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## THE EFFECT OF CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK STRATEGIES ON IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

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### ABSTRACT

Providing corrective feedback has been a traditional pedagogical practice in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes. Corrective feedback permits second language learners to develop their ability to use the target language appropriately. This study aimed at investigating the effect of different types of corrective feedback on Iranian EFL learners' language development. It investigated different types of corrective feedback strategies used by language teachers and examined the effect of corrective feedback strategies on learners' overall language development. The participants of the study were 4 language teachers who were selected among language teachers at a language institute in Shiraz and 25 EFL learners who had enrolled at the same language institute. Data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews with language teachers and observations of the learners' performance in class during 10 instructional sessions. The results indicated that explicit correction, recast, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, repetition, elicitation and nonverbal signals were the main feedback strategies employed by the teachers and attended to by the learners. The results also revealed that different corrective feedback strategies can improve EFL learners output based on the nature of errors produced. Findings have implication for language teachers in that explicit error correction techniques can enhance language learning because they are better noticed by the learners.

**KEYWORDS:** *Corrective feedback strategies, error production, language development.*

### INTRODUCTION

According to Corder (1967), errors are important in the process of language learning because they show the extent to which learners have learned the target language as well as the areas in which they still need help. This study is aimed at examining the ways through which teachers orally correct learners' errors and the effect of such corrections on learners' English language production. Corrective feedback is a techniques which is believed to facilitate L2 development through providing learners with both positive and negative evidence (Long, 1996). Positive evidence provides the learners with the correct and target-like structure or what is acceptable in L2. Negative evidence, however, shows the learners what is unacceptable in L2. Corrective feedback is defined as a teacher's move to draw a learner's attention to the grammatical accuracy of the utterance (s)he has produced (Sheen, 2007).

The significance of this study is its contribution to the classification of corrective feedback strategies. This study investigates different types of corrective feedback strategies used by teachers and their effect on learners' language development. The finding of this study can bring about insight for language teachers to know what kinds of feedback will be most acceptable to learners and enhance their learning. When errors occur, teachers will use these strategies consciously, selectively and effectively. Through such effective error correction, learners will reformulate their interlanguage and enhance their language proficiency. The data for this study were obtained through some semi-structured interviews plus some classroom observations. The findings reveal various types of oral corrective feedback employed by EFL teachers and the relative effectiveness of these strategies on EFL learners' language development.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### *Corrective feedback and error choice*

Earlier studies generated diverse findings because of their different classification of errors. Corder (1967) contended that teachers should distinguish errors from mistakes and that it is errors rather than mistakes that need to be corrected. Burt (1975) held that error correction should focus on "global" rather than "local errors". Krashen (1982),

however, considered error correction as a serious mistake and thought that it was useful to limit CF to simple and rules, such as third person -s because this helps monitoring. Chun, Day, Chenweth and Luppescu (1982) found that factual errors attracted most attention from native speakers and were corrected 89.5% of the time. In a later study, however, Chenoweth, Day, Chun and Luppescu (1983) it was found out that the areas learners were most often corrected included pronunciation and word choice, and least in factual errors. Cathcart and Olsen (1976) argue that there is a difference between what native language speakers attend to and what learners expect to be corrected.

### ***Corrective feedback and L2 development***

In the past decades, a growing number of the corrective feedback studies have been carried out in both a classroom and a laboratory context and have emphasized the role of corrective feedback in L2 development. Several studies have investigated the effects of different types of corrective feedback in second language classrooms (Macky, Gass, & McDonough 2000; Lister and Ranta 1997; Lyster 2004; Loewen 2004; Sheen 2004). The most comprehensive classification of corrective feedback is the one proposed by Lyster and Ranta (1997) who classified corrective feedback into six categories, that is explicit correction, recast, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, repetition, and clarification request. Among these, explicit correction and metalinguistic feedback are considered as the explicit ones while recast and clarification request are among the implicit types of corrective feedback.

Research has investigated the effects of implicit and explicit types of corrective feedback. Carrol (2001) found that those learners who received explicit error correction were more successful than those who received implicit corrective feedback. Ellis, Loewen and Erlam (2006) also concluded that those learners who received metalinguistic feedback outperformed those who received recasts in a delayed post-test. In a comparison of the effects of recasts with more explicit types of corrective feedback, Lyster (2004) proved that prompts were more effective than recasts. Ellis (2009) investigated the effects of recasts and metalinguistic feedback on the acquisition of implicit and explicit knowledge of regular past tense-ed. The findings demonstrated that the group that received metalinguistic feedback were more successful. Other research, however, revealed the advantage of implicit types of feedback such as recasts and clarification requests. Mackey and Philp (1998), for example, illustrated the advantage of recasts on learning with respect to L2 learners' acquisition of question forms. Iwashita (2003) showed a relationship between being exposed to implicit types of corrective feedback such as recasts and a considerable improvement in the acquisition of two grammatical structures in L2 Japanese.

In Iran EFL setting, too, some research has been conducted on the influence of error correction and corrective feedback on learners' language development. Latifi, Abedi and Moinzadeh (2010), for example, investigated the effect of error correction vs. error detection on Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners' writing achievement. To this end, 60 pre-intermediate English learners were randomly divided into two groups: one receiving feedback on their writing through error correction while the other receiving feedback in their writing through error detection using codes. Results indicated the positive effect of coded feedback on the learners' writing ability. In fact, the learners who had received coded feedback outperformed those receiving direct feedback in their writing performance.

In another study, Rassaei and Moinzadeh (2011) examined the effect of three types of corrective feedback, that is recasts, metalinguistic feedback, and clarification requests, on the acquisition of English wh-question forms by Iranian EFL learners. Results indicated that recasts and metalinguistic feedback had a significant influence on learners' performance on the post-test. Although recast group outperformed the than clarification and control groups in the post-test, metalinguistic group performed significantly better than the recast group.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The purpose of the present study is to find out how learners' errors are corrected and how teachers' error correction influences learners' response. As such, the objectives of the study have been formulated to the following research questions:

- 1) What types of corrective feedback strategies do teachers imply in EFL classrooms?
- 2) To what extent do various types of corrective feedback strategies influence EFL learners' language development?

### **METHODOLOGY**



### ***Participants***

This study had the participation of 25 EFL learners who enrolled in the IELTS classes as well as 4 language teachers who taught these classes in a language institute in Shiraz. These students who were preparing to take the IELTS test had registered in reading, writing, listening and speaking classes which were taught by 4 teachers. The students were both male and female language learners ranging from 22 to 34 year of age. All of them had taken and passed an exam before being admitted to these classes; therefore, it can be ensured that they were almost at the same level of proficiency. The teachers who were selected for this study were all female aging from 27 to 32 and had teaching experience of 5 to 8 years. They were selected on their own willingness to have their lessons observed and tape-recorded. All four teachers attended an introductory session to get familiar with the scope and purposes of this research. To this end, key words of the study such as different types of errors, corrective feedback strategies such as recast, clarification request, metalinguistic error correction, request for repetition, etc., were elaborated for the teachers. They were also instructed on how to apply these corrective feedback strategies on learners' errors and examine the way learners respond to these strategies in their future productions and language learning process.

### ***Instruments***

The study employed classroom observation and semi-structured interviews to investigate various types of corrective feedback strategies employed by teachers in language classes as well as the effectiveness of various types of corrective feedback strategies in Iranian EFL classrooms.

### ***Data collection procedure***

The data were collected in an IELTS preparatory course in a language institute in Shiraz, Iran. The framework applied for classroom observation had both teachers' and students' speech recorded when observing each class. The focus of observation was on the teacher and learner interactions when the students were asked to answer questions or when they volunteered to express their opinions in English. When errors occurred in the students' utterance, the researcher would closely examine how the teacher reacted to the errors or what type of corrective feedback strategy the teacher used, and also the way the students responded to the teacher's error correction. The researcher also used note-taking technique to help with the later analysis.

Semi-structured interviews with teachers were conducted after the analysis of the classroom data was completed. In the interviews, the researcher asked the teachers some questions about their views on language teaching, their attitudes towards the students' errors and their treatment of these errors.

### ***Data analysis***

This study aimed at figuring out the relationship among learners' errors, teachers' corrective feedback and learners' language development. The data obtained for this study were analyzed based on the analytic model developed by Lyster and Ranta's (1997) which is a model for the operationalization of error treatment sequence. This model classified learners' error to 4 categories of phonological, lexical, syntactic, discourse and L1 errors. Phonological errors were those concerning mispronunciations. Lexical errors referred to those errors related to improper use of words in the context. Syntactic errors were grammatical errors concerning misuse of prepositions, determiner, pronouns, tense, negation, etc. Discourse errors referred to errors above sentence level which can lead to production of utterances which are not coherent in meaning. L1 errors concerned the use of L1 equivalents when they failed to find a suitable L2 word or formula. Errors were identified by the teacher when learners were uncertain whether an utterance was erroneous or not by consulting a dictionary or by asking a classmate or the teacher for help.

In case an error of these types were produced by the learner, the teacher corrective feedback was provided via strategies such as explicit correction, recast, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, repetition and non-verbal signals. Each type of corrective feedback used by the teacher was codified for the analysis process. Explicit correction refers to the explicit use of the correct form by the teacher who clearly indicates that what the student said was incorrect. Recasts involve the teacher's reformulation of all or part of a student's utterance minus the error without clearly indicating that an error has occurred. Clarification requests are used to create opportunities for learners to reformulate or repeat their ill-formed utterance. Sometimes the teacher uses a clarification request, such as "I'm sorry" or "I don't understand," when he or she is not sure what the student means. Metalinguistic explanation refers to "either comments, information, or questions related to the well-formedness of the student utterance, without explicitly providing the correct answer" (Lyster & Ranta 1997: 47). Elicitation is a corrective technique that the teacher uses to allow the learner to complete the utterance by strategically pausing plus some open

questions or requests for reformulating the ill-formed utterance. Repetition refers to the teacher's repetition, in isolation, of the learner's ill-formed utterance, sometimes with a change in intonation.

Based on the feedback received, the learner could repair the erroneous production which could in turn lead to further improvement in the language learning process. Based on this model, the error treatment sequences were identified in the transcripts and coded according to the analytic model.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Base on the data obtained and analyzed, the distribution of each type of corrective feedback strategy as utilized by teachers were calculated via frequencies and reported in Table 1 below.

*Table 1: Frequency distributions of corrective feedback strategies used by teachers*

<b>Types of corrective feedback</b>	<b>Teacher 1</b>	<b>Teacher 2</b>	<b>Teacher 3</b>	<b>Teacher 4</b>	<b>Total of 4</b>	<b>%</b>
Explicit correction	6	5	6	3	20	17.6%
Recast	24	26	45	19	114	61.4%
Elicitation	11	9	7	5	32	33.2%
Metalinguistic	5	9	6	5	25	18.9%
Non-verbal signals	12	11	13	9	45	38.1%
Repetition	1	3	2	2	8	5.8%
Clarification request	4	3	5	3	15	11.2%

As shown in Table 1, teachers use different corrective feedback strategies with varied frequencies. The results show that recast strategy was most frequently used by the teachers (61.4%) while repetition strategy was used least frequently by the teachers (5.8%). The findings are in line with teachers' beliefs reflected in the interviews the interviews who mentioned that they will try their best not to interrupt students explicitly by correcting errors except when the errors are considered serious or repeatedly occur. Recast is one strategy which facilitates the flow of conversation without distracting students from what they are talking about. As for the errors taken as serious or with high rates of occurrence, the teachers said they would like to point them out explicitly and force students to correct them. In addition, teachers maintained that the use of recast as one strategy for error correction can save face for the students who made errors and thus encourage them to speak more not to inhibit them from talking or participating in class activities. In the interviews, all four teachers mentioned that they would take students' feelings into consideration when deciding how to treat errors so as to make students feel less intimidated. Students will get discouraged by thinking that what they say is full of errors and hesitate to speak out to avoid losing face in front of their classmates.

The use on non-verbal signals was also favored by the teachers both in the class observation and interviews. They refer to gestures and facial expressions which indicate there are errors in students' utterances. The teachers believed that these signals clearly indicate that there is something wrong with their production and as such they will move back to correct errors.

The results of this study also marked an interesting relationship between error types and corrective feedback types used which means that the teachers' treatment of errors was related to error types. This incorporates that the teachers changed their feedback strategies according to the nature of errors. Classroom observational data for this study indicated that syntactic errors accounted for the largest proportion of providing corrective feedback strategies due to their high frequency. In addition, teachers also took into account the nature of syntactical errors produced by the learners. When they were asked what kind of errors they are most likely to correct, they all said they would not interrupt students frequently to correct errors and only those they took as serious errors had to be corrected. By serious errors they meant those that students often made or that keep hearers from comprehending the speaker's speech.

The result of matching obtained data (corrective feedback strategy used with five categories of errors) confirmed what the teachers said in the interviews. Discourse errors are most likely to cause misunderstanding as they make the



meaning of the whole utterance incoherent. As a result, discourse errors were treated as serious errors by all four teachers which have to be corrected.

Another finding of this study was related to the degree corrective feedback strategies provided by the teacher could promote language learning experience. The findings of this study suggested a low remedial rate for produces errors which incorporates that after providing one type of corrective feedback strategy the learners repaired their erroneous production but tended to make the same error in future productions. This led the researcher to conclude that utilization of various types of corrective feedback strategies can make language learners to repair their non-target like utterances but this does not guarantee the extinction of error production in future productions. In addition, observing the class and learning behavior of male and female learners who had varying biological and psychological characteristics, different learning styles and preferences, and also various degrees of learning experience proved that individuals show different reactions to error correction strategy used and as such enjoy from varying degree of improvement in their learning.

Data revealed from observations and also interview with teachers indicated that implicit error correction strategies such as recast tended to yield lower rates of uptake than explicit types because they were not always noticed by the learners. This may be due to the fact that implicit corrective feedback strategies may serve a better communicative function in classroom discourse in the way that it helps keep students attention focused on content or message, while explicit feedback enables learners to notice problems in their production. Corrective feedback strategies such as elicitation, repetition, clarification request, metalinguistic explanation and nonverbal signals proved to be more successful in eliciting students' uptake which could enhance their learning.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the application and effectiveness of teachers' corrective feedback on Iranian EFL learners language development. It examined what corrective feedback strategies teachers used, how error types influenced the utilization of specific corrective feedback strategy and how corrective feedback strategies affect language learners' language development. The findings of this study yielded some conclusions.

First of all, Iranian EFL teachers employed seven types of corrective feedback strategies in their classes namely explicit correction, recast, clarification request, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, repetition and nonverbal signals to varying degrees.

Data revealed that each type of corrective feedback strategy selected and utilized by the teacher had something to do with the type and category of produced error by the learner. In other words, different error types lead to different choice of feedback strategies. For instance, teachers closely attended to discourse errors because they believed that they may hinder comprehension. Data also showed that recast and repetition were respectively the most and the least frequently used corrective feedback strategies used by the teachers.

Finally, the findings suggested that the implication of explicit error correction strategies such as clarification request, repetition, non-verbal signals and elicitation led to better uptake by the learners as compared to implicit corrective feedback strategies such as recast. This led the researcher to conclude that explicit error correction techniques can enhance language learning because they are better noticed by the learners.

A limitation worth mentioning concerning the present study is the fact that the data were collected in one language institute from a limited number of language learners and teachers. Such limited number of participants limits the generalizability of the findings of the study. As such, findings need to be reported cautiously.

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## INVESTIGATING TRANSLATION COMPETENCE AND ITS SUB-COMPETENCIES THROUGH DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS AND PROPOSING PACTE GROUP MODEL AS THE BEST ONE

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### ABSTRACT

Translation competence as the area of interest of many scholars and translation researchers in the last three to four decades is defined as the underlying system of knowledge required to translate as expert knowledge, predominantly procedural comprising different inter-related sub-competences (PACTE, 2003). There are different definitions and categorizations of competence most of them agree on that competence is made of different sub-competencies but they disagree on the number of sub-competencies and their kinds. There seems to be a need for a research which puts these models with each other and finds out which one of them is the most acceptable one. The aim of this research is to propose the best definition of translation competence and the best model which covers this concept. It is also about finding reasons for supposing PACTE [Process in the Acquisition of Translation Competence and Evaluation] group model of sub-competencies as the most acceptable model. These two would be the first and second questions of the research henceforth. Answering the questions the results showed that; PACTE definition and its model of sub-competencies is the most acceptable model which in the best way covers translation competence.

**KEY WORDS:** Translation competence, PACTE model of sub-competencies, EMT, Strategic sub-competence, Psycho-physiological components

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Translation studies*

Translation is a new field of study which takes the attention of the students in Iran and all over the world recently and make them interested in translation more than before, as Baker (1991, p. 11) says "unlike medicine and engineering, translation is a very young discipline in academic terms. It is just starting to feature as a subject of study in its own right, not yet in all but in an increasing number of universities and colleges around the world". It could be seen by the number of students whom we can see entering university interested in this field.

In other fields of study just like mathematics, chemistry, and medicine a lot of progresses has been made and a lot of researches has been done, as Melis and Albir put it "Unlike other disciplines, in which numerous research studies have been carried out on the functioning of expert knowledge and how it is acquired, the history of research in translation studies is both short and lacking in empirical studies" (2001, p. 279). So after all the best definition of translation studies has to be stated as "studies that can make the student a better translator, and 2) as academic research on translation" (Pym, 2009, types of university training programs section, para. 6)

The important point which is to be mentioned here is that in present times "Translators are not yet sure whether translation is a trade, an art a profession or a business" (Baker, 1992, p. 9), so among different scholars it has always been a matter of discussion.

#### *The history of translation competence*

Translation competence has been one of the important subjects of interest and a matter of discussion among scholars and translation researchers in the last three to four decades. There are two reasons for this statement. The first one is according to Pym (2003) since the 1970s the concept of translation competence has been viewed as at least "1) a mode of bilingualism, 2) a question of market demands, 3) a multi-component competence, involving sets of skills that are linguistic, cultural, technological and professional, and 4) a super-competence that would somehow stand above the rest" (p. 481). The other reason is seen as the date of the following researches which also shows since

1971 so far translation competence has been the area of interest of many researchers. (cited in PACTE, 2011, para. 10).

***Statement of the problem and significance of the research***

The concepts, definitions and models listed in this research are presented to show the variety of perspectives and viewpoints which different authors have when it comes to translation competence. "The definition of translation competence and the process by which it is acquired is of supreme importance in teaching translation since it provides the guidelines in establishing the learning objectives and the pace of teaching..." (Melis & Albir, 2001, p. 280). Another case for the importance of defining translation competence is from Pym, "defining TC [translation competence] is quite relevant in the educational context, because arriving at some relatively standardized definition of translation competencies would allow teachers to structure their courses appropriately and to evaluate and develop competences of translation trainees" (Pym, 2009, p. 1). There are different definitions of competence, there are also different categorizations of competence most of them agree on that competence is made of different sub-competencies but they disagree on the number of sub-competencies and their kinds. There seems to be a need for a research which puts these models altogether with each other and finds out which one of them is the most complete and comprehensive one. The point which must be taken into consideration is that most of the researches focus on some of the components of translation competence as it will be shown that none or few attempts have been made to consider all of them, most deal only with some aspects of translation competence however all of them have something in common and that would be in describing translation competence as a set of components. Different models for sub-competencies which are presented, in some cases would believe that translation competence sub-competencies to be, strategic, instrumental and knowledge of translation, which is ambiguous and incomplete, and in some cases would believe that language competence might be necessary to be added to these sub-competencies for achieving translation competence. However it may be proved that PACTE model of sub-competencies is the most complete and conclusively the most acceptable one considering that just this model includes the strategic component and mentions the psycho-physiological components (PACTE, 2009).

***Chronological approaches (viewpoints and/or definitions) of translation competence***

Considering that in the area of translation studies a complete definition of translation competence has always been a debate among scholars, different definition of this concept are given in here;

First Bell (1991) definition of it as "the knowledge and skills the translator must possess in order to carry out a translation" (p. 43) (cited in PACTE 2000). Bell description of sub-competencies which are; "target-language knowledge, text-type knowledge, source-language knowledge, subject area real world knowledge, contrastive knowledge, skills summarized as communicative competence (covering grammar, sociolinguistics and discourse)", is also given in Pym (2003, p. 485).

Second Sykes (1989) putting it in another way as "an excellent command of the source language, an equally excellent command of the target language plus a "... very good understanding of the subject matter" (p. 35-39) is mentioned, and finally Nuebert (2000) division of it into five components: 1) language competence, 2) textual competence, 3) subject competence, 4) cultural competence and 5) transfer competence, with the last being the most important of all competences the translator should have (p. 7) (these two definitions are cited in PACTE 2000). This group defined translation competence as the underlying system of knowledge required to translate. They believed that translation competence is "(a) expert knowledge; (b) predominantly procedural; (c) comprises different inter-related sub-competences; and (d) includes a strategic component which is of particular importance" (PACTE, 2009, theoretical model section para. 2).

Alves goncalves (2001) stated that competence includes not only the resources but also the supposed consequence, that is, "competence is defined as the appropriate use of specific abilities according to surrounding demands (McClelland, 1973), i.e., as a goal-oriented behavior"(p. 47). They assume that translation competence is not to be understood only as a repertoire, but rather as a role-specific competence, which they defined competence as the appropriate use of specific abilities according to surrounding demands from McClelland (1973), i.e., as a goal-oriented behavior, which in the domain of translation competence it includes and specifies the notion of competence as ability (Alves & Gonçalves, 2001, p. 47).

Albir and Orozco (2002) report finding only four explicit definitions of translation competence, one of them proposed by Hurtado Albir himself. They perceive translation competence as "the ability of knowing how to

translate". The other three definitions are from Bell, Willis and PACTE which were given above. (All definitions cited in Orozco, Albir, 2002, p. 376). An important point which has to be stated in here is that Amparo Hurtado Albir is one of the members of PACTE group and that is the reason which some of the manuscripts of Albir and PACTE group share some characteristics.

Rotheneves (2007, p. 131) first declared Toury's (1995, p. 241-258) view that "in the development of the translator's competence, it is of fundamental importance to learn how to translate according to the norms of a society", then referred to House (1981), investigation on translator's competence in TS which has typically followed three different approaches. He said that House introduced, for the study of translation, the concept of communicative competence (House, 1981, p. 3). However, in the same paragraph, House stated, "that translation may begin to play a truly useful role in developing student's communicative competence" (ibid). After that in another place moreover Rotheneves (2007, p. 126) stated that: "in Translation Studies (TS), the qualities of a good translator have been typically addressed based on the concept of translator competence", and also his definition of competence agrees with or confirms PACTE definition of competence which is "Originally, competence stands for the quality of possessing a skill, knowledge, or qualification" (ibid).

EMT (2009) [European Master's in Translation – EMT] definition of 'competence' is the combination of aptitudes, knowledge, behavior and knowhow necessary to carry out a given task under given conditions including six sub-competencies; Translation service provision competencies, language competence, intercultural competence, data-mining competence, technological competence and thematic competence.

### **Background of PACTE group**

The PACTE research group (Process in the Acquisition of Translation Competence and Evaluation) was formed in October 1997 to investigate the Acquisition of Translation Competence in written translation into and out of the foreign language PACTE (2003). As it was mentioned before this group defined translation competence as the underlying system of knowledge required to translate. They believe that translation competence: (a) is expert knowledge; (b) is predominantly procedural; (c) comprises different inter-related sub-competencies; and (d) includes a strategic component which is of particular importance (PACTE, 2009, theoretical model section para. 2).

In this research PACTE model of sub-competencies will be defined as the best categorization of translation competence which is,

"1) Communicative competence in both languages

2) Extra-linguistic competence:

3) Transfer competence

4) Instrumental/professional competence

5) Psycho-physiological competence

6) Strategic competence, this competence is used in detecting problems, making decisions, correcting occasional errors or deficiencies in any of the other sub-competencies" (PACTE, 2003 p. 15-18)

In view of their history, in their research in 2003 they studied translation competence from two complementary points of views which the first one is,

1. The translation process, through the collection and analysis of data obtained from experimental studies of the mental processes used to translate, and the competencies and abilities required; and the second one is,
2. The translation product, through the collection and analysis of data obtained from an electronic corpus consisting of the texts translated by the subjects participating in the experiment. They also stated that they used different instruments and different types of data-collecting methods, both qualitative and quantitative methods, so that the data could be collated and triangulated.

The aim of this research was a better understanding about how translation competence is acquired. The project had two main stages: (1) a study of translation competence (TC) (2) a study of the acquisition of translation competence.

In one other of their articles investigating translation competence, Conceptual and Methodological Issues in 2005 PACTE used

1. *Direct observation chart*. This chart was used to collect data on the external behaviour of the subjects in each stage of the process (orientation, development and revision)
2. *Problems questionnaire*. The subjects filled in this questionnaire after translating each text.

3. *Translation knowledge questionnaire.* This questionnaire of 36 questions had been designed around the 7 indicators of the translation knowledge variable.

They believed that given any bilingual has knowledge of two languages and may have extra-linguistic knowledge, so they considered that the sub-competencies specific to TC were strategic, instrumental and knowledge about translation (ibid).

In another research in 2009 their aim was to present the results obtained for the translation competence indicator acceptability of translation products and the variable "Decision-making". This experiment was done involving 35 expert translators and 24 foreign-language teachers. The results obtained relating to expert translators' dynamic concept of translation, and their dynamic approach to the translation of specific texts was also given in 2011. These studies were longitudinal which some of their results were given and some others are still under investigation.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research questions which were asked and effort was made to answer them in this research will be discussed in the following order.

The first research question is about translation competence its definition, scholars, researchers or models who take this concept into consideration, after naming them, PACTE group model of sub-competencies will be detailed specially.

After taking into consideration PACTE group model of sub-competencies and defining it, the second question of this study is asked which is about the reasons for supposing this model the best model which covers translation competence, and the most acceptable one. Therefore the aim of this research would be to answer these two questions.

## **METHOD OF THIS RESEARCH**

This research aims at describing translation competence and its sub-competencies according to different viewpoints specially PACTE group as the most completed and acceptable version of these models. So in order to reach this aim the qualitative research will be done including;

### ***Material***

The components which were investigated were

- 1) Translation competence and its sub-competencies
- 2) Communicative competence
- 3) Extra-linguistic competence
- 4) Transfer competence
- 5) Instrumental/professional competence
- 6) Psycho-physiological competence
- 7) Strategic competence

### ***Procedures***

Different kinds of materials have been used to collect data about notions like translation competence and sub-competencies from books articles and web sites. At the beginning the definition of translation competence according to different viewpoints was given. The models, scholars, researchers and groups who talk about this concept and its sub-competencies were also taken into account. Scholars like Pym (2003) and groups like EMT (2009), PACTE (1997-2011) books like in other words from Baker, articles and writers like Alves, Gonçalves and Rothe-Neves.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Models of translation competence***

The first question which this research is trying to answer is about translation competence, scholars, researchers or models who take this concept into consideration, so in order to reach this aim; the following models of translation competence are going to be discussed. These models are made of different concepts and/or sub-competencies. These sub-competencies are put together based on different viewpoints and according to different long term researches.



These models are empirical or theoretical, mostly have some features in common and sometimes are in contrast with each other. It will be said that presentation of these models bring about criticism and or comparisons to be made, and also some differences among the models of translation, or some advantages belonging to PACTE's model which finally made us propose this model the best, most acceptable, according to the idea of the writer, and the reason for such a choice will be given later on at the end of this research.

#### *Campbell model*

The first model which is taken into consideration in this chapter is from Campbell (1991), which is a psycholinguistic approach to translation competence. He in order to establish his model of translation competence analyzed 41 solutions of a single sentence that TT equivalents of these lexical items were categorized into six kinds of "product phenomena" and these phenomena were later re-organized according to the processes that may have showed the way to their appearance. Concluding the results of his tests, Campbell proposed the following model of TC (Campbell 1991, p. 339), which consists of two basic parts;

- 1) Disposition – attitudes and psychological qualities that the translator brings to the task. He proposed that disposition had two axes: *risk-taking vs. prudent* and *persistent vs. capitulating*
- 2) Proficiency: has to do with certain special bilingual skills, and has a developmental dimension. He proposed that Proficiency consists of three aspects: *lexical coding of meaning*, *global target language competence* and *lexical transfer*. He also stated that these three aspects are closely related.

In his model (Campbell, 1998), each of Textual competence, Disposition and Monitoring competence are as separate competences that are interrelated. The model of translation competence proposed allows translation students' competence to be assessed based on three independent and interrelated components. He defined these three components as followed;

The first component textual competence was defined as the capacity to organize target language grammar and lexis in a stylistically authentic way. The second component disposition was defined as including two aspects of the learner's competence, namely their choice of lexis and their cognitive attitude to the task. The third component monitoring of the translation process which denotes the translators' self assessment abilities reflected by the way they tackle revisions and corrections of their output.

The linguistic component in Campbell's model, namely *textual competence*, comprises three stages: *sub-standard*, *pre-textual* and *textual*. Campbell believes in the importance that language competence, especially the learner's textual competence in their second language, is a part of translation competence. He also believes that learning to translate into one's second language is a form of second language acquisition (Campbell, 1998) so the improvement of the student second language is totally related to their *Disposition* and their *Monitoring competence* (ibid). This point about Campbell from Pym has to be mentioned. According to Pym, it is hard to believe that the data would have given those categories had the researcher not set out to combine psycholinguistics with studies on bilingualism. The disciplinary position was there prior to the research. Nevertheless at this point, under the very vague head "disposition," Pym believes to be approaching something rather more concrete that could belong to translating and nothing but translating (2003).

#### *Pym model*

The second model which is discussed in this research is from Anthony Pym. He defines translation competence as;

- 1) The ability to generate a series of more than one viable target (TT<sub>1</sub>, TT<sub>2</sub>...TT<sub>n</sub>) for a pertinent source text (ST);
- 2) The ability to select only one viable from this series, quickly and with justified confidence. (Pym, 2003, p. 489). By mentioning that he has made this definition in 1991.

He proposed that, together, these two skills form a specifically translational competence; their union concerns translation and nothing but translation. He also stated that there is no doubt that translators should know a reasonable amount of grammar, rhetoric, terminology, computer skills, Internet savvy, world knowledge, teamwork cooperation, strategies for getting paid correctly, and the rest, but he believed that the specifically translational part of their practice is strictly neither linguistic nor solely commercial, and the most important of what he says, is this point that "It is a process of generation and selection, a problem-solving process that often occurs with apparent automatism" (ibid, p. 489). The problem solving process has been mentioned in this model too.

More over Pym indicated that his approach requires the translation trainee possess self-theorizing and self-evaluation skills, in addition to flexibility and self-confidence. He claimed that his approach also presumes the trainee's competence in grammar and rhetoric, so that they are able to "create this two-fold functional competence". (Ibid)

#### *Gonçalves model*

The third model which is introduced is a different view of translator's competence which is proposed by Gonçalves (2003) this model incorporates the following characteristics:

- Cognition is seen as situated action (Elman et al., 1996);
- Expertise is considered as an instance of deliberate practice (Ericsson, 2002);
- A broad translator's competence compasses a set of sub-competences which operate in parallel (PACTE, 2003; Gonçalves, 2003);
- A specific translator's competence is relevance-oriented (Sperber & Wilson 1986/1995; Gutt 2000);
- The latter requires meta-cognition for problem-solving, decision-making and the attribution of interpretive resemblance to translation units (Alves & Gonçalves, 2003) (cited in Alves, 2005, Pre-Requisites for a Revised Model section para. 1).

He included some of the sub-competences proposed in the PACTE model (bilingual, extra-linguistic, instrumental, and knowledge-about-translation, and its psychophysiological components) and based on connectionism and Relevance Theory, the author offered that there may be a specific, core domain for translator's competence which he calls it specific translator's competence and suggested that it is guided by the principle of relevance (Sperber & Wilson, 1986/1995) and the concept of interpretive resemblance as developed by Gutt (2000) (ibid)

Gonçalves specific translator's competence had a very prominent role in his model in which this specific translator's competence brought together the work of all other sub-competences and operated almost exclusively through conscious or meta-cognitive processes. He also stated that this specific translator's competence is Analogous to the central position which PACTE's strategic sub-competence has occupied (ibid).

The author claimed that this specific translator's competence is directly proportional to:

- 1) The production of contextual effects generated from two counterpart translation units, one in the source language and the other in the target language.
- 2) the overlapping of the two sets of effects, that is, the maximisation of their interpretive resemblance.

Therefore, Gonçalves stated that translation competence is considered to be a special type of expert knowledge heavily dependent on declarative knowledge (ibid).

The important point to be mentioned about Alves is Alves, Gonçalves and Rothe-Neves (2001) search of a definition of translation competence research. They used a psych-linguistically oriented framework, and the aim of the research was determining what accounts for *Translation Competence*. A team of researchers of the Graduate Programme in Linguistic Studies of the Faculdade de Letras at UFMG (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais) had designed this research project. As it has been mentioned in this manuscript the starting point of the project design was work carried out by Alves (1995) in an attempt to describe cognitive traits of the translation process including 40 professional translators and students in the field of Translation Studies and For gathering data they used four combinations of instruments which were: Think-Aloud Protocols, Recall Protocols, Translog, Working Memory Assessment Battery (verbal subset). So in this research they tried to find out what aspects translation competence has which as they said that the obtained results are still under investigation (Alves et al., 2001)

#### *PACTE group model*

As it was mentioned before PACTE research group was formed in October 1997 to investigate the Acquisition of Translation Competence in written translation into and out of the foreign language (inverse and direct translation). All the founding members of the group are translators and translation teachers who train professional translators in the Facultat de Traducció i d'Interpretació of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. Their centre of attention was not just one language. They examined language combinations including English, French and German, Spanish and Catalan. They worked on both direct and inverse translation directions, which it meant that considering they all have different theoretical and methodological backgrounds, for a long time they considered the need for more information about how trainee translators learn to translate in order to create better teaching (PACTE, 2003).



The main aim of this group was to validate their theories employing empirical tools. Their translation competence model was first presented in 1998 and later on (PACTE, 1998a, 1998b, 2000, 2001), and it was recently remodelled in the light of the results of the 2000 exploratory test (PACTE 2003). As it was mentioned before in this model, translation competence was considered to be the underlying knowledge system needed to translate and has four distinctive characteristics: (1) it is expert knowledge and not possessed by all bilinguals; (2) it is basically procedural knowledge (and not declarative); (3) it is made up of various interrelated sub-competencies; (4) the strategic component is very important, as it is in all procedural knowledge. The translation competence model proposed was made up of 5 sub-competencies and Psycho-physiological components (PACTE, 2003, a holistic model section para. 3).

At the beginning PACTE model was kind of incomplete, but based on new research tools and the re-validation of respective sub-competencies, the model later developed into the following construct (PACTE, 2005, p. 610) and the definition of the sub-competences developed simultaneously with the model; here definition of the five sub-competences and psycho-physiological components is given,

- (1) The bilingual sub-competence; it is defined as predominantly procedural knowledge which is needed to communicate in two languages. Its components: pragmatic, socio-linguistic, textual, grammatical and lexical knowledge in the two languages are defined as followed; first pragmatic knowledge is knowledge of the pragmatic conventions needed to carry out language acts that are acceptable in a given context; second socio-linguistic knowledge is knowledge of the socio-linguistic conventions which are needed to carry out language acts that are acceptable in a given context; this includes knowledge of language registers and dialects. Third textual knowledge is knowledge of texture (coherence and cohesion mechanisms) and of different genres with their respective conventions (structure, language features, etc.). Fourth grammatical-lexical knowledge is knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax and phonology/graphology.
- (2) Extra-linguistic sub-competence; it is defined as predominantly declarative knowledge, both implicit and explicit, about the world in general and special areas. It includes the following three components: (1) bicultural knowledge (about the source and target cultures); (2) encyclopedic knowledge (about the world in general); (3) subject knowledge (in special areas).
- (3) Knowledge about translation sub-competence; it is defined as predominantly declarative knowledge, both implicit and explicit, about what translation is and aspects of the profession. It includes: (1) knowledge about how translation functions: types of translation units, processes required, methods and procedures used (strategies and techniques), and types of problems; (2) knowledge related to professional translation practice: knowledge of the work market (different types of briefs, clients and audiences, etc.)
- (4) Instrumental sub-competence; it is defined as predominantly procedural knowledge related to the use of documentation sources and an information and communication technologies applied to translation: dictionaries of all kinds, encyclopedias, grammars, style books, parallel texts, electronic corpora, searchers, etc.
- (5) Strategic sub-competence; it is defined as Procedural knowledge to guarantee the efficiency of the translation process and solve the problems encountered.
- (6) Psycho-physiological components; these components are defined as different types of cognitive and attitudinal components and psycho-motor mechanisms. They include: (1) cognitive components such as memory, perception, attention and emotion; (2) attitudinal aspects such as intellectual curiosity, perseverance, rigor, critical spirit, knowledge of and confidence in one's own abilities, the ability to measure one's own abilities, motivation, etc.; (3) abilities such as creativity, logical reasoning, analysis and synthesis, etc.

Strategic sub-competency is the most important one among all because, this is an essential sub-competence that affects all the others and causes inter-relations amongst them because it controls the translation process. Its functions are:

- (1) To plan the process and carry out the translation project (choice of the most adequate method);
- (2) To evaluate the process and the partial results obtained in relation to the final purpose;
- (3) To activate the different sub-competencies and compensate for deficiencies in them;
- (4) To identify translation problems and apply procedures to solve them.

An important point which must be noted here is that PACTE believes, three specific sub-competences distinguished the competence of translators from that of natural bilinguals. These are: *strategic sub-competence*, *instrumental sub-competence* and *knowledge about translation sub-competence*. These sub-competences represented the mental processes that are specific to the translation process (ibid).

It must be noted that PACTE model of translation competence and of the acquisition of translation competence were designed based on research into competence, expert knowledge and learning processes in areas such as Pedagogy, Psychology and Languages (PACTE 2003). It is important to say that their work is empirical and is carried out in the form of longitudinal studies for the purpose of research and teaching, with the aim at helping to improve curriculum design that is geared towards professional translation (ibid).

In their research on translation competence acquisition PACTE group measures translation problems, translation errors and student's notions about translation. So it is important that a brief look to be taken at both the notions of problem or error and also acquisition of translation competence. First problem and error will be taken into consideration.

#### *A. Translation problem and error*

Before starting this section the difference between translation problems and translation errors must be given. Both of these concepts are supposed as indicators of translation competence within PACTE's framework. According to Nord (1991, p. 151), a translation problem is "an objective problem which every translator (...) has to solve during a particular translation task", it is observable and, in solving translation problems, subjects certainly show their ability to use translation strategies, which is a basic component of translation competence. On the other way the origin of a translation error is usually a translation problem that has not been solved or has not been appropriately solved (ibid). As it can be seen in Melis and Albir (2001) research, the problems encountered by the translator are varied; linguistic, extra linguistic, transfer problems. A working classification of these problems can be made in relation to the particular competence that the translator needs to mobilize. According to the PACTE list of sub-competencies, they may be classified as follows:

- 1) Linguistic (lexical, syntactic, textual)
- 2) Extra linguistic (cultural, thematic, encyclopaedic)
- 3) Transfer problems (difficulty in finding the dynamic equivalence)
- 4) Psycho physiological (relating to creativity, logical thought)
- 5) professional/instrumental (deriving from the translation brief, or documentation difficulties). (Cited at Melis & Albir 2001, p. 281)

Once again it must be noted that because of its role as a regulating mechanism, compensating for deficiencies in the other sub-competencies and solving the problems that arise, it is obvious that strategic competence is crucial in dealing with translation problems. (ibid)

The reasons that the notion of problem was introduced in here are varied;

The first one as Pym puts it, there is no doubt that translators need to know a problem-solving process that often occurs with apparent automatism and translating is a question of solving problems, not of moving meanings (2003). The second reason is given As Baker 1991 puts it any attempt is made to identify potential sources of translation difficulties related to the linguistic area under discussion and possible strategies for resolving these difficulties by trainees, thus the trainee is to be made more aware of her/his own strategies and conscious decisions made while tackling translation tasks and solving problems. The third and most important reason is that, strategic competence is a problem solving activity.

Concluding that Translation problem is a problem found in the ST, which a translator has to solve, no matter what his expertise is. Solutions of translation problems shows that to some extent the translator has got translator's competence; (Orozco & Albir, 2000).

Finally, depending on the students' ideas about translation, they will have a particular purpose for a particular translation task, and this will determine their solution of translation problems throughout the process of translation (Albir, 2002). Thus if the students want to reach translation expertise or translation competence when find a problem in the source text should know what the problem is and what way to solve it.

Last but not least considering that translation competence is acquired as a result of a process of development and restructuring different sub-competences, and considering that in this area expertise and acquisition was discussed the acquisition of translation competence must be taken into consideration briefly.

### *B. Acquisition of translation competence*

Considering that there are problems of definition concerning translation competence, translation competence acquisition has got the same difficulty in being defined, as it may be seen that several authors proposed models of how this process develops. Harris and Sherwood (1978) Toury (1986) Shreve (1997) Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986): PACTE (see PACTE, 2000) as PACTE mentions this group does not find a single explicit definition (ibid).

Translation competence acquisition model has changed in time; it was restructured as it gradually incorporated findings of empirical tests. "The PACTE group's work is the first empirical research to investigate the acquisition of translation competence, through a model specifically designed for this purpose" (ibid). They call it a process in which translation competence acquisition is considered as A dynamic, spiral process that, like all learning processes, evolves from novice knowledge (pre-translation competence) to expert knowledge (translation competence); They also mention that it requires learning competence (learning strategies) by using both declarative and procedural types of knowledge which they are integrated, developed and restructured. (ibid)

Rothe Neves (2007) states that in order for a generally accepted definition of translation competence arise, it should be based on and drawn from the experience of expert translators. In this context, he cites Bausch (1977) as one of the first scholars to propose basic characteristics of a professional translator; these include:

- a) Linguistic competences — grammatical and communicative
- b) Specific competences — concerning extra-linguistic reality and
- c) Translational competence — which is "an autonomous ability that surpasses reading and writing in complexity" (Bausch as cited in Rothe-Neves 2007, p. 128). The reason to give the aforementioned categorization is to say that the difference between translation competence of an expert translator and translation trainee lies in the fact that the expert probably possesses all the aforementioned sub-competencies.

### ***EU Model (EMT)***

Another research project which has been done recently is from EMT group which their definition of competence was mentioned above. EMT expert group was set up by the DGT in April 2007. Its main task is to make specific proposals with a view to implementing a European reference framework for a Master's in translation (European Master's in Translation – EMT) throughout the European Union (EMT, 2009, p.1).

The main goal of their project is to establish a quality label for university translation programs at master's level that meet agreed standards in education. To put it another way its main aim is to promote quality standards in translator training and in related professions via a common framework of minimum professional competencies (ibid).

The six competencies defined in the EMT framework includes the vast majority of the about forty seven components, these sub-competencies are included in the following section briefly;

The first competency which is introduced by this group is: TRANSLATION SERVICE PROVISION COMPETENCE, including two dimensions; which the first one is interpersonal dimension and the second one is production dimension. LANGUAGE COMPETENCE is the second competence. INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE is the third introduced competence which has got two dimensions, the first one is sociolinguistic dimension and the second one is textual dimension. The fourth competence which is introduced is INFORMATION MINING COMPETENCE. The fifth competence is THEMATIC COMPETENCE and the sixth competence which is introduced is TECHNOLOGICAL COMPETENCE (Mastery of tools) (EMT, 2009 p. 4-7). EMT states that the areas of competence are all identical and mutually interdependent, and up to a point, all the competencies are transversal, which it means that they may apply to a number of areas of competence. Together, they comprise the minimum requirement to which other specific competences may be added (for example in localization, audiovisual translation or research). All six competence areas enumerated are natural in the translation competence. Therefore, mastery of the six areas of competence leads to mastery of a transversal super competence which can be termed competence in translation (ibid).

Note: Different models for sub-competencies which were given, some of them would agree with these sub-competencies and some would add or delete the numbers of sub-competencies or disagree with the definitions. Most of these studies take a partial look at some of the elements of translation competence, none of them could be said to be complete. However just the model of PACTE group includes six sub-competencies which we can say the most acceptable among all.

PACTE points out that the features of the group can be defined as,

Carrying out testing the models and refining them based on empirical research, with the final goal of translation measurement and teaching,

Considering language competence as a sort of pre-competence,

Claiming that bilingual competence to be a sub-competence that is assessed as a fundamental part of translation competence,

Research based on a longitudinal study of translation competence acquisition, and using specific learning strategies by translation learners in the acquisition process, in addition to a reorganizing of knowledge that is constantly taking place,

The group's research is not restricted to English as it tries to reach as many language combinations as possible.

The longitudinal studies on translation competence acquisition which are being taken into consideration and done by the PACTE group can help shed light on how translation competence develops and how it is acquired (2005).

After taking into consideration chronological order of the aforementioned models of sub-competencies and defining it the second question of this research is asked which is about the reasons for supposing this model the best and most comprehensive model which covers translation competence. In order to reach this aim and answer this question the following comparison and conclusion is made.

## **COMPARING AND CONCLUDING**

The concepts, definitions and models which were listed in the aforementioned sections were presented in order to show the variety of perspectives and viewpoints which different authors have when it comes to translation competence. It is mentioned as the reason of many kinds of evaluation in the educational courses and different methods of defining and assessing translation competence.

The chronological presentation of translation competence models, introduced criticism and or comparisons to be made;

Rothe-Neves believes in the following criticism of current TC models;

He stated that the data is not based on reasonable components. He also mentioned that the concept of translation competence has been already divided into too many sub-competencies (Rothe-Neves, 2007). In order to confirm what he said it must noted that for instance EMT gives six sub-competencies with forty seven components. As it could be seen such a large number which must be asked why forty seven why for instance not fifty seven or thirty seven?

This research indicated that there are some similarities among the preceding models for instance the first one is that they cover some basic properties or they share some of the sub-competencies of translation competence. Another similarity is that some of the components in some of the models (for instance physiological competencies in Campbell and PACTE model) are the same. The other resemblance is that "TC is qualitatively different from bilingual competence" (PACTE 2003, p. 59).

This research also indicated that there are some differences among the models of translation, and there are some advantages belonging to PACTE's model which made us choose this model the best and most acceptable one;

The first and main advantage as PACTE mentions is that, their main different from previous approaches is due to the emphasis they put on procedural aspect, regarding TC as "expert knowledge in which procedural knowledge is predominant" (ibid).

The second main difference is that many of the preceding models of TC were purely theoretical or based on subjective experiences drawn from translation and translation teaching practice, (that is why PACTE group devised several tools to validate their model empirically); they used various kinds of questionnaires to validate the model.

The third important point which is to be mentioned is that in their research on TC acquisition PACTE group measures translation problems, translation errors and student's notions about translation.

The forth reason for choosing PACTE the most acceptable model is that most of the aforementioned models show many important problems, since they lack some of the fundamental components for defining or modeling translation competence.

The fifth reason is, if we consider that there are two approaches in the creation of models of translation competence, the first one as product oriented, which considers the production of respective competencies in the target text and the second approach as process oriented which is about competences being used during translation. Both of these approaches are used in the model proposed by PACTE group. While in the other models just one of these approaches is taken into consideration.

The sixth reason is in most of the introduced models the psycho-physiological components are forgotten and are not taken into consideration as part of translation competence, as Alves (2005) states, he may argue that translation strategies alone are no indicators of competence in translation. It needs to be coupled with some subjective or intersubjective parameter of meta-reflection to substantiate any kind of evidence. In this respect both Campbell and PACTE are significant, because they explicitly include psycho-physiological aspects into their models.

The seventh reason is considering that in 2003 they put the name of components on the physiological sub-competency which they used to say, and do not use psychological sub-competencies anymore as cited at PACTE 2011 article validation of TC model, this would show that they are developing this model improving and making it better by the new researches which they do. Somehow updating and improving.

The eighth reason is the wisely choice of sub-competencies or better to be said the updated choice of sub competencies. The proof for that would be the new developments resulted in that the dictionaries like Oxford and Cambridge have been made a CD which can be installed on the PCs and used easily. Also, Internet provides the translator with a large amount of information, dictionaries, vocabulary and even translations

Last but not least the ninth reasons would be that, PACTE group's work is the first empirical research to investigate the acquisition of translation competence, through a model specifically designed for this purpose (PACTE 2000).

As Pym (2003) puts it the translation competence model of PACTE is one of the models with the largest number of sub-competences. But the weight of the model would not be the reason for choosing the best model in this study otherwise the EMT group six sub-competencies and forty seven components model of sub competencies would be chosen as the best model, in which though the number of competences and components in this framework may be perceived as overlapping to some extent.

#### *Limitation of the study*

Shortcoming of this research mainly is due to the complicated nature of translation and conclusively translation competence, which there is not enough researches and studies done in this concept. So the territory of research which is taken into consideration is limited, for instance in this research only five models of translation competence could be differentiated and compared. Another point which must be taken into consideration in this regard is that, previous researches and/or the background of translation competence is really limited, and there is not a place like a library or documentation source, (for instance the internet world wide) which the previous researches in the area of translation competence could be found. In such a place all the available models of translation competence could be found and compared. The other limitation which also would be worth considering is that the focus of this research on translation competence completely was based on PACTE group which may be stated that a partial look was taken at this model and some of the models which make up the elements of translation competence were not objectively considered, which in this research great effort was done to avoid this partial point of view.

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**JAVANESE SPEECH LEVEL IN BARGAINING AND DECLINING STRATEGIES AT SARINONGKO MARKET OF PRINGSEWU OF LAMPUNG PROVINCE: A SOCIOPRAGMATIC STUDY**

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**ABSTRACT**

Local language or ethnic language is a cultural reflection of its speakers in communicating. Javanese language recognizes speech level. This article is based on two important factors, that is, bargaining and declining strategies and Javanese speech level of its speakers in trading activity at Sarinongko market of Pringsewu of Lampung Province. This research uses a sociopragmatic study which includes the Javanese speech level studied from Sociolinguistics point of view and the bargaining and declining strategies studied from Pragmatics point of view. The participants involved in the research consist of buyers as the speakers and sellers as the addressees. This article tends to find out the realisation description of bargaining and declining strategies by the Javanese speakers and the description of Javanese speech level of its speakers in trading activity at Sarinongko market of Pringsewu of Lampung Province. The method used in this research is the uninvolved conversation observation technique while the data analysis uses comparing method which is applied through dividing-key-factors technique of pragmatic competence-in-dividing.

**KEYWORDS:** speech level, Javanese language, bargaining, declining, sociopragmatics

**INTRODUCTION**

Humans live with differences in culture, nation, and geographical region with different typology. Language is one of the cultural aspect of humans. The diversity in culture results various languages such as local language or ethnic language (mother tongue). Local language is a cultural reflection of its speakers in communicating. One of the local languages in Indonesia that is still used by its speakers is Javanese language. Poedjosoedarmo (1979: 1) proposes that "Javanese language is the mother tongue of Javanese people who mainly live in the province of Central Java, Yogyakarta, and East Java. The Javanese speakers are also found in northern Banten, Lampung, Medan, and transmigrans' regions in several islands of Indonesia"

Javanese language recognizes the *undhak-usuk* system or speech level. According to Poedjosoedarmo (1979:3) speech level is "defined as language variations which the differences between one and another is determined by the difference of the speaker's and the addressee's politeness". The speech level in this research is committed by the buyers and sellers when they carry out the bargaining and declining strategies at Sarinongko market of Pringsewu of Lampung Province. Sarinongko market is one of the traditional markets located in Pringsewu Regency of Lampung Province, Indonesia. Examined from its history, Pringsewu began as a village named Margakaya in 1738 AD. It was occupied by its original dwellers of Lampung-Pubian ethnic group which reside the bank river of Way Tebu (4 km from Pringsewu capital to the south nowadays).

In 1925, a group of people from Java island through the colonization program of colonial government of East Indies cleared the forest near the Margakaya village to build a new residential area. To clear the forest, they cut down many bamboo tress. Thus, they named the new residential area by the name of Pringsewu. Pringsewu derives from Javanese language which means "a thousand bamboo". The Javanese language used by the people of Pringsewu seems to be varied because they come from various regions of Java island. Today, the Pringsewu Regency has become a developing and lively town.

Sarinongko market is a market selling the basic necessities of life such as food and clothing. The activity of Sarinongko market starts from 03.00 until 16.00 West Indonesia Time. The sellers of Sarinongko market come from various villages in Pringsewu Regency and most of them are Javanese speakers. The speech level of Javanese language used by the sellers at Sarinongko market seems to be varied from *Ngoko* to *Kromo* speech level.

The research on Javanese speech level in bargaining and declining strategies at Sarinongko market of Pringsewu of Lampung Province uses a sociopragmatic study which includes the Javanese speech level studied from Sociolinguistics point of view and the bargaining and declining strategies studied from Pragmatics point of view. The participants involved in the research consist of buyers as the speakers and sellers as the addressees.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

There are several studies used as the supporting theories in this research. One of the theories used is the theory of the description of Javanese speech level by Poedjosoedarmo (1979). In his study, Poedjosoedarmo (1979:13-15) describes three types of speech level, that is, *ngoko*, *madyo*, and *kromo*. In this research, the basic principle in determining the Javanese speech level uses the theory of Sudaryanto in Sasangka (2010). He classifies the types of speech level into four types, that is, *ngoko lugu*, *ngoko alus*, *kromo lugu*, and *kromo alus*. *Ngoko* speech level in Javanese has an impression meaning of intimate social distance between the speaker and the addressee. In other words, the relationship between the participants is not limited by respect or *pakewuh*. "*Ngoko* speech level is usually used among the colleagues, by a teacher to his/her students and someone in higher position to those who are lower" (Poedjosoedarmo, 1979:14). Meanwhile, "*Kromo* speech level is a level which shows politeness between the speaker and the addressee. It means that the *Kromo* speech level considers respect or *pakewuh* between the speaker and the addressee. This is due to the distant social distance among the participants" (Poedjosoedarmo, 1979:14). The description of Sociolinguistics in this research uses the study of Sumarsono (2013). Sumarsono explains that Sociolinguistics is the study of language related to the condition of society (studied from social sciences especially Sociology). The description of Pragmatics uses the study of Rahardi (2003). He proposes that Pragmatics is the study of direct and indirect speech acts, proposition, implicature, and conversations or conventional activity between the speaker and the addressee. In this research, the conversations activity is the speech act which can be related to the strategy of producing narratives such as bargaining and declining strategies.

According to Searle (in Rahardi, 2003: 72), bargaining is "part of the commissive speech act, that is, the type of act functioning to state promise or to offer something". Vanderveken (1990: 182) argues that "declining relates to the interaction between the speaker and the addressee along with stating politeness in using language". Turnbull and Saxton (1996:156) mention that "declining act of a request is stated in speech act such as pardoning, condoling, reasoning, stating of lacking something, and bargaining. The declining act with such speech acts is proposed to keep the addressee's feeling from inappropriateness because the bargaining of the declining is referred to the addressee".

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the explanation above, there are several questions which need to be identified. These questions are classified as follow:

- 1) What types of realisation of bargaining and declining strategies are used by the Javanese speakers at Sarinongko market of Pringsewu of Lampung Province?
- 2) What types of Javanese speech level are used by the Javanese speakers in bargaining and declining strategies at Sarinongko market of Pringsewu of Lampung?

## METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is qualitative method. "The qualitative method does not rely on proofs based on systematical logics, number principles, or statistical method. The conversations in reality, signs, and social acts are the mental materials for the qualitative method" (Mulyana, 2003:150).



Moleong (2000) defines the qualitative approach as a research procedure which produces descriptive data as in written or spoken words that can be observed. This approach focuses on the background of an individual as a whole aspect (holistic). The method used in this research includes two aspects, that is, 1) the method of data collecting and 2) the method of data analysis. These two methods are implemented in accordance with their methodological phases.

The phase of data collecting uses observation method. This method uses tapping method as the basic technique and writing technique along with record technique as the following techniques. Sudaryanto (1993).

#### ***The techniques of data collecting***

This research uses observation technique, that is, by observing the use of language (Sudaryanto, 1993). The present writer conducts an observation to the data source accurately, directly, and thoroughly.

The technique used in this research is uninvolved conversation observation technique and writing technique. The uninvolved conversation-observation technique means that the present writer becomes an observer who thoroughly pays attention to the prospective data which exists in language use excluding the present writer herself (Sudaryanto, 1993: 134-136).

After using the uninvolved conversation-observation technique, the present writer conducts writing technique by writing the data and then classifying them. The writing technique is used to collect the data of the narratives of the Javanese buyers and sellers in trading activity at Sarinongko market of Pringsewu of Lampung Province.

The data collecting of the research is conducted through several procedures as follow:

- 1) Observing and recording the narratives of the Javanese speakers in trading activity at Sarinongko market of Pringsewu of Lampung Province. Its purpose is to collect the data by tapping to get the data in natural setting;
- 2) Writing the result of the observing and recording procedures;
- 3) Reducing the data source of the Javanese speakers narratives in trading activity at Sarinongko market of Pringsewu of Lampung Province;
- 4) Classifying the data based on the Javanese speech level, bargaining strategy, and declining strategy used by the speakers in trading activity.

#### ***The technique of data analysis***

The data analysis of this research uses comparing method (Sudaryanto, 1993). The comparing method is used to select data which contain the Javanese narratives in bargaining and declining. The data analysis applied in this research also considers contexts. This is due to the fact that contexts also determine the meaning of a narrative. Wijana and Rohmadi (2009: 14) state that contexts in Pragmatics is the data background and the data presentation shows the result of the collected data, then it is concluded and verified.

In this research, the comparing method is applied through basic technique named dividing-key-factors technique. Meanwhile for the instrument, it is used pragmatic competence-in-dividing, that is the addressee as the key factor. (Sudaryanto, 1993:15). The data analysis of the Javanese speech level are classified and analyzed based on the Javanese speech level which includes *Ngoko* and *Kromo* speech level. The data analysis in bargaining and declining strategies are classified and analyzed based on the bargaining and declining narrative when the trading activity occurs.

#### ***The presentation technique of the result of data analysis***

The presentation of the result of the analysis of the research on Javanese speech level in bargaining and declining strategies at Sarinongko market of Pringsewu of Lampung Province uses formal and informal methods. "The informal method is a formulation by ordinary words but using technical terminology, while the formal method is a formulation by signs and symbols" (Sudaryanto, 1993:145). Moreover, in presenting the result of the data analysis, the present writer uses tables as the final result of the realisation of the narratives in bargaining and declining strategies.

#### ***Data source***

The data source of the research is the transcriptions of spoken data recorded by the present writer when the trading activity occurs. This research is classified as qualitative research. The qualitative methodology is a procedure which produces descriptive data of written and spoken in speech community (Djasudarma, 1993:10).

The data are collected from conversations of the Javanese speakers which include buyers as the speakers and sellers as the addressees. The research takes place at Sarinongko market of Pringsewu of Lampung Province. The conversation data in trading activity were taken on August 2013 by using voice note recorder as the instrument.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following are the data result and analysis in trading activity which describe the aspect of bargaining and declining strategies along with the Javanese speech level at Sarinongko market of Pringsewu of Lampung Province..

### Data 1 (*Pedagang Bawang*)

*Pembeli* : *bawange pinten, Bu?*

*Penjual* : *pitu ngewu Bu seprapat, setengah empat belas sewu*

*Pembeli* : *seprapat piro?*

*Penjual* : *pitu ngewu!*

*Pembeli* : *sekilo?*

*Penjual* : *dua puluh delapan ribu, Bu*

*Pembeli* : *ora kurang opo bu? Bu, ora kurang?* 1.1 (*penawaran*)

-----  
*Penjual* : *mboten, mundak-mundak iki Bu, anu arep puoso, tenan*  
-----

1.2 (*penolakan*)

### Translation per-word

- *bawange* : *bawangnya*  
'the onion'
- *pinten* : *berapa*  
'how much'
- *Bu* : *Ibu*  
'Mrs'
- *pitu ngewu* : *tujuh ribu rupiah*  
'seven thousand rupiah'
- *seprapat* : *satu per empat*  
' $\frac{1}{4}$  kilo'
- *sewu* : *ribu*  
'thousand'
- *sekilo* : *satu kilo gram*  
'one kilo gram'
- *ora* : *tidak*  
'no'
- *mboten* : *tidak*  
'no'
- *mundak-mundak* : *naik-naik*  
'increase'
- *iki* : *ini*  
'this'
- *anu* : *karena*  
'because'
- *arep* : *akan*  
'will'
- *puoso* : *puasa*  
'fasting'
- *tenan* : *benar*  
'correct'

# Translation in Indonesian

## Data 1 (*Pedagang Bawang*) (Onion Seller)

*Pembeli* : *harga/ bawang/ berapa, /Bu?*  
*Buyer* : price/ onion/ how much,/ Mrs?  
*Buyer* : 'How much the onion price Mam?'  
*Penjual* : *satu/ per/ empat/ tujuh/ ribu/ rupiah, / Bu/. Setengah /kilo gram /empat belas/ ribu/ rupiah.*  
*Seller* : one/per/four/seven/thousand/ rupiah/ Mrs/. Half/ kilo gram/ fourteen/ thousand/ rupiah  
*Seller* : 'Seven thousand rupiah for ¼ kilo Mam. Fourteen thousand rupiah for ½ kilo gram.'  
*Pembeli* : *satu/ per/ empat/ berapa?*  
*Buyer* : one/ per/ four/ how much?  
*Buyer* : 'How much for ¼ kilo?'  
*Penjual* : *tujuh/ ribu/ rupiah*  
*Seller* : seven/ thousand/ rupiah  
*Seller* : 'seven thousand rupiah'  
*Pembeli* : *satu /kilo gram /berapa?*  
*Buyer* : one/ kilo gram/ how much  
*Buyer* : 'How much for one kilo gram?'  
*Penjual* : *dua/ puluh/ delapan/ ribu/ rupiah, / Bu*  
*Seller* : two/ ten/ eight/ thousand/ rupiah/ Mrs  
*Seller* : 'twenty eight thousand rupiah, Mam'  
*Pembeli* : *tidak/ kurang, /Bu? Bu, /tidak/ kurang?* 1.1 (*penawaran*)  
*Buyer* : no/less/ Mrs?/ Mrs/ no/ less? (bargaining)  
*Buyer* : 'Not less Mam? Mam, can it be less?'

-----  
*Penjual* : *tidak, /harga/ naik/ Bu, /karena/ akan/ puasa,/ benar.*  
*Seller* : no/ price/ increase/ Mrs,/ because/ will/ fasting/ correct  
*Seller* : 'No, the price increases Mam because it will be fasting, correct'

-----  
1.2 (*penolakan*)  
(declining)

## The Realisation of Bargaining and Declining Strategies

In the data 1 (onion seller), there is one bargaining speech act and one declining speech act. The bargaining in the narrative 1.1 is committed by the speaker. Observed from the previous conversation, there is question-answer interaction between the speaker and the addressee. The questions are delivered by the speaker regarding the price of onion. After the speaker asks the onion price, the speaker performs bargaining about the price stated by the addressee and proposes to lower the price. The bargaining is marked by the narrative *ora kurang opo bu? Bu, ora kurang? 'Tidak kurang, Bu?'* (Not less Mam) '*Bu, tidak kurang?'* (Mam, can it be less)

The declining in the narrative 1.2 is delivered by the addressee. Observed from the previous conversation, there is a question-answer interaction between the speaker and the addressee along with the bargaining committed by the speaker. The proposed price of the speaker is declined by the addressee. The declining is marked by the word *mboten 'tidak'* (No). This declining is based on the reason that the price of onion is increasing due to the upcoming fasting month.

The realisation of bargaining and declining strategies in data 1 can be seen in the following table.

Table 1: The realisation of bargaining and declining strategies in data 1

Data	Strategies
1.1	Bargaining in request narrative
1.2	Declining followed by reason

## The Speech Level of Javanese Language

The conversation of trading activity in the data 1 is started with the speaker by using the Javanese speech level of *kromo lugu* and *ngoko lugu*. The addressee in the data 1 uses the Javanese speech level of *ngoko lugu*. The *kromo* speech level is "interpreted as the speech level which shows respect feeling of the speaker to the addressee" (Poedjosoedarmo, 1979:15). The *ngoko* speech level contains the meaning of intimate social distance between the speaker and the addressee. It indicates that the relationship between the two of them is not bounded by respect feeling (Poedjosoedarmo, 1979).

In the beginning of the conversation in trading activity, the speaker uses the *kromo lugu* speech level marked by the polite Javanese language and the use of the word '*pinten*'/'*berapa*' (how much). Then, from the second narrative until the end, the speaker uses the *ngoko lugu* speech level marked by the words '*piro*'/'*berapa*' (how much) and '*ora kurang*' / '*tidak kurang*' (not less/ can it be less). The speech level used by the addressee from the beginning until the end is *ngoko lugu* Javanese.

The use of the *kromo lugu* speech level in the beginning of the conversation used by the speaker and the *ngoko lugu* speech level in the following conversation can be assumed that both of the speaker and the addressee have the same age so that the Javanese speech level used by the speaker is the same. Further assumption is that the use of the *kromo lugu* speech level in the beginning of the conversation can be assumed as a polite narrative to start a conversation with the addressee and after the speaker knows about the addressee who uses *ngoko lugu* speech level, the speaker then uses the same speech level as the addressee's. In Sasangka (2010: 25), "such the thing happens due to the speaker's feeling of having the same social status as the addressee".

#### Data 2 (Pedagang Kelapa)

Pembeli : Mbak, kelopo setunggal Mbak.

Penjual : siji opo segandeng?

Pembeli : setunggal mawon, Mbak

Penjual : jokot loro wae lima ngewu 1.1 (penawaran)

Pembeli : pinten? 1.2 (penolakan)

Penjual : segandeng lima ngewu, siji telu ngewu. 1.3 (penawaran)

Pembeli : setunggal mawon mbak, kale setengah nggeh? 1.4 (penolakan)  
(penawaran)

Penjual : ora segandeng wae? 1.5 (penolakan)  
(penawaran)

Pembeli : mbotenlah kangge setitik, kale setengah nggeh? 1.6 (penolakan)  
(penawaran)

Penjual : yowes, karo opo meneh?

Pembeli : pun, niku mawon.

#### Translation per-word

- mbak : kakak perempuan (panggilan untuk wanita yang lebih tua dalam bahasa Jawa)  
'older sister' (title for older woman in Javanese)
- kelopo : kelapa  
'coconut'
- setunggal : satu  
'one'
- siji : satu  
'one'
- opo : apa  
'what'

- *segandeng* : *sepasang*  
'one fair'
- *mawon* : *saja*  
'only'
- *jokot* : *ambil*  
'take'
- *loro* : *dua*  
'two'
- *wae* : *saja*  
'only'
- *lima ngewu* : *lima ribu*  
'five thousand'
- *pinten* : *berapa*  
'how much'
  
- *telu ngewu* : *tiga ribu*  
'three thousand'
- *kale setengah* : *dua ribu lima ratus rupiah*  
'two thousand and five hundred rupiah'
- *nggeh* : *iya*  
'yes'
- *ora* : *tidak*  
'no'
- *mboten* : *tidak*  
'no'
- *kangge* : *pakai*  
'use'
- *setitik* : *sedikit*  
'a little'
- *yowes* : *baik lah*  
'okay'
- *karo* : *dengan*  
'with'
- *meneh* : *lagi*  
'again'
- *pun* : *sudah*  
'already'
- *niku* : *itu*  
'that'

#### Translation in Indonesian

##### Data 2 (*Pedagang Kelapa*) (coconut seller)

*Pembeli* : *Kak,/ beli/ kelapa/ satu,/ Kak.*

*Buyer* : *Miss/ buy/ coconut/ one/ miss*

*Buyer* : *'Miss, I want to buy one coconut miss'*

*Penjual* : *satu/ atau /sepasang?*

*Seller* : *one/ or/ a fair*

*Seller* : *'One or a fair?'*

*Pembeli* : *satu/ saja,/ Kak.*

*Buyer* : *one/ only/ miss*

*Buyer* : *'Only one miss'*

*Penjual* : *beli/ dua/ saja,/ lima/ ribu/ rupiah*

*Seller* : *but/ two /only/ five/ thousand/ rupiah*

*1.1 (penawaran)*

*(bargaining)*

Seller : 'Buy two for five thousand rupiah'

---

*Pembeli* : *berapa?* 1.2 (*penolakan*)

Buyer : 'How much?' (declining)

---

*Penjual* : *sepasang/ lima/ ribu/ rupiah,/ beli/ satu/ tiga /ribu /rupiah* 1.3 (*penawaran*)

Seller : a fair/ five/ thousand/ rupiah/ buy/ one/ three/ thousand/ rupiah (bargaining)

Seller : 'one fair for five thousand rupiah, buy one for three thousand rupiah'

---

*Pembeli* : *satu/ saja/ Kak,/ dua/ ribu/ lima/ ratus/ saja/ ya?* 1.4 (*penolakan*)

Buyer : one/ only/ miss/ two/ thousand/ five/ hundred. Only/ yes (declining)

Buyer : 'Only one miss, for two thousand and five hundred rupiah, yes?'  
(*penawaran*)  
(bargaining)

---

*Penjual* : *tidak/ sepasang/ saja?* 1.5 (*penolakan*)

Seller : no/ one fair/ only (declining)

Seller : 'No, just one fair?'  
(*penawaran*)  
(bargaining)

---

*Pembeli* : *tidak,/ dipakai/ sedikit./ Dua /ribu/ lima/ ratus/ rupiah /saja/ ya?* 1.6 (*penolakan*)

Buyer : no/ used/ a little/ two/ thousand/ five/ hundred/ rupiah/ only/ yes (declining)

Buyer : 'No, only use it for a little. Two thousand and five hundred rupiah, yes?'  
(*penawaran*)  
(bargaining)

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*Penjual* : *baik lah/, dengan/ apa /lagi?*

Seller : Okay/ with/ what/ again

Seller : 'Okay. What else?'

*Pembeli* : *sudah,/ itu/ saja.*

Buyer : already/ that/ only

Buyer : 'That's all'

### ***The Realisation of Bargaining and Declining Strategies***

In the data 2 (coconut seller) there are five bargaining speech act and four declining speech act. The bargaining act in the narrative 1.1 is committed by the addressee who bargains two coconuts for five thousand rupiah to the speaker. Observed from the previous conversation, there is a request narrative delivered by the speaker to the addressee. The strategy used by the addressee is by lower the price of the coconut if the speaker wants to buy for two coconuts, while if she buys one coconut, the price is nor lowered.

The declining act in the narrative 1.2 is committed by the speaker. Observed from the previous conversation, there are a bargaining act for the price committed by the addressee and a declining act committed by the speaker as an expression to decline the proposed price by using the question word "*pinten?*" / "*berapa*" (How much). This question is proposed so that the speaker can commit bargaining strategy.

The bargaining act in the narrative 1.3 is committed by the addressee. This bargaining is committed to bargain again the coconut price, that is, two coconut for five thousand rupiah and one coconut for three thousand rupiah.

In the narrative 1.4, there are declining and bargaining acts committed by the speaker. the declining act is committed by the speaker to ask for one coconut only instead of two and then she bargains one coconut for two thousand and five hundred rupiah.

The declining and bargaining acts in the narrative 1.5 are committed by the addressee. The addressee commits both the declining and bargaining to confirm to the speaker in a question. This confirmation is committed so that the speaker wants to buy two coconut because if she buys two she will get cheaper price instead of buying one coconut. In the narrative 1.6, there are declining and bargaining acts committed by the speaker. Observed from the conversation above, the speaker declines when the addressee bargains to buy two coconut with the reason that she needs it for a little. This reason further is used by the speaker to bargain the coconut price so that it can be cheaper. In the end, the speaker's strategy in bargaining and reasoning is agreed by the addressee.

The realisation of bargaining and declining strategies in data 2 can be seen in table 2.

Table 2: The realisation of bargaining and declining strategies in data 2

Data	Strategies
1.1	Bargaining in request narrative
1.2	Declining in question narrative
1.3	Request followed by bargaining
1.4	Declining followed by bargaining
1.5	Declining and bargaining in confirmation narrative
1.6	Declining followed by reasoning and bargaining

### **The Speech Level of Javanese Language**

The conversation of trading activity in the data 2 is started with the speaker by using the *kromo lugu* of Javanese speech level and the addressee by using the *ngoko alus* of Javanese speech level. "The *kromo* speech level is interpreted as the speech level which shows respect feeling and this speech level indicates the respect feeling of the speaker to the addressee" (Poedjosoedarmo, 1979:15). "The *ngoko* speech level indicates intimate social distance between the speaker and the addressee which means that the relationship between both of them is not bounded by respect feeling" (Poedjosoedarmo, 1979:14).

The use of *kromo lugu* speech level in the conversation in data 2 can be assumed that the speaker's age is younger than the addressee's. Thus, the Javanese speech level used by the speaker is more polite. This assumption can be seen in the use of the word '*Mba*' ('miss', title for older woman).

### **Data 3 (pedagang pisang)**

Pembeli : pinten niki, Bu?

Penjual : pitungewu mawon

Pembeli : pinten? Pitungewu?

Penjual : nggeh...gari telu, rong poloh wae ngonoh! 1.1 (penawaran)

Pembeli : mbok lima ribu mawon... lima ngewuan, Mbak? 1.2 (penolakan)  
(penawaran)

Penjual : opo? 1.3 (penolakan)

Pembeli : mbok lima ngewu wae 1.4 (penawaran)

Penjual : nemewu pas. 1.5 (penolakan)

Penjual : ajeng mendet sedanten nopo, Bu? 1.6 (penawaran)

Pembeli : mboten, setunggal mawon. 1.7 (penolakan)

Penjual : sing pundi? Sing pundi kulo talini... ajeng ditali nopo mboten? 1.8 (penawaran)

Pembeli : mboten usahlah... lah nek menteke niki?

1.9 (penolakan)

Penjual : menteke patangewu karo lima ngewu.

Pembeli : niki mawon.

**Translation per-word**

- *pinten* : *berapa*  
'how much'
- *niki* : *ini*  
'this'
- *Bu* : *Ibu*  
'Mrs'
- *pitungewu* : *tujuh ribu rupiah*  
'seven thousand rupiah'
- *mawon* : *saja*  
'only'
- *nggehe* : *iya*  
'yes'
- *gari* : *sis*  
'remnant'
- *telu* : *tiga*  
'three'
- *rong poloh* : *dua puluh*  
'twenty'
- *wae* : *saja*  
'only'
- *ngonoh* : *sana*  
'there'
- *lima ngewu* : *lima ribu rupiah*  
'five thousand rupiah'
- *opo* : *apa*  
'what'
- *nemewu* : *enam ribu rupiah*  
'six thousand rupiah'
- *ajeng* : *mau*  
'want'
- *mendet* : *ambil*  
'take'
- *sedanten* : *satu tandan pisang*  
'a hand of bananas'
- *mboten* : *tidak*  
'no'
- *setunggal* : *satu*  
'one'
- *sing* : *yang*  
'that'
- *pundi* : *mana*  
'which'
- *kulo* : *saya*  
'I'
- *talini* : *tali*



- nek : kalau
  - mentek : pisang muli
  - patangewu : empat ribu rupiah
- 'rope'
- 'if'
- 'muli bananas'
- 'four thousand rupiah'

### Translation in Indonesian

#### Data 3 (pedagang pisang) (Bananas Seller)

Pembeli : harga/ pisang/ ini/ berapa,/ Bu?

Buyer : price/ banana/ this/ how much/ Mrs

Buyer : 'How much the price of these bananas Mam?'

Penjual : tujuh/ ribu/ rupiah/ saja

Seller : seven/ thousand/ rupiah/ only

Seller : 'Only seven thousand rupiah'

Pembeli : berapa/? Tujuh/ ribu/ rupiah?

Buyer : how much/ seven/ thousand/ rupiah

Buyer : 'How much? Seven thousand rupiah?'

Penjual : iya,/ sisa/ tiga,/ dua /puluh /ribu/ rupiah/ saja 1.1 (penawaran)

Seller : yes/ remnant/ three/ two/ tens/thousand/ rupiah/ only (bargaining)

Seller : 'Yes, it's only three left for just twenty thousand rupiah'

Pembeli : saya/ kira/ lima /ribu/, lima /ribu/ rupiah/ saja/ ya? 1.2 (penolakan)

Buyer : I/ think/five/ thousand/ five/ thousand/ rupiah/ only/ yes (declining)

Buyer : 'I thought five thousand, just five thousand rupiah, Yes?'

(penawaran)

(bargaining)

Penjual : apa?

1.3 (penolakan)

Seller : 'What?'

(declining)

Pembeli : lima/ ribu/ rupiah/ saja/ ya..

1.4 (penawaran)

Buyer : five/ thousand/ rupiah/ only/ yes

(bargaining)

Buyer : 'Just five thousand rupiah, Yes?'

Penjual : enam/ ribu/ rupiah/ saja,/ harga/ pas.

1.5 (penolakan)

Seller : six/ thousand/ rupiah/ only/ price/ exact

(declining)

Seller : 'Just six thousand rupiah, the exact price'

Penjual : mau/ ambil/ satu/ tandan/ Bu?

1.6 (penawaran)

Seller : want/ take/ one/ a hand/ Mrs

(bargaining)

Seller : 'Do you want to take a hand Mam?'

Pembeli : tidak,/ satu /saja

1.7 (penolakan)

Buyer : no/one/ only

(declining)

Buyer : 'No, only one'

Penjual : yang/ mana?/ Saya/ ikatkan/.. mau /diikat/ atau/ tidak?

Seller : which/ which/ I/ tie up/ want/ tied up/ or no

Seller : 'Which one? I will tie it up...want to be tied up or not?'

1.8 (penawaran)

(bargaining)

Pembeli : tidak/ perlu/ ... kalau/ pisang muli /ini/ berapa?

1.9 (penolakan)

Buyer : no/ need/..if/ muli bananas/ these/ how much (declining)

Buyer : 'No need to....how much for these muli bananas?'

Penjual : pisang muli/ empat/ ribu/ rupiah/ dan/ lima /ribu/ rupiah

Seller : Muli bananas/ four/ thousand/ rupiah/ and/ five/ thousand/ rupiah

Seller : 'Muli bananas are about four thousand rupiah and five thousand rupiah'

Pembeli : ini/ saja.

Buyer : this/ only

Buyer : 'That's all'

### ***The Realisation of Bargaining and Declining Strategies***

In the data 3 (Bananas Seller), there are five bargaining speech acts and four declining speech acts. The bargaining act in the narrative 1.1 is committed by the addressee. The addressee bargains three hands of bananas for cheaper price. This bargaining is committed explicitly so that the bananas will be sold out soon.

The declining and bargaining in the narrative 1.2 are committed by the speaker. The strategy used by the speaker is to decline by bargaining in request narrative. The speaker requests cheaper price for a hand of bananas so that is the speaker buys all the remain bananas, the price will be even cheaper that the price proposed by the addressee.

The declining in the narrative 1.3 is committed by the addressee. The narrative is delivered in a question. This narrative is the indirect declining strategy and it seems that the addressee does not listen clearly the bargaining proposed by the speaker.

The bargaining act in the narrative 1.4 is committed by the speaker. the speaker bargains the same price as previous bargaining before the declining act of the addressee.

The declining act in the narrative 1.5 is committed by the addressee. The addressee's declining strategy is committed by giving the exact price, that is, by using the word '*pas*' which means 'enough'.

The bargaining in the narrative 1.6 is committed by the addressee. The addressee's bargaining strategy is committed through a question so that the buyer wants to buy a hand of bananas.

The declining in the narrative 1.7 is committed by the speaker. The speaker declines the previous bargaining committed by the addressee. The speaker does not want to buy a hand of bananas but a bunch of bananas.

The bargaining act in the narrative 1.8 is committed by the addressee. The strategy used by the addressee when requesting and bargaining does not work. This strategy refers to the distraction by offering to tie up the bananas which will be bought although the speaker does not finish yet the conversation. This strategy is proposed so that the speaker pays immediately the offered bananas.

The declining in the narrative 1.9 is committed by the speaker. Observed from the previous conversation, the addressee bargains (see the narrative 1.8) to the speaker by using a strategy so that the speaker finishes immediately the transaction and soon pays the proposed price of bananas. However, this strategy is declined and followed by a question. This question delivered by the speaker is to ask the price of *muli* bananas to the addressee. Further, after the addressee answers the question, the speaker finishes immediately the transaction and pays the bananas with the proposed price.

The realisation of bargaining and declining strategies in data 3 can be seen in table 3.

Table 3: The realisation of bargaining and declining strategies in data 3

Data	Strategies
1.1	Bargaining in explicit narrative
1.2	Declining and bargaining in request narrative
1.3	Declining in a question
1.4	Bargaining in request narrative
1.5	Declining stating agreement
1.6	Bargaining in a question
1.7	Declining followed by request
1.8	Bargaining in a question
1.9	Declining followed by a question

### ***The Speech Level of Javanese Language***

The conversation of trading activity in the data 3 is started with the speaker by using the Javanese speech level of *kromo lugu* and *ngoko alus* while the addressee uses the Javanese speech level of *ngoko alus*. "The *kromo* speech level is interpreted as the speech level which shows respect feeling and this speech level indicates the respect feeling of the speaker towards the addressee" (Poedjosoedarmo, 1979:15). "The *ngoko* speech level indicates the intimate social distance between the speaker and the addressee. It proposes that the relationship between both of them is not bounded by respect feeling" (Poedjosoedarmo, 1979:14).

In the beginning of the trading activity conversation, the speaker uses the *kromo lugu* speech level marked by the word 'bu' (Mrs) as the respect expression toward the older addressee. Then, after the bargaining and declining act between the speaker and the addressee, the language used by the speaker becomes varied, that is by using the *ngoko alus* speech level marked by the word *mbok* (Mam), *wae* (only), *lima ngewuan* (five thousand rupiah), and *usahlah* (no need to). Meanwhile, the speech level used by the addressee begins with the use of *kromo lugu* speech level marked by the question *Ajeng menden sedanten nopo bu?* (Do you want to take a hand Mam?) and *Ajeng ditali nopo mboten?* (want to be tied up or not)

The use of the *kromo lugu* and *ngoko alus* speech level in the conversation in data 3 can be assumed that the age of the speaker is younger than the addressee so that the Javanese used by the speaker is more polite. There is another assumption in when bargaining and declining acts happen. The speech level used by the speaker switches to *ngoko alus* which indicates intimate social distance between the speaker and the addressee because the proposed bargaining is declined by the addressee. Meanwhile, when the addressee uses the *kromo lugu* speech level, it is a strategy so that the speaker does not go and further to make the social distance closer and to show respect feeling towards the speaker.

### **CONCLUSION**

From the analysis above, it can be concluded that there are eleven narratives of bargaining strategy and ten narratives of declining strategy committed by the speaker and the addressee when the trading activity occurs. The realisation of the bargaining and declining strategies in the analysis shows the types of narrative in strategy, that is requesting, reasoning, question, confirmation, and agreement narratives. The Javanese speech levels used by the speaker and the addressee in trading activity are *kromo lugu*, *ngoko alus*, and *ngoko lugu*. The use of the Javanese speech level in this research is affected by social factors such as age, setting where the conversations take place, the purpose of the conversations and the intimate level of social distance between the speaker and the addressee. The similarities and the differences of social factors used by the speaker and the addressee can affect the intimate or distant relationship between both of them. This is realized by the speech level used by the speaker and the addressee.

### ***Limitations of the study***

This article studies the Javanese speech level along with the bargaining and declining strategies in trading activity at Sarinongko market of Pringsewu of Lampung province. There are several limitations regarding the topic of the research, that is:

1. This article focuses only on the Javanese speech level along with bargaining and declining strategies at Sarinongko market of Pringsewu of Lampung province. Thus, for the future study, it can focus on the Javanese speech level along with the bargaining and declining strategies at other transmigrants' regions of Javanese speakers as in Pringsewu Regency of Lampung Province.
2. The data taken in this article are the narratives of buyers and sellers at Sarinongko market of Pringsewu of Lampung Province. In this research, buyers are the speakers and sellers are the addressees. The research is studied by using a recording device without involving interview process. Thus, for the future study, the narratives data can be studied with involving interview process to determine the participant's background of age, occupations, how many generations of the speakers, and how long living in the transmigrants' region.
3. This research falls into a sociopragmatic study which includes the Javanese speech level studied from Sociolinguistics point of view along with the bargaining and declining strategies studied from Pragmatics point of view. In the future, this research can be studied from the other perspectives such as phonology and dialectology.

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## TEACHING ENGLISH IN STATE-RUN AND PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOLS IN IRAN: APPROACHES, DESIGNS AND PROCEDURES

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### ABSTRACT

The present study tended to survey English language teaching (ELT) in Iranian contexts of state-run and private language schools in Mashhad, the third biggest city of the country. The comparative study aimed at presenting a microcosm of the state-of-the-art in ELT in Iran by focusing on three major levels of teaching approaches, instructional designers, and pedagogic procedures. Statistical analyses of the teacher questionnaire, taken by 299 teachers in secondary schools (199) and language institute (99), at the level of approaches showed no significant differences in the teachers' behavioral-structural, cognitive-generative, and functional-interactive perspectives in the two locations. However, the data analysis at the level of instructional designs revealed significant differences at the sublevels of educational objectives, error-correction strategies, choice of syllabus, criteria for evaluation of teachers, teaching-learning activities, teacher roles, learner roles, and media use. Despite the similarity of the two contexts in testing techniques and formats, it became clear the two groups significantly differed in their focus on assessing English language (sub)skills. The findings for the procedures showed that more form-focused, mechanical and translation techniques are in vogue in state-run schools, while more interactive-communicative techniques with a focus on the learner engagement and freedom are the prevalent trends in private language institutes.

**KEYWORDS:** Approach, Design, Procedures, Language Institutes, State-run Schools

### INTRODUCTION

Formal instruction of English as a foreign language in Iran begins from junior high schools right after primary education and continues for five years till the end of secondary education. Despite the fact that English is regarded as an undeniable necessity for the country's development in various areas, a host of studies have shown that the post-revolutionary EFL instruction has been unsuccessful in fulfilling the formally stated objectives and learners' communicative needs. (Talebi Nejad & Akbari, 2002; Dahmardeh, 2009; Rajmjoo, 2007; Ostovar, 2006; to name a few). Surprisingly, this unfavorable outcome results in after more than 700 hours of formal instructions in secondary education cycle. The widespread dissatisfaction with the present situation has even prompted the educational planners and authorities to propose another education reform to cope with the deficiency. Pursuing the educational policies formulated by the Ministry of Education and Training (MET), all schools are obliged to use the assigned (EFL) curriculum by the High Council of Education. Discouraged by students' low achievements and inspired by more communicative oriented methodology and curriculum in non-academic centers, some educationalists have leveled criticism at the structurally designed and traditionally sequenced EFL course books in academic centers. (Ansary & Babaii, 2002; Shahedi, 2002; Yarmohammadi, 2002; Amalsaleh, 2004, for example.)

The ELT scenario in non-academic centers is reportedly different. The rationale behind issuing certificate for privately-operated language institutes in the country has been twofold: 1) to assist the formal academic instruction of the second language; and 2) to satisfy the ever growing aspirations and needs of learners for developing more communicative aspects of language as indicated by High Council of Education for Non-Academic Institutions (2010). Compared with the state-run schools, privately-operated language institutes reportedly rely more on communicative methodology and instructional materials and hence more responsive to language needs and compensatory for the deficiency of formal ESL instruction in public schools (Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006; Razmjoo, 2007; Ahmadi, 2005). Another noticeable feature of this private sector is the provision to teach English to learners at primary education levels, which in turn has brought about a warm welcome and support of parents. Local education authorities in Mashhad, the third biggest city of Iran, have recently reported that nearly 40 percent of issued certificates for privately-run academic institutions (173 out of 446) are for establishing language institutes. The increasing rate may imply the learners' desires to learn this major second language of the country for more communicative purposes so that they may better meet the demands of the contemporary brave new world.

Being the situation as such, there seems to be a need for a thorough investigation of the causes of the discrepancy by first identifying the perceptions and views of the main agents of the educational system, that is the teacher and the learner. Tending to move in the same direction, this study was conducted in the third biggest city of Iran at a large scale under the supervision of the Research Bureau of the Ministry of Education in Mashad with the hope to depict a microcosm of ELT in the country.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Along with the changes in second-language education, foreign language education in Iranian context has also witnessed great changes in theory and practice within the last thirty years or so (Farhady, 1995; Ansari & Babaii, 2003; Razmjoo, 2007). The trend in academic and formal settings which favors a more top-down pedagogic theory and practice and a marginalized role for the teacher and a passive role for the learner in formal educational centers has gradually been giving way to newer philosophical perspectives and outlooks. The winds of change have brought with them the need for reconsiderations of traditional, transmissive part teachers used to play by isolating themselves from the realities of the classroom dynamic. Comparatively, the general ELT trend in most parts of the world tends to keep away from method-oriented perspective and proceed toward post-method philosophy. However, the more prevalent concern in the country seems to be more in favor of beyond-method era, where the notion of the best method is seen “misguided and replaced by a search for the ways for the interaction of teacher’s and specialists’ pedagogic perceptions” (Salmani-Nodoushan, 2006, p. 4). The idiosyncratic feature of the method era, the quest for a new method at the expense of rejecting the former methods (Pennycook, 1989), still prevails in some state-run educational centers. According to Pishghadm and Mirzae (2008), the closed system of language education is reminiscence of Paublo Freire’s banking concept of education in the sense that memorization and transfer of knowledge are widely practiced, that teachers have little chance of employing practices on their own volition, and that there is an overindulgence with the test results. According to Kumaravadivelu (2006, p. 59), the post-method era is built around the parameters of particularity (teacher sensitivity to socio-cultural aspects and context-specific features), practicality (encouraging teacher to practice their own theories and theorize from their own practice), and possibility (encouraging social transformation and sense of identity in learners). Pishghadam (2008) further claims that neither practicality nor possibility condition is present for the language teacher to adopt a more post-method perspective under such a condition.

The scenario in private language institutes seems to represent a horse of a different color. The language teacher in the institute seems to be more inclined to adopt a more liberal role by employing more practices of their own choices and responding to the neglected needs of the learners, that is the more communicative aspects of language proficiency. Assuming a communicative role for language, most teachers in language institutes experience less strict control over the syllabuses of their choice and integration of Communicative Language Teaching into the design of their instructional endeavors. The changes in EFL theory and practice, according to Richards and Rogers (2001), may be analyzed with respect to three levels of conceptualizations, namely, language theories, learning theories and the pedagogical needs of the learners. The same authors further announce that the

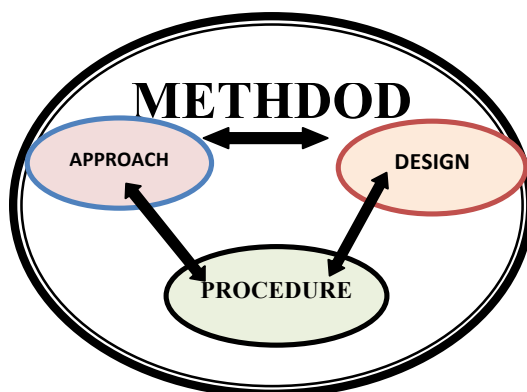


Figure 1: Richards and Rogers' model for language teaching methodology  
(taken from Jack C. Richards' *The Context of Language Teaching*, p.18)



conceptualization model has been proved useful in tracing the causes for emergence and declines of language teaching methods. To spot the apparent disparities of language education in the two contexts and to depict a microcosm of the state of ELT in Iran, this model also seems demographically and pedagogically to serve the purpose behind this study. Richards and Rogers's model(2001) inspects pedagogical features at three levels of approach, design and procedure. The authors (2001) state that, "a method is theoretically related to an approach, is organizationally determined by a design, and is practically realized in procedure" (p. 20). The framework is not without its critics, though. Kumaravadivelu (2008) regarded it an improvement over Anthony's model, but blurry in isolating the boundary between approach and design (p. 87).

Showing the interrelations among components, the model (Figure 1) illustrates that the views about language and learning will be dealt with at the approach level. Moreover, the instructional objective, syllabus types, teaching-learning activities, evaluation, the roles of teacher, learner, mother tongue, and instructional materials will be analyzed at the design level. And finally, moment-to-moment activities and practices in the classroom will be examined at the level of procedure.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Having reviewed the theoretical background and trends in Iranian context, the researcher formulated three major research questions to compare the state of ELT in state-run schools and private language institutes.

1. What are the differences between state-run and private language schools in EFL teaching at the level of approach?
2. What are the differences between state-run and private language schools in EFL teaching with respect to instructional design features?
3. How are the state-run and private language schools different in terms of observed EEFL teaching practices?

Taking the sublevels of the major components in the model into account, the overall research questions after further detailing would actually turn out to be eleven.

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Participants*

A total of 299 EFL teachers from secondary schools (199) and language institutes (100) were selected by applying cluster sampling techniques to take part in this study. Table 1 shows the demographic distribution of participants in numbers and percentage. The second group of participants were 897 ESL learners, that is, 300 (%34) from language institutes and 597 (%66) from the schools. They were randomly selected from among the students of the teachers who had already participated in the study by filling the teacher questionnaire.

*Table 1: Distribution of ESL teachers by sex, academic degree, experience, and age*

Features	Sex		Degree			Experience (Years)				Age Range			
	F	M	AD/ Stu	BA	MA/ ph.D	1-5	6-10	11-15	Above 16	20-25	26-30	31-35	Above 36
<b>F</b>	187	112	58	215	26	77	81	68	73	83	86	82	48
<b>P</b>	63%	37%	19%	71%	8%	25%	27%	22%	24%	28%	29%	27%	16%

#### *Instrumentation*

The study measures consisted of two questionnaires designed by the researcher and reviewed by two other researchers and piloted before actual investigation. The Teacher Questionnaire (TQ) had 75 Licker-scaled items and was to survey attitudes, and opinions at the levels of approach, and design. The first 12 items surveyed teachers' views on language and learning theories of structural-behavioral (SBT), generative-cognitive (GCT), and functional-interactive (FIT). The remaining 63 items were to measure opinions on syllabus types, instructional objectives, error correction, appraisal of teacher performance, teaching-learning activities, roles of teacher, learners, and



instructional materials/media, and finally student evaluation at the design level. The overall Cronbach's reliability value ( $r=0.89$ ) for the questionnaire was high and for the other levels, the values were acceptable to high, as shown in Table 2. The Learner Questionnaire (LQ) consisted of 20 items on the likert scale and intended to determine frequently used techniques and activities in schools and language institutes. The Cronbach's alpha for this questionnaire turned out to be 0.72.

Table 2: Cronbach's alpha for (sub)levels of teacher questionnaire

Overall Reliability		Sublevels of Approach						Instructional Design Level	
		SBT		GCT		FIT			
A	No. of items	$\alpha$	No. of items	A	No. of items	A	No. of items	$\alpha$	No. of items
<b>0.89</b>	75	<b>0.68</b>	4	<b>0.61</b>	4	<b>0.44</b>	4	<b>0.90</b>	63

### Procedure

The study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, the TQ was administered to the selected teachers in their own respective groups as they could preview the items, ask for clarifications and more time if necessary. In the second phase, a select number of learners whose teachers had taken the TQ were randomly asked to fill in the SQ. Only three students (sometimes four or five to compensate for not fully completed forms) from each class were required to do so.

### Data Analysis

To compare the groups, the measures of central tendency as well as dispersion were calculated and put to statistical tests of significance. To estimate the reliability values for the measures Cronbach's alpha was used and to ascertain the significance of differences based on test of normality, non-parametric techniques (skewness and kurtosis values or Klomogorov-Smirnov statistic) were used. Mann-Whitney U Test was employed for the distributions violating the assumption of normality and independent t-tests were used in case normality assumption was established.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### A. Approach Level.

*Functional-Interactive Approach (FIA)*. The results of normal t-test for comparing the group means in schools and language institutes ( $t=2.00$ ,  $df$  297) showed no meaningful difference between them at FIA sublevel ( $\alpha= 0.46$  and  $p<0.05$ ). So no confirmation was made of the study hypothesis which predicted a difference.

*Generative-Cognitive Approach (GCA)*. The results of independent t-test for this level of approach which assessed their views on generative-cognitive perspective ( $t=-0.49$ ,  $df$  297) once again showed no significant difference in the means ( $\alpha= 0.61$  and  $p<0.05$ ).

*Behavioral-structural Approach (BSA)*. For this level, the t-test again showed no meaningful difference of the means for teachers' views in the two places ( $t=-0.26$ ,  $df$  297 and  $\alpha= 0.79$  while  $p<0.05$ ). The results for analysis at the approach level are tabulated in Table 3.

Table 3: T-test results for the groups at approach sublevels

APPROACH	t-value	df.	2-tailed sig.
FIA	2.00	297	0.46
GCA	0.49	297	0.61
BSA	0.27	297	0.79
P<0.05			

No meaningful difference could be detected at the approach level which underlies theoretical notions about language and language learning. This is contrary to Richards and Rogers' model which assigns a determining role for approach in content selection, objectives and overall features of instructional design (in Kumaravadivelu 2006, p.86). In other words, the teacher's notions and convictions on what language and learning are could specify his/her subsequent behavior and preferences in teaching-learning situation. The study revealed that opposite to institute

teachers, secondary school teachers employ interactive-communicative activities less frequently despite of sharing notions with their associates in institutes on the nature of learning and language. Therefore, the driving force for EFL teachers to instruct communicatively or otherwise may be more affected by external and environmental factors rather than by internal and thoughts. More specifically, to be communicative demands both theoretical as well as pragmatic considerations if it is going to be down-to-earth and practical. In secondary school contexts teachers may be willing to resort to alternative teaching approaches and procedures, however, the textbook, social context, and preconceptions of learners might be preventing or limiting variables for them to take place in the classroom.

### B. Instructional Design Level

*Syllabus Types.* The syllabuses were classified into three major types of lexico-grammatical (LGS), student-generated (SGS), and functional-communicative (FCS). Because of violation of the normality assumption, Mann-Whitney U Test was employed for comparing the means. Table 4 and Figure 2 show the Z-values for sublevels of LGS ( $z=-10.00$ ), SGS ( $z=-12.64$ ), and FCS ( $z=-5.25$ ),

Table 4: Results of Mann-Whitney U Test for the types of syllabus in the groups

	SGS	FCS	LGS
Mann-Whitney U	6315/5	1066	2922
Wilcoxon W	26215/5	20966	7972
<b>Z</b>	5/252	12/649	10/005
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>	<b>.000</b>
<b>Effect Size</b>	<b>0.30</b>	<b>0.73</b>	<b>0.57</b>

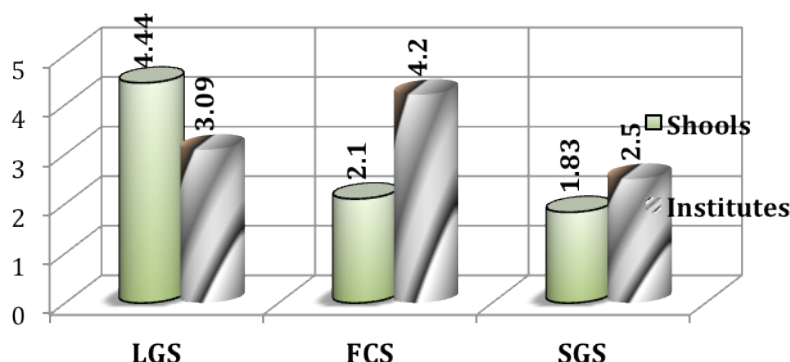


Figure 2: Comparison of means for the syllabus types for the groups

while  $p=0.000$  and this meant that the alternative hypothesis was supported. This finding justified the prediction in the study which claimed for differences in the types of syllabus in state-run and language schools. The effect sizes for LGS ( $r=0.57$ ) and FCS ( $0.73$ ), based on Cohen (1988) criteria, were large while the value for SGS ( $0.30$ ) was significant, but small.

*Instructional Objectives.* Results of Mann-Whitney U Test for instructional objectives, as shown in Table 5, indicated the teachers pursued different ESL instructional objectives in state-run schools and language institutes. The effect size was large ( $r=0.62$ ) and greater than the criterion value for the large effect criterion. So the study hypothesis which predicted a difference of objectives was confirmed.

*Error Correction.* Statistical analyses showed a significant difference of error correction strategy in teachers in schools ( $Md=3.7$ ,  $n=299$ ) and institutes ( $Md=4.14$ ,  $n=100$ ). The size effect was  $0.37$  and the alternative hypothesis which forecast significant differences for error correction strategy by teachers was again supported. See Table 5 for details.

Table 5: Results of Mann-Whitney U Test and effect sizes for instructional design sublevels for the groups

Variables	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z-values	Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect Size
<b>Instructional objectives</b>	2386	22286	-10.75	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.62</b>
<b>Error Correction Strategy</b>	5409.5	25309.5	-6.46	<b>0.000</b>	0.37
<b>Teacher Performance Appraisal</b>	6002.5	25902.5	-5.61	<b>0.000</b>	0.37

*Teacher Performance Appraisal.* Mann-Whitney U Test for the data concerning teacher appraisal (Table 5) showed a meaningful difference in the evaluation procedure and criteria in schools (Md=3.20, n=299) and institutes (Md=3.60, n=100) as the probability value (p) was less than 0.05. This difference was already anticipated in the study and confirmed through statistical analyses.

*Teaching-Learning Activities.* The anticipated difference in the types of instructional activities in academic and non-academic centers could again be detected and confirmed. The effect size for this variable ( $r=0.64$ ) was greater than the criterion value ( $r=0.5$ ). Therefore, there were great differences in teaching activities in the two educational locations.

*Roles of Instructional Materials.* Statistics for this level of instructional materials (Table 6) statistically justified the rejection of null hypothesis ( $p=0.000 < 0.05$ ) and confirmation of the study hypothesis. So teachers in state-run schools (Md=2.62, n=299) and teachers in language institutes (Md=3.75, n=100) used different forms of teaching materials and media.

Table 6: Results of Mann-Whitney U Test and effect sizes for roles of instructional materials, teacher, and learners for the two groups of teachers

Variables	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z-values	Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)	Effect Size
<b>Teacher Roles</b>	2137	22037	<b>-11.10</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.64</b>
<b>Learner Roles</b>	3359.5	23259.5	<b>-9.37</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.54</b>
<b>Roles of Instructional materials</b>	1221.5	21121.5	<b>-12.39</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.64</b>

*Roles of Teacher and Learners.* Analysis of data for the roles the teachers and students play in learning situations demanded Mann-Whitney U Test. The results indicated significant differences in roles for both teachers and learners in the two learning contexts. As for teacher roles in schools (Md=3.20, n=299) and language institutes (Md=4.40, n=100) the effect size was rather great,  $r=0.64$ . Similarly, the results for learner roles in state-run schools (Md=2.83, n=299) and language institutes (Md=3.66, n=100) showed meaningful and significant differences with a great effect size, i.e.  $r=0.54$ . See Table 6 for detailed statistics.

*Students Assessment.* The items for this level were to assess test genres and test techniques. Klotz-Smirnov test for test techniques proved to be positive, so an independent t-test was employed to compare the means. As shown in Table 7, the t-value observed for the groups is 1.48 (df=297) and t-value in the Sig.(2-tailed) is 0.13 (greater than 0.05), so there is no significant difference between the two groups and the observed difference is due to error of measurement. Thus, the hypothesis, claiming for a difference in the test techniques for evaluating learners in the two locations was rejected.

For the test genres, the normality test did not show normality of distribution, so Mann-Whitney U Test clarified school teachers (Md=2.79, n=299) and institute teachers (Md=4.50, n=100) used different testing approaches and test types to assess language skills and components. The effect size and other statistics are as follows  $r=0.71$ ,  $U=1246$ ,  $Z=-12.386$ , and  $p=0.000$  and Figure 4 represents the means of the groups for test techniques and types.

Table 7: Independent t-test for the groups at the sublevel of testing techniques

		Equal variances assumed
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	F	.438
	Sig.	.509
t-test for Equality of Means	T	<b>1.48</b>
Degree of freedom		<b>297</b>
Sig. (2-tailed)		<b>0.13</b>

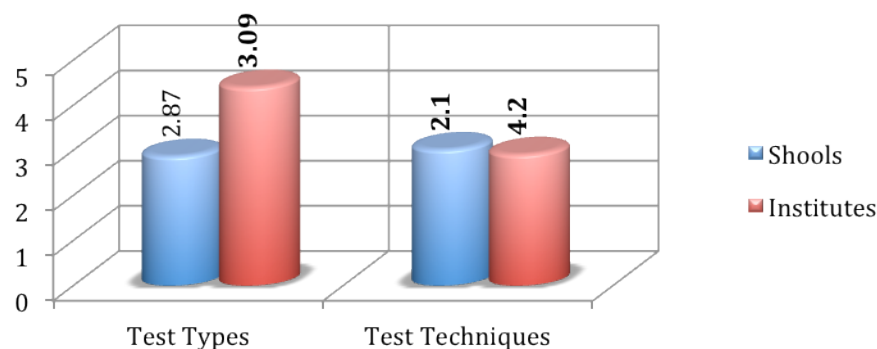


Figure 3: Bar graphs for the test types and techniques in the groups

At design level teachers in language institutes relied more heavily on analytic, communicative syllabi while teachers in schools were obliged to use the same lexico-grammatical syllabus by MET. In neither context, learner-generated syllabi are utilized. Razmjoo (2009), and Ostovar (2009) also have reported similar results in their studies on ESL textbooks in Iran. The instructional objectives in public schools revolve around developing structural accuracy and ultimately reading comprehension while in non-academic centers developing ESL accuracy along with fluency are the goals. The errors are also treated differently and the teacher's strategy varies based on the distinguishable educational objectives prevailing in the two centers. In schools, grammatical errors are more important and hence corrected frequently while in institutes correction is not limited to errors of structure per se.

Business-wise the atmosphere in non-academic centers is more competitive and hence more strict measures for teacher evaluation are required. Direct observations of teachers in classrooms, distributing opinion surveys and forms to get learners / parents views and teacher's performance in training classes are the standards by which to appraise teacher performance in institutes. Evaluation of teachers in public schools is more subjective, without direct observations or opinion surveys and questionnaires. As for teaching-learning activities, they differ considerably in frequency and variety. In public schools activities tend to be more traditional, relying on translation techniques, memorization of grammar rules and lexis, and repetition drills. In contrast, in language institutes activities are more communicative with a focus on cooperation, interaction, simulation, and role-play.

The roles of learner and teachers may be defined in terms of their degree of control over content, and patterns of groupings, their impact on the learning of others, and their function and status (Richards and Rogers2001). Classes in public schools are predominantly teacher-fronted, contrary to the language institutes where greater degrees of control over content, grouping patterns, and overall learning roles can be detected for the learners. In neither schools nor institutes could we see self-monitoring or self-evaluation being implemented and practiced. Technologically, academic centers are more equipped than language institutes but ESL school teachers benefit from the aids and media available less frequently than their counterparts in institutes where fewer teaching aids are available. The online and computerized technology are used sporadically and infrequently in both locations. Concerning ESL assessment, teachers give tests with similar formats and the noticeable dissimilarity can be traced in translation and reading aloud as frequent techniques in public schools. Teachers in institutes give more contextualized, semi-communicative tests of listening, speaking, and writing, the neglected skills in formal ESL education in the country.

### C. Teaching Procedure Level

The Klomogorov-Smirnov test as well as the histograms of distributions for the level of procedures indicated that the distribution was not normal. Therefore, the results of Mann-Whitney U Test showed that from the learners' perspective techniques employed by teachers in formal school contexts (Md=2.200) were statistically and significantly different from those of teachers in language institutes (Md=2.90). See Table 8 for detailed statistics. The effect size for the difference turned out to be the highest of all ( $r=0.8$ ) which was indicative of sharp disparity of the groups at this level of comparison. The other statistics for procedure were  $u=1646$ , and  $Z=-24.10$  and this provided the support for the alternative hypothesis of the study which argued for differences between the two locations at the level of techniques and procedures.

*Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for the level of Procedure*

Location	Md	$\bar{X}$	SD
Schools	2.20	2.22	0.18
Institutes	2.90	2.92	0.25
Total	2.35	2.45	0.39

It was possible to categorize the techniques into 1) mechanical-traditional types(MTT) and 2) interactive-communicative types(ICT). Statistical analyses revealed that teaching techniques in non-academic centers were more interactive-communicative while in academic centers they were more mechanical-traditional techniques. As shown in Table 9 and illustrated in Figure 4, the effect size for this meaningful difference in mechanical-traditional is so great ( $r=0.81$ ) and for the interactive-communicative techniques, the effect size is above medium ( $r=0.46$ ).

*Table 9: Results of Mann-Whitney U Test for Types of Techniques*

Techniques & Procedure	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z-values	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
ICT	42.50	178545.5	-24.50	.000
MTT	38515.5	83665.5	-14.04	.000

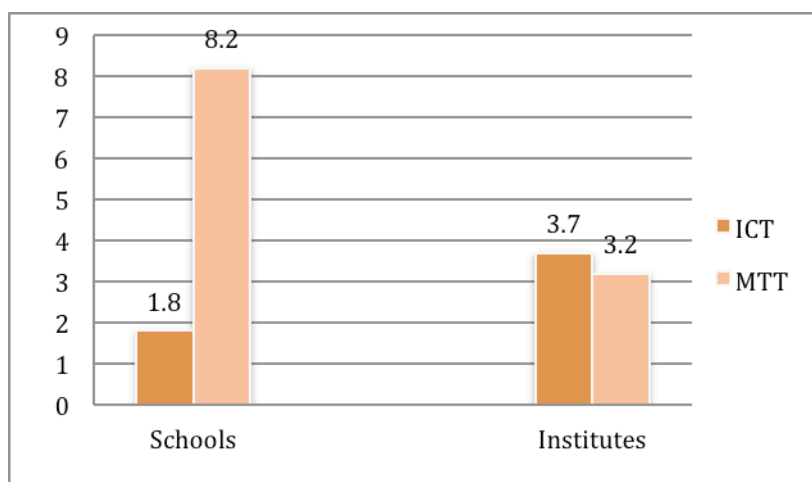


Figure 5: Bar graphs for ICT and MTT in Schools and Institutes

Concerning the last level of analysis, techniques and procedure were considerably and significantly different. Reading aloud mostly by the teacher, translation into L1, mechanical drills, memorization of rules and vocabulary out of context are typical techniques in public school classes. In language institutes, however, pair-work and group-work rather than individual practice, situational teaching instead of deductive explanations, creating a stress-free social context through attending to learners feelings and employing games and role-plays, interactive question-and-answer techniques, and teaching ESL culture predominate ESL learning context. The reason for this great difference may be explained in the light of the problems associated with formally assigned textbooks for not allowing for applying more communicative ESL teaching designs.

## CONCLUSION

The comparative study of views of EFL teachers and learners in schools and language institutes in Mashad, the third biggest city of Iran, at the three levels of teaching approaches, instructional designs, and procedures showed great changes at two of the three-layered levels of analysis. It became evident that EFL teachers regardless of their formal and informal teaching locations have a preference for more functional-interactive approaches to language instruction. More specifically, teachers in both settings do not differ significantly in terms of notions on adopting structural-behavioral, generative-cognitive, or functional-interactive positions. This finding can imply that Iranian teachers of English are moving away from method-based tradition towards beyond-method position where there is a demand for incorporation of teacher's and specialists' pedagogic perceptions.

The differences at the design levels were so noticeable and could be traced at all sublevels of the instructional design, implying the need for some modifications in the educational design of ELT in the country. More specifically, there seems to be the need for designing a more communicative-based syllabus, reconsiderations of objectives of a EFL, redefinitions of the roles of teachers and learners, incorporations of more learner-centered teaching activities and practices. Changes in perspectives at the design level of education would naturally bring about incorporation of newer assessment approaches and techniques to meet the new educational demands as well.

Finally, the reliance on more form-focused practices in academic locations and more interactive tasks and practices in informal non-academic language classes may be perceived as a natural consequence of the differences at the level of design. Modifications of the educational design can give way to more interactive teaching techniques and tasks in keeping with the communicative needs of the learners and the expectations of the teachers. Obviously, these changes can be by themselves motivating enough to enhance performances of both EFL learners and teachers in both academic and non-academic language-learning schools and institutions.

### *Some implications*

The study has some implications for language teachers and language planners. The similarity of views at the approach level can imply that the situation is ripe for radical changes in the theory and practice of ELT. Teacher cognition is believed to be a determining factor for realization of pedagogic objectives and the study indicated that teachers in both locations are ready for assuming new roles and responding to the needs of the community, that is developing communicative language proficiency in the learners. The implication for the language planners and policy makers on language education might be the need to reconsider both the objectives of English instruction programs in the national curriculum as well as the role the English language can play in educational system. More realistic objective today can be developing both oral and written language ability to satisfy the communicative needs of the learners. To achieve these, they need to make changes at the design level and more specifically replace the present syllabus with a more interactive-communicative materials and course-books.

### ***Limitations of the study***

The study is not without its own limitations. The present study heavily relied on questionnaires as the major research tool for gathering data and hence was quantitative in nature. A mixed-method research design that incorporates qualitative means of data collection as well may prove helpful in revealing teacher's beliefs and cognition; however, the large number of participants made it difficult to employ an interview in addition to the questionnaires for further transparency of views and cross-sectional evaluation of views or analysis of data. Another limitation of the study caused by the large sample size is the fact that neither proficiency levels nor gender was taken into account in the study design; hence, their probable effects as moderator variables remained unspecified. Finally, inspecting the differences at the level of instructional procedure would yield more naturalistic results when direct observations are made of the teachers in classroom. Once again, indirect means of questionnaire was used in the study for this purpose.

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ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE  
AND IDENTITY PROCESSING STYLES OF THE IRANIAN  
ADVANCED EFL LEARNERS

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**ABSTRACT**

Communication is the most prominent function of language. In order to learn and acquire a new language, the learner must demonstrate willingness to communicate (WTC) in that language. Such willingness can be altered based on the image that each individual has in his/her mind of who he/she really is. This study tries to investigate the relationship between WTC and identity processing styles among advanced English as a foreign language (EFL) Iranian learners. It assessed the WTC and identity processing styles of 345 advanced EFL Iranian learners by using the questionnaires. The results underline that the best identity type that can act as a predictor of WTC among Advanced Iranian EFL learners was the informational identity processing style. Additionally, the result of multiple regressions indicates that identity style subscales could explain 77% of variance in WTC. This study can encourage the integration of identity and WTC surveys into EFL educational settings to identify processing styles and WTC of EFL learners while determining their weaknesses and strengths regarding speaking, reading, writing, and comprehending a second language.

**KEYWORDS:** identity processing style, second language learning, willingness to communicate

**INTRODUCTION**

Communication is the most prominent function of language which has been accentuated since the 1970s (Reese & Overton, 1970). Dörnyei (2003) claims that communicative competence is found to be necessary to conduct efficient communication but it is not sufficient. In fact, language learners are expected not only to have sufficient linguistic knowledge, but also to possess a good command over this knowledge to put it into practice for efficient communication to take place. McCroskey and Richmond (1987) affirm that there is an ability which is necessary for effective communication to take place. They propose that individuals possess the ability through which they are able to competently express themselves and negotiate meaning. They label such a trait as WTC.

Recently, WTC in a second language has been widely studied (e.g., MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1998; Yashima, 2002; Peng, 2006; MacIntyre, 2007; Cao, 2011; Ghonsooly, Khajavy, & Asadpour, 2012). Cao (2011) traces the origins of WTC to early discussions in the field of L1 communication in which WTC was considered to be a personality-based, trait-like predisposition. He defines WTC as a relatively new individual difference variable in the field of second language acquisition that entails an intention to initiate a communicative behavior which is often predictive of actual behavior. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998) WTC in a second language is “a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using L2” (p. 457). This may imply that WTC as a newly developing concept does not deal with communication process but virtually explicates the individual differences in L1 and L2 communication in terms of the level of desire to communicate (Okayama, Nakanishi, Kuwabara, & Sasaki, 2006; Yashima, 2002). In this perspective, each individual who has a high level of WTC can enjoy what is stored in his/her communicative competence to communicate or use a second language.

Recently, many researchers have investigated the relationship between WTC and different variables such as, second language perceived competence, motivation, and anxiety in terms of acquiring a second language (MacIntyre, Baker, Clément, & Donovan, 2003), teacher support (Wen & Clément, 2003), writing ability (Wang, 2004), online chat (Freiermuth & Jarrell, 2006), integrative motivation (Peng, 2006), students' attitude towards the international community and their perceived linguistic self-confidence (Çetinkaya, 2007), students' perception of speaking activities in the foreign language classroom (Leger & Storch, 2009), second language perceived competence as a predictor of WTC (Yu, 2009), and nationality (Kamprasertwong, 2010). Despite the significance of the probable effect of the identity style on students' WTC in educational settings, there seems to be a major lack of studies which have specifically focused on the relationship between learners' WTC and their identity processing styles. The present study can be considered as one of the first steps towards filling this gap. The authors initially discuss the relationship between WTC and language learning. They further explain how identity and language are related. Then, they show how quantitative methods were used to evaluate and analyzed learners' WTC and their identity processing styles. They discuss implications and limitations of the study. Finally, suggestions for future research, as well as conclusions, are presented.

## RELATED LITERATURE

### *WTC and Language Learning*

The concept of WTC was first introduced by McCroskey and Richmond in 1985 while the effectiveness of WTC in the field of second language learning was proposed by MacIntyre et al. (1998). They believe that WTC is something that is related and limited to certain occasions and situations rather than being a characteristic (MacIntyre et al., 1998). There has been an increasing amount of literature on WTC. For instance, Wang (2004) identifies WTC and writing ability as two variables that are positively correlated. In another study conducted among different groups of Thai and Dutch learners of English, nationality was found to be an affective factor in determining the learners' different levels of WTC (Kamprasertwong, 2010). Freiermuth and Jarrell (2006) argue that an online chat can lead to higher levels of WTC by creating a pleasant atmosphere for communication. Peng (2007) refers to integrative motivation as the most important predictor of WTC in a second language. Çetinkaya (2007) indicates that learners' attitude towards the international community and their perceived linguistic self-confidence may affect their WTC. Leger and Storch's study (2009) show that both students' self-confidence and WTC are likely to increase over time. However, other variables such as group size, familiarity with interlocutor(s), interlocutor(s)' participation, familiarity with topics under discussion, self- confidence, medium of communication and cultural background were also found to affect the learners' WTC level (Cao & Philip, 2006).

Clement and MacIntyre (2003) believe that WTC in a second language was affected by the interaction between L2 confidence and L2 norms within the context of intergroup communication. Hence, in situations where a proficient learner is unwilling to communicate, high motivation for learning and high anxiety about communicating may appear to have a direct influence on L2 use (MacIntyre, 2007). In another study, MacIntyre et al. (2001) examine the role of social support and language learning orientations on students' WTC in a second language. The results show that social support particularly from friends can significantly influence WTC outside the classroom but it plays less important role in the classroom context. On the contrary, a more recent study reveals that students enjoy a higher level of WTC while they receive more social support from the teacher inside the classroom (Aleml, Daftarifard, & Pashmforoosh, 2011).

Moreover, Baker and MacIntyre (2000) highlight the nonlinguistic outcomes of two distinct groups of French students enrolled in immersion and non-immersion program. A strong correlation was found between perceived competence and WTC among the non-immersion group, while a correlation between anxiety about communicating and WTC was significantly high among the immersion group. Recently, Sharkawi (2013) believes that lack of investment in a second language or unwillingness to communicate in L2 classrooms could originate from a shift in learners' language identity. In the following section we discuss the relationship between identity and language.

### *Identity and Language Learning*

#### *Identity Definition*

The origin of identity formation goes back to Erikson, the father of psychosocial development. He defines identity as "terms that seem inevitably to spin in elliptical orbits around any attempt to conceptualize human beings" (Erikson, 1968, p. 9). Fraser-Thill (2011) refers to identity as a person's characteristics which make him/her an individual. It means that each person needs to understand not only his/her needs but also his/her preferences, characteristics,

weaknesses and strengths. In the social sciences, identity is one of underlying constructs of the human mind universally studied (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Côté, 2006). Kroger (2007) claims that identity is a powerful construct which guides life paths and decisions. Recently, more academic definitions are offered by other researchers in which identity refers to diverse concepts such as people's internal meaning systems (Schwartz, 2001), characteristics and attachments conferred through group memberships (Brown, 2000), social-historical currents in belief systems (Burkitt, 2004), positions taken in conversations (Bamberg, 2006), and nationalism (Schildkraut, 2007). Although these definitions have emphasized on different and diverse concepts, they all emphasize the importance of achieving a solid sense of identity as a product which requires a dynamic self-driven process (Marcia, 1980).

### *Different Types of Identity*

To understand the nature and structure of identity, researchers have classified it into different categories, though most have a great deal of common ground. Erikson (1968) considers identity formation as a recurrent interaction between self-awareness and contextual variables which is mainly noticeable in adolescence and might last to midlife. He refers to identity as one of the major developmental challenges that adolescent and young adults must negotiate. According to Berzonsky (1989), Erikson's identity definition lacks operational specificity, so it is difficult to generate and test it completely. This complexity has led most researchers to use Marcia's identity-status paradigm (1966) rather than Erikson's (1982) identity formation process.

Marcia's model (1966) identity is classified into four distinct steps: achievement, moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion. An identity achievement or a true sense of identity refers to individuals who have already achieved a steady identity status after exploring their alternatives. Moratoriums refer to individuals who have examined their options but have not decided to commit to a specific status. Although, moratorium period may seem confusing and difficult to tolerate, many psychologists find it essential before forming an identity achievement. The next step is a foreclosure identity which refers to individuals who think they know who they are while they haven't explored their ideas yet. In fact, they try to imitate identity achievement but it is not a true sense of identity. For example, they may simply adopt their parents, close relatives, or admire friends' identity without exploring other options actively. The final step includes a diffusion identity which refers to individuals who neither have explored their alternatives nor are willing to commit to a received identity from an external part. They are overwhelmed in the lengthy process of identity formation. Comparing different types of identity, teenagers and children are often in a state of identity diffusion in different aspects such as religious, occupation, or culture (Fraser-Thill, 2011)

In a later attempt to classify identity, Berzonsky (1988) introduces three identity styles: informational, normative, and diffuse/avoidant to integrate a cognitive perspective layer to the research on identity status. Individuals using an informational style would tend to apply an active problem-solving approach to identity relevant information. They seem to be good decision makers because of having more hangers about self-exploration. This group would be categorized into Marcia's achievement or moratorium status. Individuals using a normative style would tend to internalize social norms that are valued by significant others. Such identity types extremely follow the norms which, in most cases, are not their own. These individuals resort to what others determine for them; they are typically in the foreclosure status. Finally, a diffuse/avoidant style is a group of individuals who completely avoid placing themselves in situations in which they are forced to make a decision. Using a diffuse/avoidant identity orientation has been found to be positively associated with avoidant coping, self-handicapping, other-directedness, and maladaptive decisional strategies, while being negatively correlated with self-reflection, conscientiousness, and cognitive persistence (Dollinger, 1995; Berzonsky & Ferrari, 1996).

### *Identity and Language*

In education, the topic of language identity has been thoroughly researched in second language acquisition since 1980s (Sharkawi, 2013). Knafo and Shwartz (2004) investigate the relationship between identity processing styles and parent child value congruence in adolescence. Their main question was if identity exploration and commitment are related to accuracy of perception and acceptance of parental values. Participants in the two high commitment statuses, achievement and foreclosure, were found to be more accepting of the values they perceived their parents to hold. While the four identity statuses were found not to differ in the level of parent child value congruence. Another study investigates the relationships between computer use, identity processing styles, and self-esteem of black and white females in their early adulthood (Mullis, Mullis, & Cornille, 2007). The results show significant differences between black and white females in accordance with their identity processing styles and problematic use of the

Internet and self-esteem. Moreover, Kaplan and Flum (2009) investigate the joint underlying theoretical assumptions of academic motivation, achievement goal theory, and identity processing styles. They argue that definitions of achievement goal orientations and identity processing styles work in harmony as our mental interpretive guide in different situations. They also highlight the probable reciprocal relations between adolescents' academic achievement goal orientations and identity processing styles.

In spite of the importance of identity style on learners' WTC in educational settings, there is lack of research on the relationship between learners' WTC and their identity processing styles. This study tries to investigate the relationship between WTC and identity processing styles among advanced EFL learners. The research questions are as follows:

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Is there any significant relationship between WTC and identity processing styles of the Iranian Advanced EFL learners?
2. Which one of identity processing styles is the best predictor of the WTC?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

Participants were 345 Iranian advanced EFL learners consisting of 205 female (59%) and 140 male (41%). They were undergraduate students with an age range of 18-29 who took part in the research voluntarily. All of them spoke English as a second language and their major was English translation and English literature. The research was conducted in the first semester of 2013.

### *Instruments*

In this study, two types of questionnaires were applied: WTC inside the classroom developed by MacIntyre et al. (2001) and the Revised Identity Style Inventory (ISI-4) developed by Berzonsky et al. (2011). The Cronbach alpha reliability used for checking the internal consistency was .90 and .70 respectively which is considered to be an acceptable index (Pallant, 2007). The main rationale behind choosing the questionnaires was that they not only match the purpose of the study but also are the most comprehensive scales covered all aspects of communication included all skills learners need to acquire.

The WTC questionnaire included 27 items ranging from 1 to 5 (almost never willing- almost always willing). Participants were asked to indicate how much they are willing to communicate in class tasks centering on all four language skills: speaking (item 1-8), reading (item 9-14), writing (item 15-22), and comprehension (23-27). According to MacIntyre et al. (2001), the questionnaire is valid and reliable based on the following measures: speaking ( $\alpha = .79$ ), reading ( $\alpha = .80$ ), writing ( $\alpha = .82$ ), and comprehension ( $\alpha = .81$ ).

The Revised ISI consisted of 24 items ranging from 1-5 (not at all like me- very much like me) to describe three types of identity: informational style (7 items), normative style (8 items), and diffuse-avoidant style (9 items) (Berzonsky et al., 2011). Since the commitment style has no place in this study, the related items were not included in the administration and the analysis.

### *Data Collection Procedure*

Having been granted the permission by university authorities, the researchers coded the questionnaires and distributed them among Advanced EFL learners in different universities. Before distributing the questionnaires, the researchers briefly informed the participants of the objective and possible implications of the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to investigate if there is any significant relationship between WTC and identity processing styles of the Iranian Advanced EFL learners, Pearson correlations were applied. Moreover, stepwise regression statistics was applied to determine which identity processing style is the best predictor of the WTC. In this study, SPSS version 19 was used to analyze the data.

As shown in Table 1, the overall results of the correlational analysis reveal a positive and strong relationship between identity processing styles and WTC of the learners, with a coefficient of  $r = 0.175$ , which is significant at  $p < .001$ .

Table 1: Correlational Analysis of Identity and WTC

		Identity total	WTC total
Identity total	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.175**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
	N	345	345
WTC total	Pearson Correlation	.175**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
	N	345	345

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

Moreover, a multiple regression analysis was conducted to detect which identity processing type could best predict the learners' WTC total (see Table 2).

Table 2: Correlations for Identity and WTC Subcategories

	Informational	normative	Diffuse avoidant	speaking	reading	writing	Comp	WTC total
Informational	1	.307**	-.049	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Normative	.307**	1	.342**	.065	.037	.006	.344	.067
Diffuse avoidant	-.049	.342**	1	.008	-.076	-.015	.037	-.084
Speaking	.305**	.065	.008	1	.515**	.518**	.509**	.717**
Reading	.340**	.037	-.076	.515**	1	.593**	.532**	.722**
Writing	.394**	.149**	-.015	.518**	.593**	1	.542**	.704**
Comp/list	.381**	.051	-.112*	.509**	.532**	.542**	1	.696**
WTC total	.381**	.067	-.084	.717**	.722**	.704**	.696**	1
N	345	345	345	345	345	345	345	345

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

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Based on the results in Table 2, an informational identity style had the most correlation with overall WTC ( $p=.000$ ) as well as with each of its subcomponents: willingness to speak ( $p=.000$ ), to read ( $p=.000$ ), to write ( $p=.000$ ), and to comprehend ( $p=.000$ ). While, in normative identity and diffuse-avoidant identity style, the only significant correlation with the subcomponents of willingness was found in willingness to write ( $p= .006$ ) and willingness to comprehend ( $p= .037$ ) respectively.

As shown in Table 3, hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the ability of seven control measures: informational, normative, diffuse avoidant, speaking, reading, writing, and comprehension. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. Comprehension, normative, diffuse avoidant, informational, speaking, reading, writing were entered at Step 1, explaining 77% of the variance in WTC total. The total variance explained by the model as a whole was 77%,  $F(1,167.6)$ ,  $P < .000$ . Results indicate that the only identity processing style which was a significant predictor of overall WTC was the informational identity style ( $p=.012$ ). Based on the obtained results, learners with informational identity types are more likely to benefit from higher levels of WTC in 77% of the variance.



### Discussion

This study set out to investigate the relationship between WTC and identity processing styles among advanced EFL learners. The overall results of a correlational analysis show a positive and strong relationship between identity processing styles and WTC among learners. The correlation results between each component of WTC and learners' identity processing style reveal a positive and strong relationship between informational processing style and all of the components of WTC. There are several possible explanations for these results. First, the desire to communicate with other students in all of the components of WTC can enhance their "interpersonal motivation, intergroup motivation, self-confidence, intergroup attitudes, social situation, communicative competence, intergroup climate, and personality" (Mohseni & Niknejad, 2013, p. 42). Second, individuals using an informational style would tend to have a strong sense of identity which helps them in solving their problem and making decisions (Berzonsky, 1988). This idea is supported by Kaplan and Flum's (2010) view that individuals using an informational style are "proactive self-exploration and information-seeking" who gather information, evaluate alternatives, and make decisions. They also possess higher cognitive complexity, motivation, openness, and autonomy which are all decisive factors in learning a new language (p. 59). Next, a significant positive correlation between learners' informational style and willingness to speak indicates that the learners found the classroom environment pleasant and friendly. This view is supported by Mohseni and Niknejad's (2013) idea that context may play an important role in encouraging learners to open conversation.

In this study, the only significant correlation that was found between *learners* with a *normative identity* processing style and WTC was learners' willingness to write rather than use it as a speaking, reading, or comprehending while the only significant correlation between *learners* with a *diffuse-avoidant identity* style and WTC was willing to comprehend. A possible explanation for this finding is that individuals with a normative identity style are stronger in terms of their productive language skills whereas individuals with a diffuse-avoidant style have a stronger tendency towards using receptive skills. This finding may resonate with Berzonsky's (2011) idea that learners in diffusion may feel reluctant to make any commitments. Although they comprehend the target language, they are not interested in speaking, reading or writing in the classroom.

### CONCLUSION

This study attempts to investigate the relationship between WTC and identity processing styles among advanced EFL learners. The results underline that the best identity type that can act as a predictor of WTC among Advanced Iranian EFL learners was the informational identity processing style. Additionally, the result of multiple regressions indicates that identity style subscales could explain 77% of variance in WTC.

### Implications and limitations

The results of this study can be used by EFL educational systems to identify the identity processing styles and WTC of EFL learners while determining their weaknesses and strengths regarding speaking, reading, writing, and comprehending a second language. This will in turn lead to identifying learners with lower levels of overall WTC to not only specify subcomponents in which they are less competent but also to improve their WTC.

Likewise, such information can help EFL teachers, curriculum developers, and syllabus designers in developing a specific syllabus for EFL classrooms based on the identity of the learners as well as their weakness and strength in WTC. Finally, WTC does not follow an identifiable pattern (Mohseni & Niknejad, 2013). This may imply that many learners who have a *high level of linguistic competence are not able to communicate in a second language*; while on the contrary, others with a *minimal linguistic knowledge take every opportunity to communicate in a second language with less apprehension* (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). Although this study affirms the significant positive relationship between identity processing styles and WTC among learners, other affective variables such as learners' cognitive style, learning attitudes, anxiety and motivation may affect their WTC in a second language. All these are issues which future research could address.

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**THE EFFECT OF TRANSLATION VERSUS MATCHING WORDS AND DEFINITIONS ON  
RETRIEVAL OF VOCABULARY AMONG IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the effect of translation versus matching words and definitions on retrieval of vocabulary. Sixty female English as foreign language (EFL) Iranian students in Garmsar, among whom forty received vocabularies through translation and matching words and definitions techniques, participated in the study. Retrieval of vocabulary at the beginning and end of the study was assessed and compared with that of a control group that did not received vocabularies through translation and matching words and definitions techniques but completed the same pre and post-writing task. The study describes the vocabulary teaching techniques that were provided, and the results of the effects of translation and matching words and definitions techniques. The findings showed that matching words and definitions techniques had a considerable influence on the retrieval of vocabulary. It is suggested that English as foreign language teachers in universities, colleges, or institutes move to this vocabulary teaching technique in their teaching of vocabulary, as the latter it contributes towards activating student s thinking and creating ideas for doing any task.

**KEYWORDS:** Translation ,Retrieval of vocabulary

**INTRODUCTION**

Vocabulary as a field of study has in recent years undergone a major shift of emphasis. From being a neglected area in language teaching and Second Language Acquisition (Meara, 1989), it has now become one of the most researched areas in applied linguistics. The notion of vocabulary as a group of single-word items has been broadened to include multiword sequences. Views on what constitutes ‘useful’ vocabulary have also broadened from lists of frequently occurring words to those that are thematically or genre related (Nation, 1990, 2001).

Learning a second language involves the manipulation of four skills; speaking, writing, listening and reading, which lead to effective communication. One crucial factor is the amount of vocabulary one possesses as vocabulary forms the biggest part of the meaning of any language (Mccarthy, 1988). In view of this, vocabulary acquisition is currently receiving attention in second language pedagogy and research. But it is still a contentious issue that how learners acquire vocabulary effectively and efficiently or how it can best be taught.

Vocabulary is generally given little emphasis in the curriculum in Asian countries (Fan, 2003). This situation is the same in Iran as an Asian country. Generally, the emphasis on English teaching in many Asian countries is on the four language skills and vocabulary teaching in many classrooms is not paid attention enough. Words are taught through different vocabulary teaching techniques, such as translation, presenting definitions, matching words and definitions and so on, but one of the biggest problems is retrieval of vocabulary. This means that students cannot retrieve vocabularies to accomplish their tasks after they are taught to them. This may lead to a general inadequacy in vocabulary knowledge among Asian students, and it is one of the factors in the unsatisfactory performance of students in their exams. The inadequacy in lexical knowledge may hinder student's proficiency development and affect their performance in public exams (Fan, 2003).

Different researches and studies clearly show that intermediate students usually have problems with the retrieval of vocabulary. They are worried about the retrieval of vocabulary, when they are supposed to write about a topic in educational settings. Unfortunately this fear hinders the possibility of writing and various activities that need the

retrieval of vocabulary. For overcoming this problem, the vocabulary lists were prepared for intermediate students. These lists contain translation of the words and definition of the words.

The importance of this study is a way of using translation and matching words and definitions techniques to promote learners retrieval of vocabulary. Another important significance is that this process may provide teachers with useful information that conform the basis for enhancing their vocabulary teaching techniques and practices. Also findings of the study may encourage relevant authorities to think of applying matching words and definitions in classrooms.

This research project explores the possibility of using matching words and definitions in an EFL classroom to help students improve their vocabulary learning so as to enhance their lexical competence.

#### Significance of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is central to language and is of great significance to language learners. Words are the buildings blocks of a language since they label objects, actions, ideas without which people cannot convey the intended meaning. The prominent role of vocabulary knowledge in second or foreign language learning has been recently recognized by theorists and researchers in the fields. Accordingly, numerous types of approaches, techniques, exercises and practice have been introduced into the field to teach vocabulary (Hatch and Brown, 1995).

Allen (1983) has mentioned that, vocabulary is the "essence" of any given language. Vocabulary is what gives meaning and content to a language. Richards (1994) stated that "students report that vocabulary appears to be the most difficult aspect of language learning for them to master". Vocabulary learning strategies can be considered a subset of general learning in second language acquisition.

Brown and Payn (1994) identify five steps in the process of learning vocabulary in a foreign language: a) having source for encountering new words, b) getting a clear image either visual or auditory or both, of the forms of the new words, c) learning the meaning of the word, d) making a strong memory connection between the forms and the meaning of the words, e) using the words. Consequently all vocabulary learning strategies to a greater or lesser extend should be related to these five steps (Fan, 2003). Words are like telephone numbers, credit card numbers, car license plate numbers bank account numbers, the more we see them, repeat them and use them, the more we are likely to remember them. If we recycle vocabulary in interesting and imaginative ways for our students, some of it should, eventually, stick.

Most students spend many years studying English grammar, but they still cannot speak fluent, natural English. Grammar is the only part of a language. No doubt, knowing the grammar can help us speak and write correctly. However, more importantly, you need to have a good vocabulary size to speak and write naturally and effectively.

#### Retrieval

Retrieval involves recall of previously met items. Each retrieval strengthens the connection between the cue and the retrieved knowledge. Receptively, the cue may be the written or spoken form of the word and the retrieved information may be its meaning or use. Productively, the cue is the meaning or use and the retrieved information is the word form.

#### Two major factors in retrieval of vocabulary

The learners vocabulary size: the larger the vocabulary size, the greater the quantity of language that needs to be processed in order to meet the words to be retrieved. The length of time that the memory of a meeting with a word lasts: there must be some memory of previous meeting with the word. A critical factor is the length of time that such a memory lasts. Delayed post-tests of vocabulary learning indicate that memory for words can last several weeks. The number of previous meetings with the word will influence the length of time a memory remains.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study seeks answers to these questions:

1) Does the translation technique have any effect on the retrieval of vocabulary among Iranian Intermediate EFL learners?

2) Does the matching words and definitions technique have any effect on the retrieval of vocabulary among Iranian Intermediate EFL learners?

3) Is there any significant difference between the vocabulary of Iranian Intermediate EFL learners who use the translation technique and that of those who do not?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

Sixty intermediate institute students comprised the subjects of the study. Three classes of 33, 33 and 34 Iranian intermediate students at Mina and Shokouh Institutes were given Preliminary English Test (PET) in order to determine their level of English proficiency. Then according to the mean performance and the standard deviation of the test, subjects were assigned into high, mid and low groups. Those students whose scores fell one standard deviation below and above the mean were assigned as the mid group (sixty students). Then they were randomly assigned to one control and two experimental groups (each including twenty students). Concerning the age and sex of the learners, it should be mentioned that in the experimental and control groups the students were females, all of whom were 17 to 22.

### ***Materials***

In order to determine the level of the student's English proficiency the Preliminary English Test (University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, 2009) was used; first, the students were asked to participate in the English Language Proficiency Test. From among a hundred students who were at the intermediate level of English proficiency sixty students were selected.

For the purpose of the study, all the homogenous subjects completed the writing tasks before the study (pre-test) and two month later, at the end of the study (post-test). They were asked to write three compositions in three separate sessions.

### ***Procedures***

To conduct the research and to verify the research hypothesis the following process was performed:

Three classes of 33 and 33 and 34 Iranian Intermediate students at Mina and Shokouh institutes in Garmsar were selected; then PET test, (2009 version) was administered to three groups to find the homogeneity of the groups. After analyzing the data, the participants whose scores fell one standard deviation above or below the mean were selected. At last, the researcher chose 60 students.

The teacher assigned two classes as the experimental groups and the other as the control, each one consisting of 20 homogenized participants. Then, the pre-test of writing about the three topics were given to students, and students wrote about the topics, then researcher realized that students did not know some words related to the topics

The students in the experimental groups received 20 sessions of 60 minutes treatment, three sessions a week, vocabulary teaching, while the control group was taught the conventional method for vocabulary learning in the same time. The topics for writing were taken from the Interchange 3 book. In the experimental group 1, the words were taught in the way that, the meaning of unknown words were translated in students native language and in the experimental group 2, the words were taught in the way that the definitions of unknown words were presented and students were asked to match the words to their definitions. Then, in the control group the words were taught in a way that synonyms of unknown words were presented.

The strategies which were taught were as follows:

Translation: The meanings of unknown words in student's native language were translated during teaching vocabulary.

Matching words and definitions: The definitions of unknown words were presented during teaching vocabulary and students were asked to match the words to their definitions.

Synonym: The synonyms of unknown words were presented during teaching vocabulary.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To ensure the participants homogeneity in terms of their overall language an English Preliminary Test was administered.

*Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the homogenous groups*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Range	Min	Max
Group1	20	36.4	5.184	26.88421	18	26	43
Group2	20	37.65	6.03	36.45	22	29	50
Group3	20	41.5	4.489	20.15789	17	33	49

### *T-test in translation*

The amount of sig in topic 1, topic 2 and topic 3 is less than 0.05 that shows the significant difference among means before and after treatment. 95% Confidence interval of difference has been positive before and after treatment, showing that the means of topics after treatment have increased, so translation as one method of vocabulary teaching has had positive effect on the retrieval of vocabulary. The results are illustrated in table 2.

*Table 2: Paired sample tests in translation*

Paired differences		Mean	Std deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the difference		t
df	Sig				Lower	Upper	
(2-tailed)							
Pair1	Topic1-topic01	4.05000	1.53811	.34393	3.33014	4.76986	11.776
Pair2	Topic2-topic02	4.00000	1.71679	.38389	3.19652	4.80348	10.420
Pair3	Topic3-topic03	4.00000	1.52177	.34028	3.28779	4.71221	11.755

### *T-test in matching words and definitions*

The amount of sig in topic 1, topic 2 and topic 3 is less than 0.05, showing the significant difference among means before and after treatment. 95% Confidence interval of difference (lower & upper) has been positive before and after treatment, and this shows that the means of topics after treatment are more than before treatment, so matching words and definitions as one method of vocabulary teaching has had positive effect on the retrieval of vocabulary. The results are illustrated in table 3.

*Table 3: Paired sample tests in matching words and definitions*

Paired differences		Mean	Std deviation	Std. error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference		t
df	Sig				Lower	Upper	
(2-tailed)							
Pair1	Topic1-topic01	6.10000	2.63379	0.58893	4.86735	7.33265	10.358
Pair2	Topic2-topic02	6.30000	1.68897	0.37767	5.50954	7.09046	16.681
Pair3	Topic3-topic03	6.30000	1.86660	0.41739	5.42640	7.17360	15.094

### *T-test in synonym*

The amount of sig in topic 1, topic 2 and topic 3 is less than 0.05, showing the significant difference among means before and after treatment. 95% Confidence interval of difference (lower & upper) has been positive before and after treatment, and this shows that the means of topics after treatment are more than before treatment, so giving synonym as a one method of vocabulary teaching has had positive effect on the retrieval of vocabulary. The results are illustrated in table 4.

*Table 4: Paired sample tests in synonym*

Paired difference		Mean	Std deviation	Std. error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference		t
df	Sig				Lower	Upper	
(2-tailed)							



Pair1	Topic1-topic01	2.25000	1.55174	.34698	1.52376	2.97624	6.485	19	.000
Pair2	Topic2-topic02	1.35627	1.35627	.30327	1.31525	2.58475	6.430	19	.000
Pair3	Topic3-topic03	1.74718	1.74718	.39068	1.18230	2.81770	5.119	19	.000

#### *Anova*

Anova is a procedure for testing whether the difference among the means of two or more groups is significant. This technique allows statistical analysis of main effects (independent variables) and combinations of factors on the dependent variable. The amount of sig in topic 1 is less than 0.05 and this shows that the hypothesis for the sameness of means is not the same and there is a significant difference among these three teaching methods. The results are illustrated in tables 5&6.

*Table 5: The result of ANOVA before teaching*

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Topic01	Between groups	.233	2	.117	.103	.902
	Within groups	64.350	57	1.129		
	Total	64.583	59			
Topic02	Between groups	.633	2	.317	.332	.719
	Within groups	54.350	57	.954		
	Total	54.983	59			
Topic03	Between groups	.533	2	.267	.293	.747
	Within groups	51.800	57	.909		
	Total	52.333	59			

*Table 6: The result of ANOVA after teaching*

		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Topic01	Between groups	140.633	2	70.317	25.767	.000
	Within groups	155.550	57	2.729		
	Total	296.183	59			
Topic02	Between groups	182.033	2	91.017	44.840	.000
	Within groups	115.700	57	2.030		
	Total	297.733	59			
Topic03	Between groups	168.933	2	84.467	47.764	.000
	Within groups	100.800	57	1.768		
	Total	269.733	59			

Tukey is a test that we can say which one of these methods is the most effective. The sign \* shows the difference among groups. With using confidence interval, we can say that the retrieval mean in topic 1, matching words and definitions is more effective than the two other methods of vocabulary teaching. Then, this method (matching words and definitions) is the most effective one among these three methods of vocabulary teaching (translation, matching words and definitions, synonym). Lower bound and upper bound are positive. And also translation is more effective than synonym. (The amounts of confidence interval are positive).

The amount of sig in topic 2 is less than 0.05, then it can be said that the means of three groups are not the same and there is significant difference. Tukey also shows that matching words and definitions is more effective than the two other methods of vocabulary teaching, since confidence interval for matching words and definitions is positive.

The amount of sig in topic 3 is less than 0.05, then it can be said that the means of three groups are not the same and there is significant difference. In second output of Tukey test we can see that the confidence interval of matching words and definitions is positive. Then this method is more effective than the two other ones, and translation is more effective than synonym. The results are illustrated in table 7.

*Table 7: Multiple comparison of translation, matching words and definitions and synonym*

Dependent variab (I)



group		(J) group	Mean difference (I-J)		Std. Error	Sig	95%
confidence Interval			Lower bound	Upper bound			
Topic1	Translation	Matching words & definitions	-1.90000*	.52239	.002	-3.1571	-.6429
		Synonym	1.85000*	.52239	.002	.5929	3.1071
	Matching words & definitions	Translation	1.90000*	.52239	.002	.6429	3.1571
		Synonym	3.75000*	.52239	.000	2.4929	5.0071
	Synonym	Translation	-1.85000*	.52239	.002	-3.1071	-.5929
		Matching words & definitions	-3.75000*	.52239	.000	-5.0071	-2.4929
Topic2	Translation	Matching words & definitions	-2.45000*	.45054	.000	-3.5342	-1.3658
		Synonym	1.80000*	.45054	.001	.7158	2.8842
	Matching words & definitions	Translation	2.45000*	.45054	.000	1.3658	3.5342
		Synonym	4.25000*	.45054	.000	3.1658	5.3342
	Synonym	Translation	-1.80000*	.45054	.001	-2.8842	-.7158
		Matching words & definitions	-4.25000*	.45054	.000	-5.3342	-3.1658
Topic3	Translation	Matching words & definitions	-2.30000*	.42053	.000	-3.3120	-1.2880
		Synonym	1.80000*	.42053	.000	.7880	2.8120
	Matching words & definitions	Translation	2.30000*	.42053	.000	1.2880	3.3120
		Synonym	4.10000*	.42053	.000	3.0880	5.1120
	Synonym	Translation	-1.80000*	.42053	.000	-2.8120	-.7880
		Matching words & definitions	-4.10000*	.42053	.000	-5.1120	-3.0880

### Discussion

Once again, it has been proved that the matching words and definitions technique has its advantage over the traditional techniques. According to Brown and Payn (1994) identify five steps in the process of learning vocabulary in a foreign language: a) having source for encountering new words, b) getting a clear image either visual or auditory or both, of the forms of the new words, c) learning the meaning of the word, d) making a strong memory connection between the forms and the meaning of the words, e) using the words. Nation (2007) says that "Definitions provide clear, simple, brief explanations of words, which are used to comprehend the context. Pual Nation (2007) believes that definition is the appropriate meaning from dictionary that provides lots of information about a word. Sasson (2007) says that " Effective foreign or second language learning involves to a great extend learning new vocabulary words... and a lot of them. Adults and adolescents need between 10 and 16 encounters with a new word before they can put it in their long term memories. This has implications for vocabulary practice. Letters, sounds, words, chunks, and grammatical structures need to be spread out and built up from noticing, to recognition to production".

To sum up, this study showed that utilizing matching words and definitions led to a better performance in the retrieval of vocabulary among Iranian intermediate EFL learners. This study also revealed that new technique of vocabulary teaching could change the conventional way of teaching vocabulary and using matching words and definitions is fruitful for the English learner to retrieve the vocabularies.

### CONCLUSION

The main concern of this study was to study this assumption whether or not using translation or matching words and definitions can make any effect on the retrieval of vocabulary of intermediate EFL learners. Comparing the results of the groups at the pretest exam and at the posttest through applying ANOVA was lead to assure and indicate any significant changes in general vocabulary learning by students, and retrieval of vocabulary in particular after receiving the treatment.

It revealed a significant effect in performance of subjects in the experimental group 2; that means the subjects in experimental group 2 benefited significantly from treatment which was conducted. In addition, the results of ANOVA enabled the researcher to reject the first null hypothesis and therefore, the first research question was answered appropriately. Performing ANOVA revealed a significant effect of matching words and definitions on retrieval of vocabulary of learners. So, the results of ANOVA enabled the researcher to reject the second null hypothesis and therefore, the second research question was answered appropriately.

Based on the results of ANOVA, the matching words and definitions technique is the most effective vocabulary teaching technique for the retrieval of vocabulary among Iranian intermediate EFL learners.  
Pedagogical Implications

Given the matching words and definitions technique seems to have an impact on the retrieval of vocabulary, it is worth implementing the matching words and definitions to help L2 speakers to cope with ESL oral tasks, thereby providing a means to help students improve in language and facilitate task completion. It may also be desirable to incorporate planning time and space into vocabulary learning with a view to promote the effective use of the matching words and definitions technique in the classroom. The results and conclusions of this study indicate, using matching words and definitions is an important factor in the retrieval of vocabulary.

### ***Suggestions for further studies***

This study found that students retrieve vocabularies better through matching words and definitions technique. In this study, only the writing performance was emphasized. Future studies could investigate whether this facilitative effect holds for other language skills such as listening comprehension. Future studies could be performed focusing on their proficiency levels such as advanced or elementary levels. Finally, the same procedure could be used in other settings.

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## THE EFFECT OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES ON PROMOTING WRITING SKILL OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

Cooperative Learning refers to instructional methods involving small heterogeneous groups working together, toward a common goal and teaching writing may be a difficult skill in Teaching English as Foreign Language, so the purpose of this study was to investigate The Effect of Cooperative Learning Techniques on promoting writing skill of Iranian EFL Learners. so that, one hundred Iranian English Foreign Language learners participated in initial population of this study and 60 learners were selected after a proficiency Test. The participants were at the intermediate level in compliance with Nelson English Language Proficiency Test. The selected participants were randomly divided into two experimental groups: Student Team - Achievement Divisions (STAD), Group Investigation (GI), and one control group Conventional Instruction (CI). The procedure lasted for 16 weeks. The statistical analysis of the results by one-way ANOVA shows that the experimental groups (STAD and GI) performed better on writing skills than the control group (CI), and based on the results cooperative learning enhances students writing performance.

**KEYWORDS:** Cooperative Learning (CL), Heterogeneous Grouping, Student Team - Achievement Divisions (STAD), Group Investigation (GI), Conventional Instruction (CI)

### INTRODUCTION

One of the main problems which English Foreign Language Learners (EFL) is confronting it is how to improve their writing abilities. It seems that the lack of self-confidence is obvious among most of EFL learners during writing, since their writing will not verify completely by other EFL learners or teachers. Writing is necessary when learners further their study. Writing is one of the skills that students need to master either at primary, secondary or tertiary level. The skill of expressing oneself in the form of writing has been the aim of many teachers to cultivate in their students (Krause, 1994)

A few decades ago, a new approach called "Cooperative Learning" (CL) seemed to attract a lot of attention and became popular. Slavin (1982) stated that CL refers to instructional methods in which students of all levels of performance in small groups work together toward a common goal which encompasses the following instructional methods such as, Student Team-Achievement Divisions (STAD), Team-Game-Tournaments (TGT), Team-Assisted Individualization (TAI), Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC), Jigsaw, Learning Together, and Group Investigation (GI). Slavin (1987, p. 14) pointed to STAD, TGT, and Jigsaw as the general methods which can be used in all subjects and in all grade levels and TAI, CIRC, and GI designed for particular subjects at particular grade levels.

One of the approaches used in this research is based on **Student Team-Achievement Divisions (STAD)**. According to Slavin (1987, p. 14), "it has been used in such diverse subject areas as math, language arts, social studies, and science". The STAD technique was chosen because, according to Ghaith and Yaghi (1998), it has consistently been shown to be among the most simple and effective CL methods in improving student writing skill of well-defined objectives in various subjects. In addition to STAD, GI is the next issue of interest in this research which demands us as researchers to investigate this issue experimentally and not rely just on vague tradition or controversial research findings. **Group investigation**, developed by Shlomo Sharan and Yael Sharan in 1992, is a general classroom organization plan in which students work in small groups using cooperative inquiry, group discussion and

cooperative planning and projects. Moreover, it is said to be one of the most student-centered methods as students have much freedom to choose their topics of interest for investigation, plan and carry it out, present and evaluate the results.

As was stated before, this study attempted to investigate the effects of Cooperative Learning techniques (Student Team–achievement Divisions (STAD) and Group Investigation (GI)) on promoting intermediate learners’ writing skill. In English learning classroom, the teacher aims at developing four skills of his/her the learners’ ability to understand, to speak, to read and to write. The ability to write occupies the last place in this order, but it does not mean that it is the least important. When we look at writing as a product we are mainly interested in outcomes, that is, we identify what the students have produced, e.g. grammatical accuracy, mechanics of writing, proper format, good organization, etc. Recent research on writing has provided us with an important insight: good writers go through certain process, which lead to successful pieces of written work: “They start off with an overall plan in their heads. They think about what they want to say and whom they are writing for. Then they draft out sections of writing, and as they work on them, they are constantly reviewing, revising, and editing their work.” (Hedge, 1988). Writing is a creative process because it is a process of reaching out for one’s thought and discovering them. Writing, as such is a process of meaning making (1994, National University of Singapore).

One of the main problems which English Foreign Language Learners (EFL) is confronting is how to improve their writing abilities. It seems that the lack of self-confidence is obvious among most of EFL learners during writing, since their writing will not verify completely by other EFL learners or teachers. Writing is necessary when learners further their study. The most common complaint of student is their quickly forgetting of the things they have learnt, in spite of consuming so much time and energy. So this has always been the concern of the language specialists to deal with it. In this study the researcher wants to understand whether the Cooperative Learning will affect writing ability of students or not.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Slavin (1982, pp. 10-12) referred to “CL as instructional methods involving small heterogeneous groups work together toward a common goal. He believed that CL has long been incorporated into the traditional classroom, taking the form of small group project, peer tutoring, and group discussion”. In addition, he added that since the 1970s, however, CL has taken a more formal and structured approach causing specific CL strategies to be developed and researched.

LittleJohn (1983, p. 598) said that “group work motivates learners to make fewer mistake, feel less inhibited, and freer to speak in small groups than in teacher-led class”. Long and Porter (1985, pp. 207-212) cited “five pedagogical arguments for group work. Those pedagogical arguments increase the quantity of language practice opportunities, improvement of the quality of student talk, individualization of the instruction, creation of the positive climate in the classroom, and increase student motivation”.

Chamot and O’Malley (1987, p. 244) maintained that “different language skills which related to a task can be practiced by working cooperatively on that task in small groups of students”. Slavin (1987, p. 1) argued that “CL promotes academic achievement, is relatively easy to implement, and is inexpensive.” the greatest strength of CL is the wide range of such positive outcomes as, children’s improved behavior and attendance, and increased liking of school. Long and Porter (1985, p. 224) stated that “although the use of group work in EFL classroom has been recommended in the last few years and teaching materials have been developed accordingly, little or no attention has been given to describing the roles of the teacher and the students, and the planning, structuring, and management of the learning tasks, which should be based on the underlying principles of the techniques as they are practiced in the classroom. They (1985) also added that the effect of carefully outlined group methods on the achievement of EFL learners has received little attention from researchers. This is also true of the relationship between group work and whole class, teacher-led instruction.

Barros and Verdejo (1998) state that from a variety of theoretical perspectives learning improves when it is carried out as constructivist and social activity. They also add that CL has been defined as the acquisition by individuals of knowledge, skills or attitudes through group interaction. It is a structured systematic instructional strategy in which students in small groups work together toward common goal.

Zakaria and Iksan (2007, p. 36) said that “the premise underlying CL is that learning is most effective when students are involved in sharing ideas and working cooperatively to complete academic tasks, and it has been utilized as both an instructional method and as a learning tool at various levels and in various subject areas of education”. Sanel (2008) argued that CL provides an opportunity to share and exchange information for each student in the class. The whole class can take part in the activities and compare and contrast their ideas with their classmates. In this way, all the learners in the classroom can get the opportunity for exploring the use of communicative language.

### ***Benefits of Cooperative Learning***

Klinger and Vaughn (2000, pp. 69-73) believe that some potential benefits of CL for language learners entail opportunities for L2 interaction, improvement of L2 proficiency, development and integration of L2 skills, and content learning. In order to maximize the benefits of CL, teachers have to prepare the environment to support learning, closely monitor groups, and adjust implementation procedures if the desired outcomes are not being attained.

### ***Theoretical Perspectives of Cooperative Learning***

Decisions about how to apply CL can be based on one or more theoretical perspectives. Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1998, pp. 29-30) identified three major theoretical perspectives on CL that include social interdependence theory, cognitive-developmental theory, and behavioral theory.

### ***Social Interdependence Theory***

Johnson, Johnson, and Smith (1998, p. 29) assert that social interdependence theory views positive links of individuals to accomplish common goals. The basic premise underlying social interdependence theory is that the type of social interdependence that is structured in a situation determines how individuals interact, which in turn determines outcomes

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

As can be inferred from the previous sections, STAD and GI techniques of CL methods are the independent variables of concern in this study. To investigate the effects of above-mentioned variables in a systematic way, the following research questions are put forward:

1. To what extent, do students who are using STAD differ from those who are using Conventional Instruction technique (CI) in writing performance?
2. To what extent, do students who are using GI differ from those who are using (CI) technique in writing performance?
3. To what extent, do students who are using STAD differ from those who are using GI technique in writing performance?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

A sample of 60 students at intermediate level who were learners at Navid Institute in Yasuj was chosen based on a systematic random sampling from among 100 students. The subjects were at intermediate level in compliance with Nelson English Language Proficiency Test, they were divided into three homogeneous groups known as two experimental groups (A and B), and one control group (C).

### ***Instrumentation***

Several different testing instruments were utilized in the process of the development of the present research. A Thirty items of Nelson Battery Test (Fowler & Coe, 1976) was applied to determine the homogeneity of the groups regarding their levels of proficiency. The reliability of this homogeneity test was computed through the application of Kuder and Richardson (KR-21) method, ( $r = .75$ ).

The writing test was administered at the end of the treatments to the students in the three groups. Here, again the item difficulty and item discrimination of all the test items were estimated. All the items had the adequate level of

difficulty and the sufficient power of discrimination. According to Kudar and Richardson (KR-21) method, the reliability of the post-test was estimated as ( $r = .73$ ).

### ***Data collection***

Several different testing instruments were utilized in the process of the development of the present research. Thirty items of Nelson Battery (Fowler & Coe, 1976) was applied to determine the homogeneity of the groups regarding their levels of proficiency. The reliability of this homogeneity test will be computed through the application of Kudar and Richardson (KR-21) method. Moreover, the participants will take a post test.

### ***Data Analysis***

The results obtained from analyzing the students' performance in three groups (A, B, and C) using STAD, GI, and CI techniques respectively on EFL learners' writing performance. Moreover, in order to find out whether there is significant difference among three methods, a one-way ANOVA will apply in this context, for three groups' performances on writing skill. All data collecting for purpose of this study will process using the 'Statistical Package for The Social Sciences' (SPSS)

### ***Procedure***

First, the learners were homogenized linguistically in order to make sure that the results of the study were not due to the initial differences between the participants. When the homogeneity was assured, the participants were divided into three groups, namely A, B, and C based on a systematic random sampling. Two groups (A and B) were considered as experimental groups and the other group (C) as the control group. In each group only 20 students who were at intermediate level were under consideration. Each group was seen separately and received different treatments. All sessions took place in the students' classrooms about 45-minute period. The treatment continued for two months (sixteen sessions) and covered instructional units of Paragraph Writing (A Textbook for Basic Writing) by Riazi, Beyzaie and Zare. (2002)

Then, in group (A) the researcher randomly divided the students ( $n=20$ ) into 4 mixed ability learning groups (heterogeneous teams) with five students. The teams balanced in order to ensure mixed ability grouping.

The researcher then started the instructional units to the experimental group (A) according to the dynamics of STAD method. Meanwhile, the control group (C) was taught the same content by the same teacher, but according to a Conventional Instruction technique (CI).

In group (A), the treatment proceeded according to the components of STAD method such as, teaching, team study and individual quizzes. Each lesson began with a teacher presentation to introduce and discuss the material under study about 15 to 20 minutes. Then the students worked in their teams to complete activities or worksheets that teacher earlier prepared. After that, students took individual quizzes on the same material and were not allowed to help each other

In group (B), the treatment proceeded according to such components of GI method as, Investigation, Interaction, Interpretation, and Intrinsic motivation. Students were assigned to three member groups based on the common interest in a specific subtopic of units were determined. Then the teacher asked the subjects to plan their group investigations, and exchange ideas through interaction. After that, the subjects cooperated in planning and integrating their findings with the teacher.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

To accept or reject the stated null hypothesis, the data obtained through Nelson language test as homogeneity test and post-test were analyzed (using SPSS 20 software) in different steps. The early step used in analyzing data was to determine the homogeneity of the groups regarding their levels of second language proficiency. So, the learners' overall scores on Nelson language proficiency test were collected from their records. Means and standard deviations of each of the three groups for Nelson language proficiency test are presented in table 1. It shows that each of the three groups had approximately similar performance on Nelson language proficiency test, and the obtained means and standard deviations of each of the three groups, were to some extent, similar.



Table 1: Sample means and standard deviations for homogeneity test

Group	N	Maxi	Mini	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental Group (A)	20	18	6	11.40	2.479
Experimental Group (B)	20	17	6	11.30	2.386
Control Group (C)	20	16	5	11.10	2.943

In this study, the independent variable was CL method with two variables including STAD, and GI techniques. In this way, the study investigated the effects of the three independent techniques through one-way ANOVA in order to find to what extent these techniques influence the writing skill of learners (i. e. dependent variable) by Iranian EFL learners at the intermediate level of their English proficiency.

The descriptive statistic in the following table presents means and standard deviations of each of the three groups. Each of the three groups has different performance on writing skill and also indicates better performance of students who received instruction through STAD technique (N=20, M=13.35, SD=2.580) than students who received instruction through GI technique (N=20, M=13.15, SD=2.450), and those received instruction through CI technique (N=20, M= 10.05, SD=2.012).

The results are shown in table 2 as follows:

Table 2: Descriptive statistics for three groups' performance in writing skill.

Group	N	Maxi	Mini	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental Group (A)	20	18	6	13.35	2.580
Experimental Group (B)	20	17	6	13.15	2.450
Control Group (C)	20	16	5	10.05	2.012

#### Results of One-Way ANOVA

To begin with, a one-way ANOVA was run on the mean scores of the three groups in writing skill post-test and it yielded statistically significant difference among them. The results of one-way ANOVA statistically indicated meaningful differences among three groups. The Sum of Squares (SS) column is the variability found between groups and within groups before they were divided by their respective degrees of freedom (df). The Mean Square (MS) column gives two variance figures which make up the F-ratio; MS between groups (MSB), and MS within groups (MSW). The F-ratio with its probability level is also noted.

To evaluate the effects of STAD, GI and CI techniques on writing skill, the sample means of three groups were compared

Table 3 indicate the results of one-way ANOVA.

Table 3: Results of one-way ANOVA for three groups' performances on writing skill test.

Source of variances	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
Between group	136.933	2	68.46	12.290	0.000
Within groups	317.550	57	5.571		
Total	454.483	59	-----		

\*P< 0.05

The results of one-way ANOVA showed a significant difference among the experimental groups (A and B) and the control group (C) on the dependent variables of writing skill. Therefore, the differences among groups were statistically significant.

A post-hoc Tukey test was manipulated to determine where precisely the significance lays in each group. The results of Tukey test revealed that there was a significant Mean Difference (MD) between the mean scores of experimental group (A) receiving STAD technique and control group (C) instructed according to CI technique (MD=3.300,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the first null hypothesis (HO1) was rejected.

The Tukey test showed a comparison between the achievement means of experimental group (B) receiving GI technique and control group (C) through CI technique (MD=3.100,  $p < 0.05$ ). The results indicated that the second null hypothesis (HO2) was rejected. In addition, the results of comparing the achievement means of experimental group (A) taught according to STAD and experimental group (B) instructed according to GI technique (MD=.2000,  $p > 0.05$ ) verified the third null hypothesis (HO3 ).

Post-hoc analysis of Tukey test indicated significant mean differences among the three groups' writing skill post-test as presented in table 4.

*Table 4: Post-hoc Tukey test for three groups' performances on post-test writing skill*

Groups		Mean Difference	Std. Error	Sig
STAD	GI	.2000	.746	.961
	CI	3.300*	.746	0.00
GI	STAD	-2.00	.746	.961
	CI	3.100*	.746	0.00
CI	STAD	-3.300*	.746	.965
	GI	-3.100*	.746	0.00

\*P < 0.05

To summarize, on the writing skill, the size of the change that occurred between STAD and CI techniques (MD=3.300) was bigger than that occurred between STAD and GI (MD=.2000), and GI and CI techniques (MD=-3.100). The findings illustrated that there was a greater effectiveness of STAD technique compared with GI and CI techniques in promoting English writing skill.

### Discussion

*Question 1: To what extent, do students who are using STAD differ from those who are using Conventional Instruction technique (CI) in writing performance?*

The results of one-way ANOVA and Tukey Test indicated statistically significant difference between the experimental group (A) and the control group (C) on dependent variable of writing skill. It indicated that STAD technique is more effective in comparison with CI technique in improving EFL writing skill of intermediate level of English. This is in agreement with the findings of Ghaith (2003), Myres (2006), Tracy and Barbara (2003), and Wilson (1991) who reported similar results with regard to the positive effects of CL.

One more plausible explanation of this outcome is that students in cooperative groups receive peer encouragement and personalized support from their more competent partners. They may perceive that their contributions are expected and valued for the success of the group. Their partners are available to help them when they need a customized answer to a question or solution to a problem. When someone generates an incorrect response, the more able students in the group can explain why that answer is not acceptable, and this explanation can arouse interaction among group members which can promote deeper learning of materials through explanation, elaboration, or mental processing which take place during this interaction.

Additionally, the theoretical relevance of CL in enhancing students writing ability is based on the assumption that students in CL may feel important because they perform roles which are essential to the completion of group tasks.

Furthermore, they possess information and resources that are indispensable for their teams. Likewise, interaction among team members can lead to increased achievement through elaboration and organization of the material prepared by the teacher. This is consistent with the finding of cognitive elaboration perspective that cooperative learners must engage in some sort of cognitive restructuring or elaboration to keep information in memory and incorporate it into the existing cognitive structures (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1998).

The difference between the environments of these two groups of learners, namely that one was a cooperation setting with the positive interaction among group members while the other was a conventional setting with the lack of interaction among group members, may be responsible for the difference in the importance of these two techniques.

“Team rewards, as one of the central concepts of STAD cooperative learning technique, may have a strong impact on learners’ performance specially writing performance. So the superiority of STAD can be explained from a behavioral learning theory which maintains that students will work hard on tasks that provide a reward, and students will fail to work on those tasks that provide no reward or punishment”(Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1998, p. 30).

(Chastain, 1988, p. 38) “Comprehensible input may also have a strong impact on increasing students’ achievement. Students cannot learn the materials unless they are able to comprehend the material to be learned. What is comprehensible for one person may be partially or totally incomprehensible to another person.” So in cooperative groups of STAD where students with mixed ability work with their peers, it is possible for them to adjust their input to make it more understandable to other, On the other hand, cooperative group members help each other to apply the correct form of grammar rules and writing rules.

This finding is also in agreement with the claim made in information processing that brain’s input capacity is limited and “people cannot take up and process all of the input they constantly receive, but rather can select only certain input for attention, uptake, and processing ” (Celce-Murica, 2001, p. 271). Thus, peer learning can compensate for the lack of information that is caused by the limitation of attention and working memory.

Another explanation for the finding based on social affective learning strategies appears worth exploring. Chamot and O’Malley (1987, p. 244) maintain that “students in small groups by working cooperatively on a task can practice language skills which are directly related to that task ” ;Thus, cooperation strategy as one of the social affective learning strategies can have positive effect on learning language skills.

A possible reason that students in cooperative groups of STAD technique were more successful than those students in the individual groups of CI technique is that individual groups in conventional instruction lack interpersonal feedback in the practice. Furthermore, the environment structuring learning situations may cooperatively enable students to process information more deeply than those who studying the information by themselves. Students in CI group work alone on a unit or activity; however, they lack a partner with whom to interact or share knowledge. This is consistent with the notion made by Chastain (1988) that teacher and other people are the most powerful and effective source of feedback.

*Question 2: To what extent, do students who are using GI differ from those who are using (CI) technique in writing performance?*

The results of the present study also compared GI technique and CI and the finding showed that despite the basic differences between the two techniques, “GI technique emphasized the students’ self-direction through group centered-decision making while CI technique focused on the verbal presentation of academic subject matter proposed by the teacher to the students whose primary role is listening and respond to the teacher’s questions ” (Tan, Sharan, & Lee, 2006, p. 13

It seems that multilateral conversations within groups are other reasons for this outcome. Although the teacher decided not to allow multilateral conversations within the groups, to ensure concentration on peer tutoring of previously taught materials, such group conversations did develop, and the teacher permitted students to continue these conversations. Thus, multilateral conversations may guide students toward variety of topics with different goals in the class and also may arouse conflict constructively within groups. While Johnson and Johnson (1994) maintained that resolving conflict constructively is a prerequisite for coordinating efforts to achieve mutual goals in cooperative group.

As was already stated, peer learning can compensate for the lack of information that is caused by the limitation of attention and working memory. On the other hand, Tan, Sharan, and Lee (2006, p. 18) emphasized that "using a wide variety of authentic resources and materials are essential for presenting a product in GI class. Therefore, students need to have opportunity for more advanced input, such as from the teacher, and also need to receive input from authentic sources which work on it in their groups. Unfortunately, the observations carried out during cooperative sessions indicated that students received much peer input and little input from the teacher because of the existing interaction and communication between learners. Consequently, it could be that too much peer input and little teacher input can cause students to acquire incorrect language skills, and this can also lead to fossilization whereby students continue to use incorrect forms of the second language.

Students' early resistance to GI technique of CL also may have effect on the outcome of this study. Mirhassani and Hosseini (2002, p. 47) pointed to "the tendency of Iranian EFL high school students for non-cooperation rather than cooperation". Additionally, competitive learning is the primary approach in our educational system.

Therefore, the teacher should overcome students' perceptions for implementing GI in class through spending time with the groups or with individuals during the class, walking around the class to observe group interaction, making suggestions, or asking questions in order to help the groups, emphasizing upon his/her role in GI process, and finally making clear students why they use this technique and what the outcomes will be from this activity.

*Question3. To what extent, do students who are using STAD differ from those who are using GI technique in writing performance?*

The results of the present study also revealed that students who were in STAD and GI training achieved higher overall scores than students in the CI group. This finding is consistent with the research findings that students who received CI technique displayed the lowest performance (Scott & Jesse, 1998; Shachar & Sharan, 1994).

However, STAD technique was not significantly different from GI technique, although STAD mean scores were slightly higher than GI mean scores.

Group Investigation as a specific technique with more complexity than other CL techniques requires more investigation in order to implement it effectively in the class. Thus, teachers who are responsible for implementing GI technique should be instructed for the specific skills and strategies required to utilize this technique such as, four basic strategies-investigation, interaction, interpretation, and intrinsic motivation-which have been found to be essential for implementing GI. They should also properly be in serviced on CL theories and techniques.

Thus it is not easy to implement CL techniques like STAD and GI in one small corner of the overall curriculum of EFL teaching while the other areas of the curriculum remain highly competitive and teacher-centered. So, it is suggested that the educational culture as a whole should be changed so that CL becomes the norm for all students in all subjects .

## **CONCLUSION**

This study elucidates that cooperative learning enhances students writing performance. Cooperative Learning techniques like STAD and GI are supported by a multiplicity of theories from a variety of academic disciplines—including behavioral theory, cognitive developmental theory, as well as social interdependence theory. Student Team-Achievement Divisions is also supported by a large body of empirical research across different time periods, subjects, and geographical locations and has consistently found a variety of positive outcomes—including accelerated academic achievement, increased self-esteem, and motivation.

In cooperative learning the students are given opportunity to write and to revise and rewrite what they have written. Peer criticism aids them to have the high level of writing performances, since they have the opportunity of evaluating each other work separately.(i.e. the student have the opportunity of evaluating their own works). The students working with partners ask each other for help and improve their attitude towards writing.

In this study, before cooperative learning was incorporated in the class, the students obtained low scores ,but after the implementation of cooperative learning for sixteen weeks, the students scored significantly better in their

writing. So it is obvious that the implementation of cooperative learning in the writing has been proven to produce positive effects in students' learning of writing.

As this study has demonstrated, simply putting students in groups does not guarantee positive results. Teachers cannot simply place students together and expect them to work well with each other. Central components of effective CL must be in place so that students can come to feel that they are positive contributors, not only to their teams, but to the class as a whole. Most teachers are faced with large heterogeneous classes, making it difficult to serve the needs of all students in the class. Cooperative Learning techniques like STAD and GI take advantages of this heterogeneity, by encouraging students to learn from one another and from more and less knowledgeable peers and They demonstrate more confidence in writing and decrease their apprehensions towards writing. Through teaching CL would be make equal interesting for the both of teacher and the students

Although cooperative learning strategies are difficult to practice as novel strategies of instruction, it show high level of enthusiasm, curiosity and involvement in being taught through cooperative learning tasks. Thus, this study lends credence to the belief that cooperative learning has positive effects on the students' writing performance. Therefore, teachers should consider this learning approach as a viable alternative for teaching writing, so, it can be helpful to EFL teachers either involved in CL practice or wanting to implement CL into their classrooms to maximize the benefits of CL in the classrooms.

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THE IMPACT OF TEACHER'S DISCOURSE ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS'  
SPEAKING SKILL

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aimed at analyzing the role of teacher's discourse in the development of learners' speaking skill. In this research 32 intermediate English Foreign Language learners participated and they were divided in two groups- control and experimental. For the pretest of the study, the speaking section of Preliminary English Test was employed in both groups. After the pretest, the experimental group was exposed to teacher's discourse (written and spoken) over a period of 6 weeks. The learners in the experimental group were taught how to use teacher's discourse consciously and subconsciously to improve speaking skill (treatment). During that time, the teacher used special vocabularies and structures while teaching the book and in the conversation part of the class. The teacher observed learners' speaking with respect to general speaking and the five factors of speaking like fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and interactional strategies. In the second administration of the speaking section of PET as posttest to the two groups, it was revealed that the teacher's discourse has a significant impact on the learners' speaking skill.

**KEYWORDS:** discourse- teacher's discourse- fluency- pronunciation- vocabulary- grammatical accuracy- interactional strategies.

**INTRODUCTION**

The study of discourse, in general, is broad, with wide-ranging contributions from linguists, psychologists, and educators. Such actions are referred to as the teacher's discourse moves. The teacher's role refers, broadly speaking, to the educational tools the teacher applies to stimulate pupils' performance. Studies by Webb and her colleagues (Webb & Farivar, 1994a; Webb et al., 1994b) have shown that pupils' performance is boosted when teachers encourage pupils to use high quality helping behavior—defined as helping behavior that includes asking for, providing, and applying explanations.

According to Webb and Farivar (1994a), and Webb et al., (1994b), Teachers play a key role in promoting interactions among students and engaging them in the learning process, and cooperative learning is widely recognized as a pedagogical practice that can be employed in classrooms to stimulate students' interest in learning through their involvement with their peers. When students work cooperatively, they learn to give and receive information and develop new ideas and perspectives on how others think and communicate in socially appropriate ways. It is through interacting with others in reciprocal dialogues that students learn to use language differently to explain new ideas and realities and, in so doing, to construct new ways of thinking and feeling (Mercer, 1996). Cooperative learning provides opportunities for students to actively interact with others, negotiate new understandings, and appropriate new and creative ways of thinking about topics under discussion (King, 1999).

EFL learners' reluctance to speak English in the classroom is a problem commonly found in EFL contexts. Consequently, students have fewer opportunities to learn from speaking than the more oral students. Research shows that they develop more negative attitudes to school and are likely to lack motivation to put more effort in it (McCroskey & Richmond, 1991). For other students, working with students who are reluctant to maintain and extend conversations also limits their opportunities for language use.

Unfortunately, EFL learners in intermediate levels and even some of them in advanced level can't speak English as well. They used to think in their mother's tongue. Moreover, some teachers don't use academic words in their class.



This issue causes that the learners can't improve speaking skill in a correct way and talk fluency and accuracy. In Iran, we have many problems and difficulties with this matter. The learner's motivation and interaction are low in the classroom too, and any researcher didn't research about it in terms of teacher's role. This weakness about speaking can be related to teachers, because the role of them is crucial in the classroom and if they don't pay attention to their types of speaking, student's interaction, student's motivation, classroom interaction,... their learners can't speak as well.

If the teacher's discourse and classroom interaction could motivate the learners to use a complex discourse rather than the simple productions employed in language acquisition sequences (Swain, 1998), then they could engage in producing at least some output that would promote their discourse acquisition.

This study is intended to investigate the role of teacher's discourse on the speaking of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. The researcher intended to determine whether there is any significant difference between the learners who exposed to teacher's discourse and that of those who were not. Learners in Iran have a big problem in speaking. They can't maintain in conversation and continue their talking in English language, because their vocabulary knowledge are not well and most of the times, they can't use the words in the suitable parts of speech. In addition, the interaction between students, teachers with students, and students with the teacher is low. So, a teacher that uses academic discourse can help them to improve their speaking skill. As the researcher mentioned before, according to Webb and Farivar (1994a), and Webb et al., (1994b), Teachers play a key role in promoting interactions among students and engaging them in the learning process, and cooperative learning is widely recognized as a pedagogical practice that can be employed in classrooms to stimulate students' interest in learning through their involvement with their peers. When students work cooperatively, they learn to give and receive information and develop new ideas and perspectives on how others think and communicate in socially appropriate ways. It is through interacting with others in reciprocal dialogues that students learn to use language differently to explain new ideas and realities and, in so doing, to construct new ways of thinking and feeling (Mercer, 1996).

## REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The term 'discourse analysis' has no precise meaning; it is used to refer to several different approaches for analyzing language (both spoken and written) and hence to some quite different methods. Within linguistics, it usually indicates an interest in the way language is organized in units longer than sentences.

Educational research following this approach has focused on the structural organization of classroom talk. The classic investigation of Sinclair and Coulthard (1977) showed that in teacher-led lessons the language has characteristics which mark it out as a distinct, situated language variety, and one which assigns particular roles to speakers (see also Stubbs, 1983; Willes, 1983). They devised a method for categorizing all talk in a lesson into a hierarchical system of 'acts', 'moves' and 'exchanges' and 'transactions'. The basic unit of teacher-pupil communication in this system is the 'IRF exchange', in which a teacher Initiates an interaction (typically by asking a question), the student Responds (usually by providing an answer) and the teacher then provides some Follow-up or Feedback (for example, by confirming that the answer was correct). The IRF concept has since been used by many classroom researchers, although few employ the whole of Sinclair and Coulthard's rather complex hierarchical system.

In the classroom, context can range from the talk within a lesson, to a student's entire lifetime of socialization, to the history of the institution of schooling. Discourse analysis in the classroom becomes critical classroom discourse analysis when classroom researchers take the effects of such variable contexts into consideration in their analysis (Heath, 1983).

The Classroom is the primary and most obvious context for the discourse will be examining (Nystrand, 1997). He (1997) noted that however, the "context" for classroom discourse analysis also extends beyond the classroom, and within different components of classroom talk, to include any context that affects what is said and how it is interpreted in the classroom. Context can be bounded by physical borders— appropriate language at home may be different from appropriate language in school; But context can also be bounded not by physical borders, but by discourse borders—appropriate language within a lesson may be different from appropriate language after a lesson ends.

Classroom research across a range of situations has shown that classroom interaction dramatically constrains what kinds of language and literacy events are encouraged or allowed (McGroarty, 1996), whereas discourse outside the classroom context has a much wider range of acceptable and productive possibility. In a family or peer group setting, for example, students may be encouraged to talk at length, tell imaginative stories, or skirt the topic initially introduced, in favor of an entertaining aside. In school classrooms, as Holden Caulfield pointed out in J.D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*, such talk can be labeled as an entirely unsuitable "digression!" (Salinger, 1951).

Shirley Brice Heath (1983) documented how socialization into certain kinds of problem-solving at home can adversely affect student achievement in school.

### ***Classroom Interaction***

It takes a social-theoretical view of the reality created by a foreign language in the classroom (Swain & Lapkin, 1998). They emphasized that classroom interaction examines the interaction of teacher and learners in their various activities along a continuum that extends from instructional to natural discourse and is determined by the way participants present themselves to one another and negotiate turns-at-talk, topics, and repairs.

Pica (1994) supports the importance of interaction in language learning, and she focuses on a specific type of interaction: negotiation. This is, as she (1994, p. 494) defines: "the modification and restructuring of interaction that occurs when learners and their interlocutors anticipate, perceive, or experience difficulties in message comprehensibility. As they negotiate, they work linguistically to achieve the needed comprehensibility, whether repeating a message verbatim, adjusting its syntax, changing its words, or modifying its form and meaning in a host of other ways."

Class interaction is about students having an active discussion during class. Interactions occur both between students with no lecturer present, and with the lecturer who probes student thinking among the whole group (Tusi, 2001). He said that there are many ways on how to communicate with students, especially in the classroom.

### ***Different types of Classroom Interaction***

#### ***A. Teacher to Student***

How teachers interact with students is crucial to creating a positive atmosphere in the classroom. Greet each student as they enter the classroom and make eye contact. When presenting information, move about the room or have a student write the information at the front of the room while you stand at the back, creating the feeling that the entire room is engaged. Whenever possible, position desks in a circle with you. This encourages discussion and face-to-face interaction, and also contributes to a feeling of community where you and your students are equally involved in the discussion (Tusi, 2001).

#### ***B. Student to Student***

Student interaction can also be very beneficial. Collaborative learning occurs when the teacher presents students with a task or idea, and together the students come to conclusions about the idea or find possible solutions to the problem. Put students in groups of no more than five. Give specific written instructions about the task at hand and the goal of the task. Be clear and concise about your expectations for the assignment. Continually move from group to group, monitoring progress and answering questions (Tusi, 2001).

### ***Teacher's Discourse***

The study of discourse, in general, is broad, with wide-ranging contributions from linguists, psychologists, and educators. Such actions are referred to as the teacher's discourse moves. With the growing number of individuals learning English, researchers and teachers should take into account significant aspects of classroom discourse. Kumaravadivelu (2003a) discussed that "our first and foremost duty as teachers is to maximize learning opportunities for our learners" (p. 44). He noticed that teachers, therefore, should take it into account that they should be able to direct learners toward using the knowledge in new situations, creating examples, and sharing the information, to name a few; all these opportunities are largely, but not totally, affected by how the teacher manipulates his/her discourse.

Lesh and Lovitts' (2000) view acknowledges that such perceptions do not develop in a vacuum, but are shaped within the context of the discourse communities that teachers inhabit. Perception, interpretation, and practice can be understood as having collective aspects rather than being understood as strictly individual processes.

The term teacher may refer to anyone having a recognized role of managing authority in the classroom, including teaching assistants but generally not students (Douglas, 2000). He mentioned that students may temporarily take on a "teaching" role, but teachers have a special status with the authority to manage classroom discourse in terms of content (topic, task) and structure (small group, whole class), as well as to set physical and temporal boundaries (available tools and time). The teacher's role refers, broadly speaking, to the educational tools the teacher applies to stimulate pupils' performance. Studies by Webb and her colleagues (Webb and Farivar 1994a; Webb et al. 1994b) have shown that pupils' performance is boosted when teachers encourage pupils to use high quality helping behavior—defined as helping behavior that includes asking for, providing, and applying explanations. Additionally, Chinn et al. (2000) reported that both cooperation and performance are boosted when the teacher promotes high quality helping behavior. Following these researchers, we define effective teacher behavior during CL as the ability of teachers to stimulate the high quality verbal helping behavior of both individual team members and teams as a whole.

Teachers play a key role in promoting interactions among students and engaging them in the learning process, and cooperative learning is widely recognized as a pedagogical practice that can be employed in classrooms to stimulate students' interest in learning through their involvement with their peers (Douglas, 2000). When students work cooperatively, they learn to give and receive information and develop new ideas and perspectives on how others think and communicate in socially appropriate ways. It is through interacting with others in reciprocal dialogues that students learn to use language differently to explain new ideas and realities and, in so doing, to construct new ways of thinking and feeling (Mercer, 1996). Cooperative learning provides opportunities for students to actively interact with others, negotiate new understandings, and appropriate new and creative ways of thinking about topics under discussion (King, 1999). In effect, cooperative learning provides opportunities for students to construct new knowledge in an environment that encourages them to test out their ideas free from the constraints of a wider class group.

During the past several decades, researchers have studied dozens of peer-based learning approaches (O'Donnell, in press) and established that working collaboratively with others can increase achievement (e.g., Slavin, 1990). Most approaches focus on the structure and operation of groups and define the teacher's role in terms of organizing, facilitating, and monitoring group work. For example, in a popular method called Student Teams and Achievement Divisions (STAD, Slavin, 1986), teachers present material to the class using their usual instructional methods and assign practice tasks to cooperative groups. Though exceptions do exist (e.g., Hogan, Nastasi, & Pressley, 2000; Palincsar & Brown, 1984; Yackel, Cobb, & Wood, 1991), which we will discuss later in this article, most peer-based methods do not address features of the classroom context such as teachers' preexisting beliefs about teaching and learning and their well-established instructional practices and norms guiding interpersonal exchanges, nor does research on peer learning take these into account, thereby limiting our understanding of the functioning and effectiveness of these methods (Lampert, 2001; Stigler & Hiebert, 1997).

The study of teacher discourse is a thriving field of inquiry. The effect of teacher discourse is not unknown to researchers and language teachers since it has a significant role on learners' success or failure. Millrood (2004) has studied the impact of NLP techniques in teachers' discourse on directing learners toward better understanding of the language. He mentioned that it is possible to improve teacher-learner congruence through a decent verbal interaction with the learners. Creating an optimal condition for a productive classroom interaction was the main purpose of his study. In another study, Inceçay (2010) analyzed the quality of a teacher's language use in a class of 16 Turkish young learners of English as a foreign language and found that there are two categories regarding teacher talk; construction and obstruction. Therefore, teachers can improve or hinder learning process through the language they use. The studies just described focused explicitly on teacher discourse as a means of influencing student behavior and learning. In contrast to those studies, most cooperative learning approaches do not make clear the discourse that teachers should engage in while working with students, but instead focus on teacher activity such as setting up the group context, providing instruction and training, and, in some cases, observing and monitoring group work (see, for example, the review by Webb & Palincsar, 1996).

However, even without specific guidance in how they should interact with students and groups, the teacher may still play a major role in shaping the dialogue among students (Douglas, 2000). He noticed that peer-directed learning

programs do not occur in a vacuum, but are introduced within existing classroom contexts in which teachers (and students) have pre-existing beliefs about teaching and learning and often have well established instructional practices and norms guiding interpersonal exchanges. Even in the absence of explicit guidance for how they should interact with students in their cooperative learning classrooms, teachers model ways of interacting with others and communicate expectations for behavior, either explicitly or implicitly, through their discourse.

Using increasingly discourse-focused methods, found that these teachers break free of the restrictive communicative norms of the secondary science classrooms (cf. Lemke, 1990) to communicate positive and empowering messages to their students about science, about who and what is valued in the science classroom, and about their students' roles as learners (Hanrahan 1999, 2002).

Some studies have delved into the relationship between teacher's supportive instructional discourse and learners' reports of self-regulation and positive coping (Turner, Meyer, Midgley, & Patrick, 2003). Many studies have advocated the influence of teacher discourse on learners' success. Webb, Nemer, and Ing (2006) conducted a research and concluded that the discourse modeled by the teacher is largely mirrored, to use the aforementioned researchers' word, in learners' behavior.

According to Krashen (1984), comprehensible input is the only pathway through which individuals can build a cognitive map of a second language and eventually this input leads to acquisition of L2. Krashen stated this notion as "i + 1 hypothesis" in which he came to the realization that the input individuals receive should be tuned with their existing level of knowledge (Brown, 2007). In every EFL classroom situation, educators should take it into account that the language learners are exposed to should not be far beyond or much lower than their current competence otherwise it would have consequences both for the teacher and especially for the learners (Brown, 2007). It is not unlikely to see in a classroom that highly proficient learners become demotivated by the teacher's activities and questions and, on the other hand, beginners become frustrated with participating in mind-boggling classroom activities.

It is of paramount importance for EFL teachers to be aware of the characteristics of their discourse, for it is one of the most beneficial tools which is at the hand of teachers and has a great effect on reducing learners' affective filter. Therefore, teacher talk, defined as "the variety of language used by teachers when they are in the process of teaching" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 543), is a significant tool to communicate with learners. Teacher discourse, therefore, can turn to Achilles' heel if educators do not match their discourse to learners' proficiency level. In everyday language teaching, educators use questions or introduce various activities. They may, for instance, ask learners to compare, differentiate, define, or paraphrase.

Douglas (2000) said that a teacher's discourse move has an intentional purpose, takes place in a setting, can take on several forms, and may result in a variety of consequences. Many of the consequences of a teacher's discourse move maybe unintended-perhaps at direct odds with the teacher's purpose or outside the scope of anticipated consequences. The aims of the framework are to provide a language for describing and a structure for considering how the form of a discourse move and the setting in which it is made interplay in determining its consequences.

Douglas (2000) noted that a teacher's discourse move has a purpose (some intended aim or aims), takes place in a setting (constraints, prior history), has a particular form (verbal: questions, hints, directives, etc., as well as nonverbal: gestures), and results in consequences(both for individual learners and for the community of learners).

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

Two major research questions are addressed:

Q1: Does teacher's discourse have a statistically significant impact on the speaking of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

Q2: Does teacher's discourse have statistically different impacts on the fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary knowledge, grammatical accuracy, and interactional strategies of Iranian intermediate EFL learners?

To answer the above questions, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1: There is no significant difference between the speaking of Iranian intermediate EFL learners who are exposed to the teacher's discourse and that of those who are not.

H2: There is no significant difference in the fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary knowledge, grammatical accuracy, and interactional strategies of the Iranian intermediate EFL learners who are exposed to the teacher's discourse and those of EFL learners who are not.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

In this research, 32 EFL learners were participated. They were all English learners at intermediate level. After that, the researcher divided them in two groups of experimental and control. The population of control group was 17 EFL learners and 15 for experimental group. The gender of both groups were female students. The result included two classes as the sample of the study.

The age range of the sample was between 16 and 22. Some of these participants were high school students and college students. The major of college students were not English. However, all of them had at least two years of English learning background.

### *Instrument*

In this study, some instruments of evaluation of the participants' speaking were used. The researcher used two parallel tests, as a pretest and a posttest of PET. PET is the Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET) is the second level of the Cambridge exams in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Both pretest and posttest were a PET speaking (Quintana, 2003, p.74-5). The part of PET which used in pre test was related to personal information and each learner must answer the questions in 2-3 minutes. It was included 8 questions. The pretest was given in the first session in order to find out the starting point of the students' speaking ability before the treatment was conducted. Meanwhile, the posttest was conducted at the end of the treatment in order to find out the effect of the teacher's discourse on students' speaking skills. In posttest, another part of PET was examined. It was about general conversation based on the photographs. The researcher showed the photograph to the learners and they talked about it in 3 minutes. After taking these tests, two raters scored them based on Weir's Analytic Speaking (1993, p.194-5).

### *Procedures and Data Analysis*

In experimental group, the teacher used some academic words and structures (spoken and written discourse) and he repeated them while teaching the book and in conversation part. Because these words was repeated as much as possible by the teacher, the learners used them their speaking consciously and subconsciously. In control class, the teacher just taught the book and he didn't use academic words. So the teacher's discourse didn't measure for this group.

In the first stage, the pretest (speaking part of PET) was given to both experimental and control groups. The pretest was conducted to identify the skills of the students in speaking before the treatment. The result of the test were collected and analyzed as the preliminary data about the students speaking ability and two raters scored them. In the second step, the experimental group got a treatment within 6 sessions. The experimental group received teacher's discourse technique for their conversation. The control group didn't exposed to the treatment. Third, the posttest was given to both experimental and control groups to find out whether both groups make different results or not. The posttest was principally similar as the pretest. It was used to measure the effectiveness of teacher's discourse on improving students' speaking skills in experimental group.

At least, after post test the teachers in both groups checked the speaking of the learners in terms of general speaking and the aspects of speaking like fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary knowledge, grammatical accuracy, and interactional strategies. From the beginning, all of the treatment activities were recorded; specifically the words and structures that used by the teacher within the classroom as discourse.

The scores of the students' tests were used to show the effectiveness of the teacher's discourse to improve students speaking skills. They were collected through the speaking tests, pretest and posttest which were conducted to both experimental and control groups. Two raters scored the tests. So, the inter-rater reliability happened in this research.



Scarvia et al (1975) stated that a test is valid if it measures what has to be measured. In the terms of reliability, the inter-rater reliability was used in which raters are required to make judgments on the language produced by the students. Inter-rater reliability is essentially a variation of the equivalent type of reliability in that the scores are usually produced by two raters and a correlation coefficient is calculated between them (Brown J.D., 1988), (see Appendix D).

This quantitative analysis was used to see whether this technique was effective in improvement of the learner's speaking skills. Two tests (pretest and posttest) of PET exam were applied. As it mentioned before, this research was quasi-experimental. The pretest and posttest scores were analyzed by using t-test. The t-test used to compare the two means of different groups (Hatch & Farhady, 1982). The inter-rater reliability was used to make sure that the scoring in the speaking test was objective.

In addition, the MANOVA test was used in this research. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is a statistical test procedure for comparing multivariate (population) means of several groups. Unlike ANOVA, it uses the variance-covariance between variables in testing the statistical significance of the mean differences). It is used when there are two or more dependent variables. It helps to answer essentially; MANOVA takes scores from the multiple dependent variables and creates a single dependent variable giving the ability to test for the effects. Statistical reports however will provide individual p-values for each dependent variable, indicating whether differences and interactions are statistically significant.

At least, the effect size was used in this study. Effect size is simply a way of quantifying the size of the difference between two groups. It is particularly valuable for quantifying the effectiveness of a particular intervention, relative to some comparison. Moreover, by placing the emphasis on the most important aspect of an intervention - the size of the effect - rather than its statistical significance (which conflates effect size and sample size), it promotes a more scientific approach to the accumulation of knowledge (Baugh, 2002).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

To answer the first research question of this study which asked does teacher's discourse have a statistically significant impact on the speaking of Iranian intermediate EFL learners, was analyzed. In this section, the descriptive statistics of speaking scores of both groups, i.e. the participants who were received teacher's discourse and those who didn't receive it, are shown.

The review of tables 1 and 2 reveal that the scores of learners in both groups at pretest are equal. So, all the learners are in the same level of proficiency.

The tables 3 and 4 show the descriptive statistics of the scores of two raters in two groups in posttest.

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Scores of Two Raters for Control and Experimental Groups in Pretest*

Pretest	N	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Variance
Control Group at Pretest (R1)	17	5	10	15	12.88	13.00	13 <sup>a</sup>	1.616	2.610
Control Group at Pretest (R2)	17	5	10	15	12.59	13.00	13	1.583	2.507
Experimental Group at Pretest (R1)	15	5	10	15	12.93	13.00	12 <sup>a</sup>	1.486	2.210
Experimental Group at Pretest (R2)	15	5	10	15	12.73	13.00	12	1.486	2.210



*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Scores of Two Raters for Control and Experimental Groups in Pretest*

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Control Group at Pretest (R2)	17	5	10	15	12.59	13.00	13	1.583	2.507
Experimental Group at Pretest (R1)	15	5	10	15	12.93	13.00	12 <sup>a</sup>	1.486	2.210
Experimental Group at Pretest (R2)	15	5	10	15	12.73	13.00	12	1.486	2.210

*Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Scores Between Control and Experimental Groups in Pretest*

Pretest	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Variance
Control Group at Pretest	17	4.50	10.50	15.00	12.73	13.00	13.00 <sup>a</sup>	1.521	2.31
Experimental Group at Pretest	15	5.00	10.00	15.00	12.83	13.00	13.50	1.422	2.02

*Table 3: Descriptive statistics of scores of two raters for control and experimental groups in posttest*

Posttest	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Variance
Control Group at Posttest (R1)	17	6	11	17	13.59	14.00	14	1.460	2.132
Control Group at Posttest (R2)	17	5	11	16	13.35	13.00	14	1.455	2.118
Experimental Group at Posttest (R1)	15	4	13	17	14.93	15.00	13 <sup>a</sup>	1.223	1.495
Experimental Group at Posttest (R2)	15	4	13	17	14.73	15.00	14	1.163	1.352

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of Scores Between control and Experimental Groups in Posttest

Posttest	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Variance
Control Group	17	5.00	11.00	16.00	13.47	13.50	12.00 <sup>a</sup>	1.385	1.92
Experimental Group	15	4.00	13.00	17.00	14.83	14.50	14.50	1.128	1.27

#### Test of Normality Analyses of Pretest

Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality was utilized to the normality of participants' speaking at pretest. The result of this analysis is set forth in Table 5.

Based on the result of this table, we can state that two groups of scores are normally distributed. Accordingly, the parametric independent-sample *t*-tests was run to compare the speaking mean score of control and experimental group before the treatment.

Table 5: Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality of Participants' Speaking Scores at Pretest

PRETEST	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Control Group	.942	15	.413
Experimental Group	.969	15	.846

#### Test of Normality Analyses of Posttest

The results of this analysis in Table 7 express that Sig. of participants' speaking scores for control and experimental groups at posttest are .29 and .57 respectively, that are both larger than that of the selected significance i.e. .05. Therefore, it can be claimed that two groups of scores are normally distributed and parametric one-sample *t*-test was run to compare the writing and mean score of control and experimental groups after the treatment to test the hypotheses of this study.

Table 6: Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality of Participants' Speaking Scores at Posttest

POSTTEST	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Control Group	.974	15	.913
Experimental Group	.925	15	.231

Table 8 demonstrates that Sig. (*p* value) which is .005 is less than .05 ( $P < \alpha$ ). Furthermore, the *t*-observed which is -3.02 is greater than the *t*-critical at the 0.05 level of significance, 2.00. So these reveal significant difference between the mean speaking score of control and experimental after treatment. Therefore, the null hypothesis of this study

which states that “Teacher's discourse quality doesn't have an impact on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' skill in maintaining conversation” is **rejected**. So we can claim that teachers' Teacher's discourse quality influence Iranian intermediate EFL learners' skill in maintaining conversation.

*Table 7: Independent Samples Test to Compare the Speaking Score of Control and Experimental Groups at Posttest*

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
							95% Confidence Interval	
F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	Lower	Upper
.503	.484	-3.02	30	.005	-1.36	.450	-2.283	-.442

#### ***Investigation of Research Question Two***

To answer the second research question of this study which asked does teacher's discourse have statistically different impacts on the fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary knowledge, grammatical accuracy, and interactional strategies of Iranian intermediate EFL learners, was analyzed. After computing the *t*-test, we need to compute the effect size based on Glass's test. Otherwise the researcher do not know how much the treatment was effective. Glass's  $\Delta$  effect size is known as the difference of two population means and it is divided by the standard deviation of the second group. Mathematically Glass's  $\Delta$  effect size is denoted by:

$$\Delta = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{s_2}$$

$$= 14.83 - 13.47/1.38$$

$$= .9$$

One feature of an effect size is that it can be directly converted into statements about the overlap between the two samples in terms of a comparison of percentiles. The result of effect size is shown in table 9.

*Table 8: Independent Samples Test to Compare the Speaking Score of Control and Experimental Groups at Posttest*

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
							95% Confidence Interval	
F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	Lower	Upper
.503	.484	-3.02	30	.005	-1.36	.450	-2.283	-.442

#### ***Investigation of Five Factors (Dependent variables)***

To analyze the five factors of marking speaking test, MANOVA was applied. It is applied in table 10.

Table 9: One-way MANOVA (Pretest)

*Descriptive Statistics*

PRETEST		Mean	Std. Deviation	N
	Group			
Fluency	Control	2.559	.3906	17
	Experimental	2.733	.3716	15
	Total	2.641	.3859	32
Pronunciation	Control	2.618	.4517	17
	Experimental	2.533	.3994	15
	Total	2.578	.4233	32
Vocabulary	Control	2.353	.3859	17
	Experimental	2.600	.3873	15
	Total	2.469	.4004	32
Grammatical Accuracy	Control	2.500	.4330	17
	Experimental	2.633	.3994	15
	Total	2.563	.4164	32
Interactional Strategies	Control	2.441	.3906	17
	Experimental	2.367	.3994	15
	Total	2.406	.3902	32

Levene's test was run to investigate the equality of variances among the dependent variables at pretest. The Sig. for all five factors is more than .05 reflecting that these five factors have equal variances in control and experimental groups and therefore are homogeneous. MANOVA in Table 11 was performed to investigate five different factors in speaking pretest. The dependent variables which were used are Fluency, Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Grammatical Accuracy, and Interactional Strategies. The independent variable was discourse quality. There was not a statistically significant difference between mean score of control and experimental groups on the dependent variables, since  $F(5, 26) = 1.48, p = .22$ ; Wilks' Lambda = .77; partial eta squared (effect size) = .22 that is much low.

Table 10: One-way MANOVA (Tests of Between-Subjects Effects) at Pretest

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.988	439.283	5.000	26.000	.000	.988	
	Wilks' Lambda	.012	439.283	5.000	26.000	.000	.988	
	Hotelling's Trace	84.477	439.283	5.000	26.000	.000	.988	
	Roy's Largest Root	84.477	439.283	5.000	26.000	.000	.988	
Group	Pillai's Trace	.222	1.488	5.000	26.000	.228	.222	
	Wilks' Lambda	.778	1.488	5.000	26.000	.228	.222	
	Hotelling's Trace	.286	1.488	5.000	26.000	.228	.222	
	Roy's Largest Root	.286	1.488	5.000	26.000	.228	.222	

Table 11 explains that when the results for the dependent variables were considered separately via Tests of Between-Subjects Effects, the difference between the mean of control and experimental groups on all five dependent variables was not statistically significant, since the Sig. for all of them is more than .05 ( $P > \alpha$ )

Table 11: One-way MANOVA (Posttest)

**Descriptive Statistics**

Posttest	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Fluency	Control	2.676	.4309	17
	Experimental	3.067	.3200	15
	Total	2.859	.4257	32
Pronunciation	Control	2.588	.4045	17
	Experimental	2.767	.3716	15
	Total	2.672	.3937	32
Vocabulary	Control	2.941	.3483	17
	Experimental	3.100	.3381	15
	Total	3.016	.3474	32
Grammatical Accuracy	Control	2.441	.4638	17
	Experimental	2.733	.3716	15
	Total	2.578	.4419	32
Interactional Strategies	Control	3.029	.3293	17
	Experimental	3.167	.4082	15
	Total	3.094	.3689	32

MANOVA in Table 12 was performed to investigate five dependent variables in speaking posttest. The dependent variables are Fluency, Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Grammatical Accuracy, and Interactional Strategies. The independent variable was discourse quality. There was not a statistically significant difference between mean score of control and experimental groups on all five dependent variables, since  $F(5, 26) = 1.72, p = .14$ ; Wilks' Lambda = .75; partial eta squared = .24 ( $p > .05$ ). Wilks' Lambda does not tell us which variables were different between the two groups.

Table 12: One-way MANOVA (Tests of Within-Subjects Effects) at Posttest

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.993	718.584	5.000	26.000	.000	.993
	Wilks' Lambda	.007	718.584	5.000	26.000	.000	.993
	Hotelling's Trace	138.189	718.584	5.000	26.000	.000	.993
	Roy's Largest Root	138.189	718.584	5.000	26.000	.000	.993
Group	Pillai's Trace	.249	1.727	5.000	26.000	.164	.249
	Wilks' Lambda	.751	1.727	5.000	26.000	.144	.249
	Hotelling's Trace	.332	1.727	5.000	26.000	.164	.249
	Roy's Largest Root	.332	1.727	5.000	26.000	.164	.249

Thus, Tests of Between-Subjects Effects was applied to investigate the change of mean score of the dependent variables between the two groups. The results are manifested in Table 13.

Table 13: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects (Posttest)

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Group	Fluency	1.213	1	1.213	8.265	.007	.216	
	Pronunciation	.254	1	.254	1.672	.206	.053	
	Vocabulary	.201	1	.201	1.703	.202	.054	
	Grammatical Accuracy	.680	1	.680	1.987	.048	.142	
	Interactional Strategies	.150	1	.150	1.107	.301	.036	
Error	Fluency	4.404	30	.147				
	Pronunciation	4.551	30	.152				
	Vocabulary	3.541	30	.118				
	Grammatical Accuracy	5.375	30	.179				
	Interactional Strategies	4.069	30	.136				

When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately via Tests of Between-Subjects Effects, the all five dependent variables were not statistically significant between two groups at posttest. The Pronunciation, Vocabulary, Interactional Strategies were **not** significantly different between control and experimental groups, because the Sig. for them were .20, .20, and .30 respectively that are more than .05 ( $P > \alpha$ ). However, the two other factors i.e. Fluency, and Grammatical Accuracy were significantly different between the two groups since the Sig. for Fluency factor was .007 with the effect size (partial eta squared) of .21, and the Sig. for Grammatical Accuracy was .04 with the effect size of .14, and .24 respectively that are less than .05 ( $P < \alpha$ ).

Figure 1 and 2 reveal the difference between the mean of control and experimental groups on all five dependent variables at pretest and posttest.

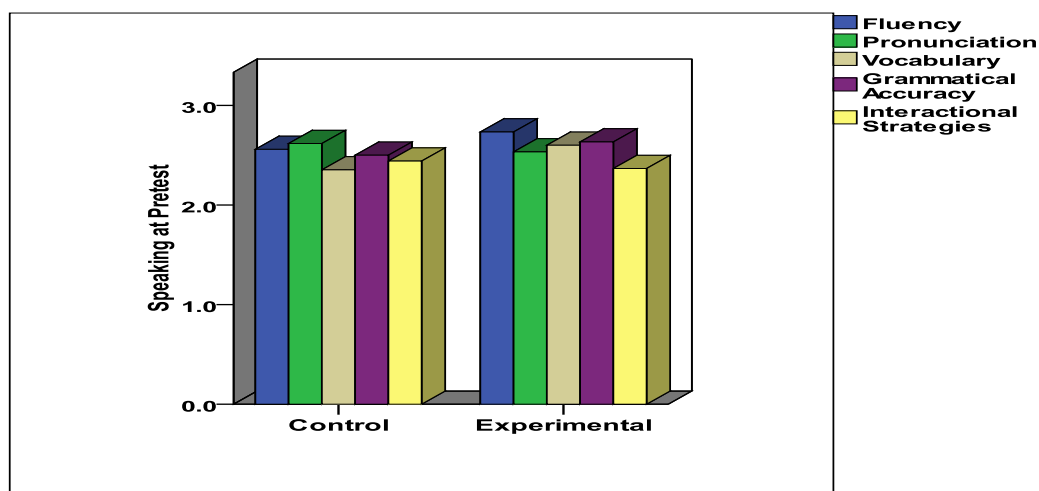


Figure 1: The Difference Between the Mean of Control and Experimental Groups on all Five Dependent Variables at Pretest



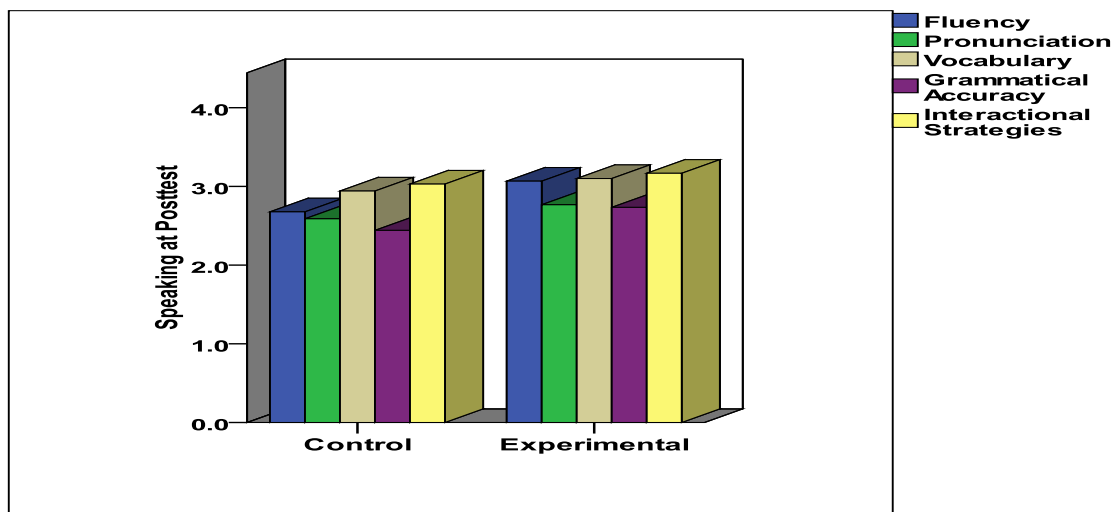


Figure 2: The Difference Between the Mean of Control and Experimental Groups on all Five Dependent Variables at Posttest

## CONCLUSION

In this research the independent variable in first question hypothesis (teacher's discourse quality) which may influence speaking skill on Iranian intermediate EFL learners was examined. Based on Ghabanchi, , Morady, & Malekzadeh, (2011) The effect of teacher discourse is not unknown to researchers and language teachers since it has a significant role on learners' success or failure.

In order to determine whether there was any significant difference between teachers discourse quality on learners' speaking skills, the participants divided in two groups; control and experimental . Furthermore, the two groups of learners were compared in terms of speaking skills before and after receiving treatment.

As it has been argued in the previous parts of this chapter, the EFL learners' speaking skills were significantly different between control and experimental groups. according to t-test and MANOVA, the speaking skills among learners in experimental group were more improved rather than control group. So, this result shows the theoretical and statistical significant on the data. In addition, the effect size based on Glass's test showed the practical significant of the data in this research. Many studies have advocated the influence of teacher discourse on learners' success. Webb, Nemer, and Ing (2006) conducted a research and concluded that the discourse modeled by the teacher is largely mirrored, to use the aforementioned researchers' word, in learners' behavior.

In the case of testing fluency, pronunciation, knowledge of vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, and interactional strategies in second question hypothesis, there was observed that all of these variables have significant impact on speaking skills of learners in experimental group. Researchers such as Cazden (1986) and Rymes (2008) have long recognized the potential of teacher discourse to foster meaningful conversation and student learning in classrooms.

In this study, the interaction between students with each other, teacher with learners, and learners with the teacher were increased, too. This indicates that when learners are talking with a classmate, they tend to produce a discourse closer to that of spontaneous conversation rather than generating elaborate discourse. Thus, it is assumed that interaction between learners are adequate for improving "interactive competence" ( He & Young 1998), interactions with a teacher enhance learners' experience of more complex discourse.

Therefore, classroom interaction probably provides a productive basis for enhancing. It was also shown here that the effectiveness of teacher discourse improving learners' speaking skills might have its own limits for some learners. When discussing the EFL learners, it was suggested that their multi-utterance behavior might depend either on their proficiency or on their culture specific communicative behavior. Probably, the self-confidence learners have of their communicative proficiency also plays a role in their performance. In any case, this kind of learner continues to produce short discourse so their discourse

acquisition remains at risk. To find out whether explicit discourse learning would improve their performance and to understand the real cause of their reluctant performance, further investigation of the second language classroom is needed.

These findings are in line with Douglas (2000), Inceçay (2010), and Palincsar and Brown (1984) perspective. Douglas (2000) argues that students may temporarily take on a teaching role, but teachers have a special status with the authority to manage classroom discourse in terms of content (topic, task) and structure (small group, whole class), as well as to set physical and temporal boundaries (available tools and time). In another study, Inceçay (2010) analyzed the quality of a teacher's language use in a class of 16 Turkish young learners of English as a foreign language and found that there are two categories regarding teacher talk; construction and obstruction. Therefore, teachers can improve or hinder learning process through the language they use. Palincsar and Brown (1984) developed an approach called reciprocal teaching in which teachers help students carry out certain strategies designed to improve text comprehension, including generating summaries, questions and predictions about the text they have read, and clarifying what they don't understand. During dialogues with students, teachers model the strategies, prompt students to use them and provide instruction on how to use them, and provide feedback.

#### ***Limitation/ Delimitation of the Study***

The present study was delimited and imitated in certain ways. It was really impossible to have EFL learners almost all to be in the same age. Also, the officials of the institute where the study took place, would not let the class activities to be videotaped.

In order to handle the project easily and to clear up the sex factor, just female participants were selected. The study was worked in intermediate level. The age of learners were between 16 to 22, and the researcher couldn't do this study in other ages. This study was conducted in a local setting with Iranian EFL learner, so it cannot be claimed that all EFL learners benefit from teacher's discourse. Last but not least, this study was conducted in a rather short period of time. If there was more time, different techniques such as lecture, storytelling, communication games, and role play could be used for assessing the role of teacher's discourse in speaking skill.

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APPLICABILITY OF E-ASSESSMENT IN IRAN AS AN EFL CONTEXT: FROM FANTASY TO  
REALITY

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**ABSTRACT**

Language assessment, in line with theoretical changes in language and psychology, has undergone major shifts both in theory and practice. Unlike traditional discrete point testing that strived for maximally objective measurement procedures without reference to particular teaching and learning situations, recent approaches to language assessment have viewed assessment as an integral part of the teaching and learning processes. Emergence of formative assessment, dynamic assessment, and E-assessment could be attributed to such recent developments. Given the fact that E-assessment is the least understood and researched especially in EFL, English as a Foreign Language, contexts, the present article tries to review the underlying motives for the emergence and application of E-assessment to come up with context specific decisions over the applicability such an assessment procedure in Iran as an EFL context. The usefulness of E-assessment needs to be determined through weighting the advantages and disadvantages with reference to particular testing situations.

**KEYWORDS:** E-assessment; EFL assessment

**PRELIMINARIES**

Haken, (2006) explains that assessment is an integral piece to assuring that an educational institution achieves its learning goals, as well as a crucial means of providing the essential evidence necessary for seeking and maintaining accreditation. Hersh, (2004) advocates the position that assessment of student learning should be considered an integral part of the teaching and learning processes as well as part of the feedback loops that serves to enhance institutional effectiveness. Good assessment serves multiple objectives (Swearington, n.d.) and benefits a number of stake-holders (Love & Cooper, 2004). According to Dietal, Herman, and Knuth (1991) assessment provides an accurate measure of student performance to enable teachers, administrators, and other key decision makers to make effective decisions. Kellough and Kellough (1999) identified seven purposes of assessment:

- 1-Improving student's learning;
- 2-Identifying students' strengths and weaknesses;
- 3-Reviewing, assessing, and improving the effectiveness of different teaching strategies;
- 4-Reviewing, assessing, and improving the effectiveness of curricular programs;
- 5-Improving teaching effectiveness;
- 6-Providing useful administrative data that will expedite decision making; and
- 7-Communicating with stakeholders (p.56).

Most individuals in the assessment community believe that the assessment process begins with the identification of learning goals and measurable objectives (Martell & Calderon, 2005) as well as the use of specific traits that help define the objectives being measured (Walvoord & Ander-son, 1998). These traits are frequently correlated with the developmental concepts articulated in Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives which provides a recognized set of hierarchical behaviors that can be measured as part of an assessment plan (Harich, Fraser, & Norby, 2005).

Assessment is not new to academia, with the roots of the current movement dating back over two decades (Martell & Calderon, 2005). But two decades hardly take us back to the origins of educational assessment. According to Pearson, Vyas, Sensale, and Kim (2001), assessment of student learning has been gaining and losing popularity for well over 150 years. In K-12 education, assessment first emerged in America in the 1840's, when an early pioneer of

assessment, Horace Mann, used standardized written examinations to measure learning in Massachusetts (Pearson et al., 2001). After losing momentum, the scientific movement of the 1920's propelled the use of large-scale testing as a means of assessing learning (Audette, 2005). The 1960's saw further support of standardized testing when the National Assessment of Educational Progress was formed, which produced the Nation's Report Card (Linn, 2002). But perhaps no initiative has had as broad and pervasive an impact as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), which formally ushered us into an age of accountability. The NCLB act is a sweeping piece of legislation that requires regularly administered standardized testing to document student performance. The NCLB act is based on standards and outcomes, measuring results, and holding schools accountable for student learning (Audette, 2005). In 2006, Congress is required to reauthorize the Higher Education Act and it is predicted that NCLB will lead to changes in Higher Education Assessment requirements (Ewell & Steen, 2006). In higher education, the first attempts to measure educational outcomes emerged around 1900 with the movement to develop a mechanism for accrediting institutions of higher education (Urciuoli, 2005). In 1910, Morris Cooke published a comparative analysis of seven higher education institutions including Columbia, Harvard, Princeton, MIT, Toronto, Haverford, and Wisconsin. The result of the report was the establishment of the student credit hour as the unit by which to calculate cost and efficiency (Urciuoli, 2005). By 1913, accreditation in higher education had spread nationwide with the formation of a number of accrediting bodies (Urciuoli, 2005). The United States is unusual in that it relies on private associations rather than government agencies to provide accreditation of academic institutions and programs. A number of reports released in the mid 1980's charged higher education to focus on student learning (Old Dominion University, 2006). During that time, the first formal assessment group was established, the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) Assessment Forum, formed in 1987. In 1992, accrediting agencies were required to consider learning outcomes as a condition for accreditation following a 1992 Department of Education mandate (Ewell & Steen, 2006).

Assessment experts point to pioneers of the assessment movement, Alverno College and North-east Missouri State University, which have both been committed for over three decades to out-comes-based instruction. Kruger and Heisser (1987) who evaluated the Northeast Missouri State University assessment program found that the variety of assessments and questionnaires employed as well as the use of a longitudinal database that provides multivariate analysis makes this institution an exemplar in the effective use of quality assessment to support sound decision making. The oldest recognized undergraduate assessment program in the United States can be found at the University of Wisconsin, which has reported on some form of student outcomes assessment continuously since 1900 (Urciuoli, 2005).

The assessment movement is not limited to the United States. In the United Kingdom, the Higher Education Funding Council was established following the Further and Higher Education Act of 1992, requiring the assessment of quality of education in funded institutions. In 2004, the Higher Education Act was passed with the goal of widening access to higher education as well as keeping UK institutions competitive in the global economy (Higher Education Funding Council for England, 2005). The formation of the Europe Union has created a need for the communication of educational quality. According to Urciuolo (2005) educational discourse in Europe and the UK are becoming dominated with the terms standards and accountability, which were born and have been growing within the United States for many years.

## APPROACHES TO ASSESSMENT

Petkov and Petkova (2006) recommend course-embedded assessment as having the advantage of ease of implementation, low cost, timeliness, and student acceptance and note that the type of performance appraisal supported by rubrics is particularly effective when assessing problem solving, communication and team working skills. They explain that rubrics should not be considered checklists but rather criteria and rating scales for evaluation of a product or performance. According to Aurbach (n.d.), rubrics articulate the standards by which a product, performance, or outcome demonstration will be evaluated. They help to standardize assessment, provide useful data, and articulate goals and objectives to learners. Rubrics are also particularly useful in assessing complex and subjective skills (Dodge & Pickette, 2001).

Petkov and Petkova (2006) who implemented rubrics in introductory IS courses found that the use of rubrics helped to make assessment more uniform, better communicate expectations and performance to students, measure student progress over time, and help to lay the foundation for a long-term assessment program that combines projects and portfolios. They argued that measuring students' knowledge, strengths, and weaknesses prior to instruction is done



through diagnostic testing. Diagnostic assessment allows educators to remedy deficiencies as well as make curricular adjustments.

Haken (2006) similarly explained that it is important to measure knowledge; however, measuring knowledge is not enough. Hence, the current charge in education is to transform learning and assessment from the world of memorized facts to a broad, well-rounded model that reflects the learner-centered outcomes of an academic program (Wright, 2004). As a result, an academic program should work on building as well as assessing students' critical-thinking skills (Haken, 2006). According to Walcott (2005), who examined business education, examples of critical thinking can be found in the creation of marketing plans, the interpretation of financial statement ratios, the recommending of organizational restructuring, identifying and analyzing ethical issues, case studies, evaluating a company's strengths and weaknesses, and portfolio creation. Portfolios can be used to assess learning-outcome achievement as well as to diagnose curriculum deficiencies that require improvement (Popper, 2005). Popper explained that portfolios should include a variety of samples of student work. According to the American Association of Higher Education (2001), portfolios have a broad application in a variety of contexts for the collection of meaningful evidence about learning outcomes. According to Chun (2002), a portfolio should require students to collect, assemble, and reflect on samples that represent the culmination of their learning. Cooper (1999) identified six considerations of the portfolio building process: identification of skill areas, design of measurable outcomes, identification of learning strategies, identification of performance indicators, collection of evidence, and assessment. Wiggins (1990) suggests that work being assessed should be authentic or based on the real world. Pellegrino, Chudonsky, and Glaser (2001) suggest that formative assessments focus less on student responses and more on performance. As a result, many institutions are anchoring their assessment activities into meaningful scenarios so that students are being assessed on their abilities to apply learning into realistic situations.

### **E-ASSESSMENT USE**

E-Assessment is often seen as providing a partial solution to providing assessment for increasing numbers of students and declining staff to student ratios (Sim et al., 2004). In addition, students may experience cognitive conflict because they are generally expected to word process essays and engage in online tasks but use pens in examination halls (Brown et al, 1997) such that we are training them in one system and testing them in another. Gipps (2003) reasons that if teaching and its associated resources become electronic, then assessment too will need to take that route, to ensure alignment between the modes of teaching and assessment.

Subjective judgment is always involved – when an educator creates a test they do so with their internal biases on the type and nature of material. When the limit of the assessment and the type and nature of the 'correct' answers are preset, the educator introduces their own judgment and bias into the system from the start. However the extent of bias can be reduced because in e-assessment, the judgments made are only made based upon the original criteria and not on 'human introduced error' (e.g. marking at 2 a.m.) so that a second level of error is not introduced. In addition, levels of correctness can be programmed into the system that can score partially correct marks in a more consistent manner.

### ***Advantages of E-Assessment***

These are characteristics of good assessment skill and have links to a strong well evaluated pedagogy, as well as providing maintain for both employees and students– and of course, online assessment has all the other advantages of distant access and selection of time and place of assessment (while the latter may be limited for summative assessments that require security). When looking to use e-assessment, one can find that grading quickly is one of its strongest points. Test feedback can be on a question by question basis and with the use of a 'knowledge tracking system' and students can follow their evolution and self-determine their weaknesses and strengths as well. Some of the advantages of e-assessment that one might want to consider are:

- direct feedback to students,
- allows rehearsal and revision,
- immediate feedback to employees,
- allows evaluation of a course's strengths and weaknesses,
- Can be connected to other computer-based or online materials.



## CONCERNS AND ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH E-ASSESSMENT

Implementation of E-assessment does not seem that realizable without a true and comprehensive understanding of the issues associated with it. In fact E-assessment may not always be the first priority in particular educational contexts. Its usefulness should be determined with reference to particular situations so this section is allocated to the issues relevant to electronic assessment.

### *Time Required*

One of the claims most often made for e-assessment is that it saves time. This is perfectly true at the point of delivery— it is possible to process the results for a summative assessment for a class of, for example around 700 students within a couple of hours of the last one logging off, including error checking and results analysis. This has to be balanced against the time, and skill, needed to create the assessment in the first place. This may not be so important for formative assessments, which can be discussed with students later (and where failings may actually be of educational interest) but it is obviously vital that an end-of-course assessment should be reliable. The time and expertise for this cannot be underestimated, nor the need for 'shredding and vetting' by colleagues. There are times when an open-ended exercise (whether we call it an essay, project or report) may be more suitable for your purposes. There is of course no reason why this cannot be delivered online, with students uploading written materials into virtual learning environments to be assessed off-line.

### *Misleading Clues*

There is a danger that by picking out particular areas (either deliberately or inadvertently), the quizzes could send misleading clues to students about what is and isn't important. This is exacerbated by the students' tendency to be very strategic and exam-focused when considering how best to spend their study time.' (Clarke, et al, 2004: 253)

### *Equity and Diversity*

Equity and diversity— when computers are involved in the assessment process, there are equity issues for different student groups relating to language status and gender and issues around computer anxiety and exam equivalence. Brosnan (1999, p. 48–49) suggests that: 'computer anxiety can lead to simplification of conceptual reasoning, heightened polarization and extremity of judgment and pre-emption of attention, working memory and processing resources. Individuals high in computer anxiety will therefore underperform in computer-based versions of assessment'. Brosnan (1999) asserts that even those who are using computers effectively will still exhibit computer anxiety and he contends that female students exhibit higher levels of anxiety, and so poorer levels of performance. Ricketts and Wilks (2002) suggest that student performance in tests should be monitored to ensure fairness and consistency when there are any changes in delivery, whether this is a change to CAA or changes in the way that the CAA is presented.

### *Issues of Equivalence*

The issues of equivalence between different forms of assessment are highlighted by Clariana and Wallace (2002), who assert that you cannot necessarily expect that equivalent measures of student learning will be produced from computer-based and paper-based tests, even if you use the same questions. They assume that the 'test mode effect' will diminish when students become as familiar with the medium of the computer as they are with paper, for assessment, and that computer familiarity might be an issue for some groups of students. McDonald and Twining (2002) concurs, expressing the belief that inconsistent findings relating to student scores in computer-based and paper-based tests often result from different levels of exposure to changing technologies. It is probably fair to observe generally that students perform differently under different conditions of assessment, and that innovations in CAA simply introduce a new range of variants on this construct theme.

### *It Attracts Greater Scrutiny*

While problems with objective testing can occur whether the tests are offered on paper or online, it is the online testing that tends to attract greater scrutiny. Don Mackenzie in Brown et al. (1997, p.217) contends that CAA has produced quality and efficiency gains in assessment, but for many there have been marginally lower pass rates than for essay-type assessments. He suggests that the reason is that there is a larger spread of marks (typically a standard deviation of 15 per cent with a mean of 50 per cent).

### ***Design of Questions***

Problems in the use of computers for multiple choice questions could derive from the design of the questions and the skills of the designer (Mackenzie, 2003), rather than from the software or the use of the computer per se, or it could be that some tutors may be reluctant to relinquish traditional modes of assessment (Mackenzie, 2003).

### ***Disparity***

Research by Clariana and Wallace (2002) has shown that the use of CAA has a positive impact on the test scores of high attaining pupils, when compared to those from paper-based tests, because they assert that higher-attaining students more quickly adapt to new assessment approaches.

Noyes, et al. (2004) suggests that lower-performing individuals will be disadvantaged when CAA is used because they assert that a greater work load and additional effort is required to complete a computer-based test.

### ***Change in Working Practices***

The savings in time that might be produced by the automated marking in CAA are instead shifted to the design and construction of the assessment activity, (including the level and amount of feedback to be given). Brown, et al. (1997) sees this as a profound change in working practices for academics. There is also the issue of defining requisite technical skills for students undertaking CAA such as, who should be involved in that training, and when should it take place, especially in the context of overloaded curricula, (Weller, 2002). Macdonald and Twining, (2002) found that their students only became competent in the use of a particular piece of software while they were completing an assignment that required its use.

### ***Plagiarism***

Plagiarism is a concern for many thinking of using CAA, (Weller, 2002); but Rovai, (2000) and Carroll, (2002) suggest that assessment design is the key to deterring plagiarism. O'Hare and Mackenzie, (2004) assert that there is a level of imagination and rigor required for the design of assessment online compared to that for more traditional forms of assessment. Weller et al, (2002) suggests that the use of portfolios can help to counter plagiarism, as these places less reliance on single assessment items. The JISC funded Plagiarism Advisory Service gives advice and guidance on plagiarism prevention.

### ***Off-Campus Assessment***

Computer software for CAA allows for questions to be presented to students in different orders, with distracters in different orders, and if sufficient questions have been compiled of sufficient integrity then they can sit different tests. All of this allows for students to sit in adjoining desks in computer laboratories that will at other times be used for learning activities. This is fairly straightforward for on-campus students, but could be more problematic for students taking courses at a distance. However, Rovai (2000) suggests that this difficulty can be overcome by using 'proctored testing' where academics arrange for students to sit online assessments under test conditions in alternative venues.

### ***Reasons for using E-Assessment***

Bull and McKenna, (2004: page 3) suggest a number of reasons that academics may wish to use CAA:

1. To increase the frequency of assessment, thereby, motivating students to learn, encouraging students to practice skills.
2. To broaden the range of knowledge assessed.
3. To increase feedback to students and lecturers.
4. To extend the range of assessment methods.
5. To increase objectivity and consistency.
6. To decrease marking loads.
7. To aid administrative efficiency.

Nichol and Macfarlane, Dick (2005; 2004) identified from the research literature seven principles of good feedback practice that could support learner self-regulation – active control by students of some aspects of their own learning. Nichol and Milligan (2006) have taken this further to show how e-assessment can support these seven principles by providing: Timely feedback, opportunities for re-assessment and continuous formative assessment to encourage

students' self-esteem, statistics to help tutors evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment— questions answered very poorly can be re-examined in case poorly specified, timely information for tutors to be able to help shape teaching.

Peer assessment is attractive for an number of reasons. (Topping's 1998 reviewing demonstrated that it is associated with gains on conventional performance measures, in higher education.) Students can be asked to create far more pieces of work than could be marked by a single tutor. It can avoid the problem that as a class size gets bigger, the load on the tutor increases directly, along with the time taken to provide feedback to students. Students must understand criteria for assessment, and must acquire a range of higher-order skills, such as abstracting ideas, detecting errors and misconceptions, critiquing and suggesting improvements.

### ***Assessment and Education***

Assessment is central to the practice of education. For students, good performance on 'high-stakes' assessment gives access to further educational opportunities and employment. For teachers and schools, it provides evidence of success as individuals and organizations. Assessment systems are used to measure individual and organizational success, and so can have a profound driving influence on systems they were designed to serve.

There is an intimate association between teaching, learning and assessment, illustrated in below figure. Robitaille, et al, (1993) distinguish three components of the curriculum: the intended curriculum (set out in policy statements), the implemented curriculum (which can only be known by studying classroom practices) and the attained curriculum (which is what students can do at the end of a course of study). The links between these three aspects of the curriculum are not straightforward. The 'top-down' ambitions of some policy makers are hostages to a number of other factors. The assessment system tests and scoring guides- provides a far clearer definition of what is to be learned than does any verbal description (and perhaps provides the only clear definition), and so is a far better basis for curriculum planning at classroom level than are grand statements of educational ambitions. Teachers' values and competences also mediate policy and attainment; however, the assessment system is the most potent driver of classroom practice.

This is a well-established technology, particularly well- suited to assessing declarative knowledge ("knowing that") in well-defined domains. Developing tasks to identify student misconceptions is also possible. It is harder to assess procedural knowledge ("knowing how"). MCT is unsuited to eliciting student explanations, or other open responses. MCT have the great advantage that they can be very cheap to create and use. Some of this cheapness is illusory, because the costs of designing good items can be high. Over-use of MCT can be very expensive, if it leads to a distortion of the curriculum in favor of atomized declarative knowledge, divorced from conceptual structures that students can use to work on the world, effectively. MCT are used extensively for high-stakes assessment, and are presented increasingly via the web. For example, web-based high-stakes tests are now available; the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), used by many colleges to determine access to Graduate School in many colleges, is available online.

### ***Creating more authentic paper and pencil tests***

It makes sense to allow students access to the tools they use in class, such as word processors, and that professionals use at work, such as graphing tools and modeling packages during testing. It makes no sense at all to always forbid students to use 'tools of the trade' when being assessed. E-learning changes the nature of the skills required. E-assessment allows examiners to focus more on conceptual understanding of what needs to be done to solve problems, and less on telling students what to do, then assessing them on their competence in using the manual techniques required to get the answer.

A complete reliance on paper-based assessment has a number of drawbacks; first is that such assessments are increasingly 'inauthentic' as classroom and professional practices embrace ICT. Second is that such assessments constrain progress, and have a negative effect on students who have to learn (just for the exam) how to do things on paper that are done far more effectively with ICT. A third major constraint is that current innovative suggestions for curriculum reform, which rely on student portfolios for their implementation, will be impossible to manage on a large scale without extensive use of ICT.

E-assessment is a stimulus for rethinking the whole curriculum, as well as all current assessment systems. E-assessment provides a cost-effective way to integrate high quality portfolio assessment with externally set and marked tests, in any combination. This makes it likely that there will be significant changes in the structure of

summative assessments, because of the range of student attainments that can now be assessed reliably. There is likely to be extensive use of teacher assessment of those aspects of performance best judged by humans (including extended pieces of work assembled into portfolios), and more extensive use made of on-demand tests of those aspects of performance, which can be done easily by computer, or which are done best by computer.

## CONCLUSION

This article has not real reflected potential pitfalls application of e-assessment in nowadays educational system of Iran. However, a single study cannot unravel the different effects e-assessment on the educational system at the micro and macro levels; in fact it is very difficult on the basis of this review study to prove that exactly which factors actually cause impediment to the applicability of e-assessment in Iran. The major dilemma ahead of practitioners is the inauthentic nature of e-assessment. Recent communicative approaches to testing have advocated the use of authentic tests as reliable predictors of testes' future performances in academic and non academic situations. Bachman (1990) recognized 2 different approaches to authenticity: real-life approach (RL) and interactional-ability approach (IA). E-assessment is more at odds with RL approach which intends to design test tasks that are situation ally as much as possible similar to non test real life tasks. Testers need to make up their minds and determine if e-assessment should be emphasized at the expense of authenticity.

Another challenge in EFL contexts is the applicability of e-assessment in terms of facilities available in institutions, educational policies, and its face validity. According to Bachman and Palmer (1996), total abandonment of any of the test qualities is not legitimate. The testers, instead, need to maximize the overall usefulness of the test. E-assessment is not of course an exception.

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## THE EFFECT OF LOCAL AND GLOBAL CUES ON THE COMPREHENSION OF PERSIAN PSEUDOCLEFTS

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of canonical word order as a global cue and resumption as a local cue on the comprehension of Persian pseudoclefts. Nineteen (N = 19) monolingual Persian speaking children aged between 31 and 79 months were recruited from a kindergarten. Using a picture selection task consisting of 27 items including subject pseudoclefts, object pseudoclefts with resumptive pronoun, object pseudoclefts with resumptive clitic, and gapped object pseudoclefts. The results showed that subject pseudoclefts which have a canonical word order were comprehended more accurately than different object pseudoclefts and that resumptive elements did not have a significant effect on the comprehension of object pseudoclefts. The results are discussed with reference to current theories of sentence processing.

**KEYWORDS:** Persian, Pseudocleft, Canonical word order, Resumption

### INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this study is to examine the effect of canonical and non-canonical word orders on the comprehension of Persian pseudoclefts. Specifically, we aimed to compare the comprehension of subject and object pseudoclefts by Persian-speaking children. A consistent finding in the context of relative clauses is that subject relative clauses such as (1a) are easier to process than object RCs, as in (1b), e.g., Arnon (2005); Diessel and Tomasello (2005).

(1a) The dog that chased the cat.

(1b) The cat that the dog chased\_.

A number of proposals have been put forward to explain why (1a) is generally easier to process than (1b). The first account is the structural distance hypothesis (O'Grady, Lee, & Choo, 2003) which claims that the structural distance between the head noun and the position it occupies in the RC determines sentence difficulty. The linear distance hypothesis attributes the difficulty to the linear distance between the head and its position in the relative clause; that is, the number of intervening words between the head noun and the gap (e.g., Gibson, 1998, 2000; Hawkins, 1989). Finally, the difference in complexity has been attributed, by accounts known as the word order difference hypothesis, to the fact that object relative clauses have noncanonical word order within the relative clause (Christiansen & MacDonald, 2009). The suggestion is that, since canonical word order is more frequently encountered, it is easier to parse than non-canonical word order, which is comparatively infrequent and therefore marked.

As a significant structural attribute, discontinuous dependencies are universal in languages of the world. It is a general property of any language that two interconnected elements are often split in the surface structure of a sentence. In English filler-gap dependencies, gaps are generated in the surface structure of a sentence by shifting a word to another place. In object RCs in English which is a canonical SVO language, the object goes before the verb, which is a non-canonical order. Such change in position from the original canonical position lays an empty sign marking the underlying unmarked canonical position (i.e., the gap) from which it has been moved (Chomsky, 1995).

Models of language processing have long intended to find out how the comprehension machine connects the moved elements of these discontinuous dependencies to permit the human processor to comprehend the input and at inspecting the function of the underlying canonical order of a specific language in the procedures triggered during

such connection. As a result, an essential question is whether the processing system requires recovering the moved element as soon as it finds a gap or whether such connections are set only after the initial processing of the whole sentence (Love & Swinney, 1998).

Previous studies have reported contradictory results with regard to the role of resumptives in the comprehension of complex sentences. In the context of relative clauses, mixed results have been reported in the literature. Second and fourth graders' comprehension of complex sentences was investigated by Richgels (1983), using a picture selection task involving clefts and pseudoclefts. Sentences were either passive or active and their noun-verb-noun relations were either according to children's expectations or contrary to their expectations. The results showed that active sentences were easier than passive sentences and that sentences according to children's expectations (typical) were comprehended significantly better than those against their expectation (atypical). Richgels (1983) concluded from this study that children's sentence comprehension ability is under the effect of an interplay between syntactic and non-syntactic factors.

McKee and McDaniel (2001) investigated the distribution of English resumptives in a series of sentences in adults and children by the use of two elicited production and one grammaticality judgment experiment. The results of the two production experiments indicated that English-speaking children's production patterns resembled those of adults but the use of resumptives by children was significantly higher in comparison to adults. The grammaticality judgment task revealed that children's acceptance of resumptives was also higher than adults. The interpretation of these findings was that there is a close resemblance between the grammar of children and that of adults. On the other hand, it was interpreted that the difference between the performance of adults and children in the judgment task was the reflection of the children's working memory capacity limitation. The higher rate of resumptives production and acceptance by children as McKee and McDaniel (2001) argued was attributed to differences in parsing and earlier shunting of complex clauses out of children's active memory in order to reactivate the referent.

Four to five-year-old children's comprehension and production of subject and object RCs was investigated by Arnon (2005) in Hebrew which is a true resumptive pronoun language (McCloskey, 2006) using comprehension and elicited production. The results of the study showed that the children who produced the highest rate of resumptive pronouns in the elicitation task performed very poorly on gapped object RCs in the comprehension task. Subsequently the children who performed poorly on the comprehension task of the main study were tested administering a picture selection task involving gapped object RCs and object RCs with resumptive pronouns. The presence of a resumptive pronoun remarkably increased comprehension and significantly reduced errors associated with thematic role assignment. Finally, it was suggested that the use of resumptive pronouns in production is associated with difficulty in comprehension of gapped object RCs, while their presence in the input makes comprehension more easily by helping thematic role assignment.

Rahmany, et al (2011) investigated the acquisition of relative clauses (RCs) by Persian speaking children aged 2-7 years. Fifty-one children were recruited from three nursery schools in Tehran and divided into four age groups to examine their comprehension of subject-, object- and genitive-RCs by performing a picture selection task which consisted of 20 items. Three pictures were presented vertically on every page of the test booklet and the experimenter read one sentence to the participants and they had to choose the appropriate picture (they were tested individually). The results of this study showed that the participants experience more difficulty in processing object and genitive RCs in contrast to subject RCs, suggesting that the children have special difficulty in processing sentences without canonical word order.

The role of resumption in the interpretation of object relative clauses (RCs) in Persian speaking children was investigated by Rahmany, et al. (2013). In this study sixty four (N = 64) children aged 3: 2 – 6: 0 were recruited who completed a referent selection task that tested their comprehension of subject RCs, gapped object RCs, and object RCs containing either a resumptive pronoun or an object clitic. The results of this investigation showed that the presence of a resumptive element (pronoun or clitic) facilitates children's processing of object RCs. Moreover, the interpretation of object RCs with every type of resumptive elements were more accurately than gapped subject and object RCs. At last it was suggested that resumptive pronouns facilitate the process of syntactically complex contexts because they provide a local cue to thematic role assignment.

The current study examines the comprehension of pseudoclefts by Persian speaking children. Pseudocleft is a kind of RC which has been less investigated. According to Calude (2008) clefts appear when a simple clause becomes

cleaved to focus or highlight one of its constituents. As seen in (2) the clause is cleaved to focus its subject, *the dog*, in (2a) or its object, *the cat*, in (2b).

- (2a). What hit the cat was the dog. (wh-cleft, focusing on subject)  
 (2b). What the dog hit was the cat. (wh-cleft, focusing on object)

### *Persian pseudoclefts*

According to Karimi (2005) Persian is a null subject head final language which is based on Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) word order. Persian pseudoclefts have the complementizer *ke* instead of a relative pronoun. The complementizer is invariant. In Persian the presence of a gap is necessary in a subject pseudocleft, but optional in an object pseudocleft. Thus, in Persian a resumptive pronoun is not permitted in a subject pseudocleft. This is illustrated in examples in (3).

(3)

(a)	Chizi	ke _	sag	o	zad	gorbe	bud
	What	that _	dog	OM	hit 3 sg	cat	be past 3 sg
	What hit the dog was a cat.						
(b)	*Chizi	ke	u	o	zad	gorbe	bud
	What	that	he	OM	hit 3sg	cat	be past 3 sg
	* What he hit the dog was a cat.						

In addition, a personal pronoun can be used where a gap is expected. Like the example in (4a) in which a resumptive pronoun is used and the example in (4b) in which a clitic pronoun is used. In (4c), the object pseudocleft is formed by a gap.

(4a)

Chizi	[ke	sag	un	ra	zad]	gav	e	bud
What	[that	dog	it	object marker (OM)	hit past 3s	cow	PM	be past 3 sg
*What the dog hit it was the cow.								

(4b)

Chizi	[ke	sag	zad-esh]	gav	e	bud
What	[that	dog	hit-it-Clitic past 3sg]	cow	PM	be past 3sg
* What the dog hit it was the cow.						

(4c)

Chizi	[ke	sag	zad _]	gav	e	bud
What	[that	dog	hit GAP past 3sg]	cow	PM	be past 3sg
*What the dog hit was a cow.						

In the subject pseudocleft the linear distance between the head noun and the gap is 1 word, i.e., *ke*, but the structural distance between them is 2 nodes, i.e., CP and IP. The word order within the RC is the canonical word order of Persian—SOV. In the object pseudocleft the linear distance between the head noun and the clitic is 3 words, i.e., *ke*, *sag* and *zad*. The structural distance is 3 nodes, i.e., CP, IP, and VP. The word order is not canonical, i.e., OSV.

Thus, according to the structural distance hypothesis, linear distance hypothesis, and word difference hypothesis, the Persian subject pseudocleft should turn out to be easier than object pseudocleft. This prediction is in line with the results reported by Urosevic, Carello, Savic, Lukatela and Turvey (1986), Langus & Nespors (2010), Rahmany et al (2011) and Gavarró, Cunill, Muntane and Reguant (2011). Following Sells (1987), Gibson (1998), Rahmany, et al. (2013), Hofmeister and Norcliffe (2013), we predicted that object pseudoclefts with resumptive elements would be easier to comprehend than gapped object pseudoclefts.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Does word order have any effect on the comprehension of pseudoclefts in children?
2. Does resumptive pronoun have any effect on the comprehension of object pseudoclefts in children?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

In this study 19 monolingual Persian speaking children aged 31-79 months, 9 female and 10 male were recruited from a kindergarten in Karaj the center of Alborz province in Iran. The children were divided into two groups based on their age for investigating the effect of pseudocleft type (canonical vs. non-canonical) and the presence/absence of resumptives on the comprehension of object pseudoclefts.

### *Materials*

The test used in this study included 27 items in Persian; 5 object pseudoclefts with resumptive pronoun (OP), 5 object with resumptive clitic (OC), 5 object pseudoclefts with gap (OG), 5 subject pseudoclefts (S) and 7 fillers. The used test was a standardized test adapted from Rahmany et al (2011). All of the verbs used in the test were in simple past and included *keshidan* (pull), *shostan* (wash), *gereftan* (grab), *boosidan* (kiss) and *zadan* (hit) which are one part verbs in Persian; they were selected since their comprehension process was thought to be easier than compound verbs. All the noun phrases used in the test were animate including: *sag* (dog), *khers* (bear), *gav* (cow), *feel* (elephant), *asb* (horse) which are very familiar animals, to prevent animacy effects, because according to some researchers like Correa (1995) and Brandt et al (2009) this factor affects children's comprehension.

### *Procedure*

The test was conducted with 9 female and 10 male monolingual Persian speaking children aged 31-79 months from a kindergarten. They were tested one by one in a quiet room. The examiner was Montaseri one of the authors of the current paper who was completely familiar with the procedure of testing and had a lot of concerns about correct performance of testing. After greeting and some warm up expressions to reduce stress, each participant was familiarized with the procedure of testing so that the experimenter showed one of the picture tablets to her/him. Then the child was told that every item would be read out and he/she should listen carefully and select one of the binary pictures on the tablet which matched the item. Before reading the actual items, each child was requested to do one trial. If she/he did not understand or showed hesitation, the experimenter explained to her/him more about the procedure. If the participant did not get the sentence right the first time and asked for repetition, it was read just one more time. The time needed to test every participant was about twenty minutes. The correct answer was scored 1 and incorrect one 0. A sample test item is shown below:



Figure 1: A sample item representing “What the cow washed was the elephant.”

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Comprehension of the four pseudo-clefts was assessed. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Comprehension of four Pseudo-clefts

Descriptive Statistics				
	AGES	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
STOTAL	1.00	4.7778	.66667	9
	2.00	3.3333	1.87083	9
	Total	4.0556	1.55193	18
OPTOTAL	1.00	2.3333	2.06155	9
	2.00	3.0000	1.65831	9
	Total	2.6667	1.84710	18
OCTOTAL	1.00	3.6667	1.00000	9
	2.00	3.5556	1.42400	9
	Total	3.6111	1.19503	18
OGTOTAL	1.00	4.1111	.78174	9
	2.00	3.7778	1.71594	9
	Total	3.9444	1.30484	18

Results are reported in terms of mean scores of subject, object with resumption, object with clitic, and object with gap. A quick look at the table shows that the different pseudocleft types were comprehended in the following order: subject pseudoclefts (4.05), object pseudoclefts with a gap (3.94), object pseudoclefts with resumptive clitics (3.61) and object pseudoclefts with resumptive pronoun (2.66). Figure 2 below presents a graphical representation of the results.

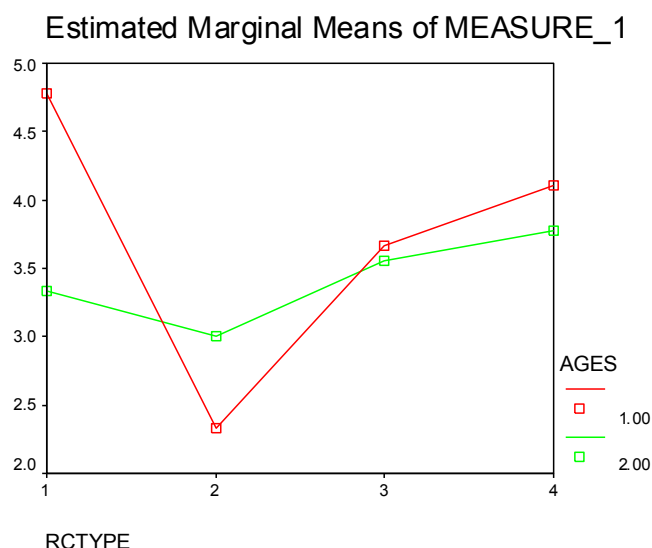


Figure 2: Mean average scores of the comprehension of the 4 pseudo-clefts in L1

In order to test whether the differences were significant or not, a repeated measure ANOVA was carried out with sentence type as a within-subject factor and age as a between-subject factor.

Table 2: ANOVA Results for L1 Comprehension of Pseudo-clefts on Four Sentence Types

Tests of Within-Subjects Effects						
Measure: MEASURE_1						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
RCTYPE	21.486	3	7.162	5.209	.003	.246
RCTYPE * AGES	10.264	3	3.421	2.488	.072	.135
Error(RCTYPE)	66.000	48	1.375			

ANOVA detected a statistically significant effect for sentence type ( $F_{(3)} = 5.20$ ,  $p = .003$ , Effect size = .24); thus it can be stated that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean score of these four pseudocleft types. The interaction effect between the sentence type and age was not significant ( $F_{(3)} = 2.48$ ,  $p = .07$ , Effect size = .13). As the results of ANOVA for the effect of sentence type were significant, a post-hoc pairwise comparison was run to see which pairs of pseudocleft types were significantly different.

Post-hoc pairwise comparison revealed that the difference between subject pseudoclefts and object pseudoclefts with resumption ( $p = .02$ ) was significant. In addition, the children's performance on object pseudoclefts with resumption was significantly worse than that on object pseudoclefts with gap.

### Discussion

The results of our study suggest that children have difficulties processing non-canonical word order. This is in line with results reported by researchers like Greenberg (1966), Slobin and Bever (1982), Urošević et al (1986) who found that OS order is perceptually more complex than SO. In Basque in which the canonical word order is SOV Erdocia, Rodríguez-Fornells, Mestres and Laka (2005) reported that non-canonical word orders are syntactically



more complex than canonical ones. Rahmany et al's (2011) results also showed that the process of object and genitive RCs were more difficult for children in comparison to subject RCs, suggesting that children have particular difficulty processing sentences with non-canonical word order.

The results indicated that resumptive pronoun did not have a significant effect on the comprehension of pseudoclefts. This is contrary to the results suggesting that resumptive elements function as a prop which creates an opportunity to reactivate the mind referent in children's working memory which may not be possible in the absence of them (Mckee & McDaniel, 2001). It seems that resumptive pronouns not only did not facilitate the comprehension of pseudoclefts but also made it more difficult. Thus, the results do not support the claims of Labelle (1990), Mckee and McDaniel (2001), Arnon (2010) and Rahmany et al (2013) who reported the facilitating effect of resumptive pronouns on the comprehension of RCs in English, Hebrew and Persian. But the obtained results are consistent with Friedmann's (2007) and Rahmany et al's (2011) finding that word order as a global cue is preferred over resumptive pronouns as a local cue to thematic role assignment. This may be due to the possibility that resumptive pronouns are less perceivable and available than word order. Therefore, word order is the preferred strategy in the comprehension of pseudoclefts. Moreover, the results of current study detected that comprehension of gapped object pseudoclefts is significantly easier than object pseudoclefts with resumptive pronouns, a result which is inconsistent with the suggestion of Arnon (2005) and Rahmany et al (2013).

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicated that word order is an effective factor in the comprehension of pseudoclefts. Subject extracted pseudoclefts are easier to comprehend than object extracted pseudoclefts in Persian. This is due to the fact that subject pseudoclefts have a canonical structure and provide a global cue to thematic role assignment which is more available for children compared to resumption as a local cue. This finding is in accordance with the predictions of the structural distance hypothesis, linear distance hypothesis, and word difference hypothesis. In the current study resumptive pronouns did not facilitate the comprehension of pseudoclefts because they are local cues which are less perceivable and available in contrast to word order which is a global cue and seems to be a simple strategy (Rahmany et al., 2011); therefore, children interpret subject pseudoclefts significantly better than object pseudoclefts with resumptive pronouns.

The findings of the current study can contribute to pedagogy because they showed that global cues like word order have a more significant effect than local cues like resumptive pronouns on the comprehension of pseudoclefts as one kind of RCs so Persian grammar teachers should pay attention to these two factors respectively. For example, the use of resumptive pronoun **un** not only does not facilitate the comprehension of pseudoclefts but also make it more difficult so that in the example *chizi ke sag e un ra keshid khers e bud* (what the dog pulled **it** was the bear) the child thinks it is the bear which pulls the dog not the dog which pulls the bear.

## Limitations of the study

1. There were some factors other than resumptives and word order which could not be controlled and probably affected the comprehension of pseudoclefts and cause error in analyzing data such as stress of testing, momentary absentmindedness, noises, shyness, playfulness, tiredness and so on.
2. As pseudoclefts are a rare kind of RCs at first they seemed strange for children and enhance difficulty in selecting pictures.
3. Selecting an appropriate kindergarten and their managers and personnel's cooperation with examiner was not an easy work.

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## E-ASSESSMENT VIABILITY FROM THE BENEFICIARIES' STANDPOINTS

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### ABSTRACT

Taken for granted that the constructivists' model of speculation is true in which learner-centered, learner's autonomy and teacher as facilitator factors are backbones in the instruction process; then why not to attribute measurement into the hands of the learner. Hence, pedagogical coursewares in line with e-assessment-based instruction modules, applications and templates can be developed to satisfy the following principles plus more; supportive feedbacks are reported to be magnificently effective to that end. The purpose of this qualitative study is to bounce back beneficiaries' viewpoints on viability and practicality of e-assessment via a SWOT analysis technique in which well-defined parameters such as Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), based on the learners, teachers, administrators and testing experts attitudes toward that pedagogical model and in line with Richard's maxims are favored. To this end, four questionnaires, a five-point Likert scale one- for three levels of respondents- ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (no idea), are developed for data elicitation from the beneficiaries', working in e-learning centers of some Iranian universities or oversea experts. Statistically, participants showed their interest in the strengths and opportunities as well as the operational values of e-assessment. But, the study has a deep challenge in its design; another challenging problem is the low IT literacy of the teachers and administrators and the final one refers to the misconception noble savage of the learners. Finally, this study predicts the future stance of development and expansion of e-assessment in the educational context with more collaboration among learners, teachers, administrators and testing experts in educational settings, while such protocols rely on the elucidations of IT and testing experts.

**KEYWORDS:** E-assessment, SWOT analysis, Viability, IT literacy, Supportive feedback

### INTRODUCTION

Assessment is central to the practice of education. For teachers, learners and administrators, it provides evidence of success. Hersh (2004) advocates the position that assessment of student learning should be considered an integral part of the teaching and learning processes as well as part of the feedback loops that serves to enhance institutional effectiveness. The high price of paper around the globe has already made Iranian official administrators both in the ministry of education and in the ministry of Science, Research and Technology capitalize on e-assessment agenda in educational environments to replace traditional paper and pencil tests. The new insight into the e-assessment protocol has newly found its mainstream to attract public attention in the country.

From the literature, one can easily infer the same tendency in global education. Number of studies have been conducted on the use of e-assessment in education but few studies have been conducted on the how to measure viability of assessment in education. In other words, Smart Assessment in Cyber Environment has not been practically studied in educational system of Iran. Therefore, there are practically shady areas about advantages and disadvantages of smart assessment and how smart assessment in cyber environment should be materialized for better implementation.

Thus, this study intends to shed some light on the e-assessment real beneficiaries', type of data elicitation, data interpretation, instrumentation and alike by reviewing SWOT analysis from another perspective. The focus of this study is still largely on creating the virtual e-assessment content for educational system based on the constructivists' theorizing model as well as Richard's maxims.

Consequently, this study will revitalize the road to success of Smart Assessment in Cyber Environment and how the system can be improved and expanded in the educational system. Lastly, Conclusion and recommendations are

drawn for further researches on the use of E-assessment model in e-learning & assessment environments to add to the practical objectified value of the study.

### **THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES**

The roots of the current movement dates back to the last two decades (Martell & Calderon, 2005). The first attempts to measure educational outcomes emerged around 1900 with the movement to develop a mechanism for accrediting institutions of higher education (Urciuoli, 2005). E-Assessment is a new online pedagogy that uses ICT to deliver education effectively and not about technology for technology's sake. E-Assessment is one of the domains of e-learning. It refers to assessment which is electronically delivered. There are claims (Richardson, Baird, Ridgway, Ripley, Shorrocks-Taylor & Swan, 2002; Ripley, 2004) that students prefer e-assessment to paper-based assessment, because the users feel more in control; interfaces are judged to be friendly; and because some tests use games and simulations, which resemble both learning environments and recreational activities. According to Hamilton and Shoen (2005), web-based testing has significant advantages in the areas of cost, ease of use, reliability, replicability, scoring, aggregating results, and data management. They explain that digital assessment measures can score themselves with great reliability and no subjectivity while making data available with immediacy. According to Page, project based learning can support critical thinking, multi layered decision making, goal setting, problem solving, and collaboration. Consequently, many institutions are anchoring their assessment activities into meaningful scenarios so that students are being assessed on their abilities to apply learning into realistic situations (Page, 2006).

McAlpine Mhairi (2002) breaks assessment down into five main points or criteria that ensure this dialogue is worthwhile: clarity of purpose; validity/reliability; referencing (establishing a common measure across all candidates); the quality of assessment items/instruments; and grading, a process that relates directly to referencing. The idea of having our assessments computerized is obviously attractive and e-assessment is emerging as a major driver for e-learning for both learners and staff. E-Assessment (sometimes known as Online Assessment, Computer-based Assessment or Computer Assisted Assessment (CAA) certainly has advantages. However, it also has some disadvantages and related problems.

Clariana and Wallace (2002) have shown that the use of CAA has a positive impact on the test scores of high attaining pupils, when compared to those from paper-based tests, because they assert that higher-attaining students more quickly adapt to new assessment approaches. Noyes, et al. (2004) suggests that lower-performing individuals will be disadvantaged when CAA is used because they assert that a greater work load and additional effort is required to complete a computer-based test. There is also the issue of defining requisite technical skills for students undertaking CAA such as, who should be involved in that training, and when should it take place, especially in the context of overloaded curricula, (Weller, 2002).

Plagiarism is a concern for many thinking of using CAA, (Weller, 2002); but Rovai, (2000) and Carroll, (2002) suggest that assessment design is the key to deterring plagiarism. O'Hare and Mackenzie, (2004) assert that there is a level of imagination and rigor required for the design of assessment online compared to that for more traditional forms of assessment. Bull and McKenna, (2004: page 3) suggest a number of reasons that academics may wish to use CAA:

1. To increase the frequency of assessment, thereby, motivating students to learn, encouraging students to practice skills.
2. To broaden the range of knowledge assessed.
3. To increase feedback to students and lecturers.
4. To extend the range of assessment methods.
5. To increase objectivity and consistency.
6. To decrease marking loads.
7. To aid administrative efficiency.

Nichol and Milligan (2006) have taken this further to show how e-assessment can support these seven principles by providing: Timely feedback, opportunities for re-assessment and continuous formative assessment to encourage students' self-esteem, statistics to help tutors evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment— questions answered very poorly can be re-examined in case poorly specified, timely information for tutors to be able to help shape teaching.

The consensus among researchers indicate that constructivism learning theory, which focuses on knowledge construction based on learner's previous experience, is a good fit for e-learning because it ensures higher-order learning process among learners (Harman & Koohang, 2005; Hung, 2001; Hung & Nichani, 2001).

Honebein (1996) advanced a set of goals that aid the design of constructivism in learning settings. The goals are to:

- Provide experience with the knowledge construction process;
- Provide experience in and appreciation for multiple perspectives;
- Embed learning in realistic and relevant contexts;
- Encourage ownership and voice in the learning process;
- Embed learning in social experience;
- Encourage the use of multiple modes of representation;
- Encourage self-awareness in the knowledge construction process.” (Honebein, 1996 p. 11)

E-assessment has not been limited to certain methods but rather has been an eclectic mix of various approaches and techniques such as “Richard Maxims” that are developed from a good teaching system (1996):

1. The maxim of involvement (follow students' interest to maintain involvement)
2. The maxim of planning (plan and try to follow your plan)
3. The maxim of order (maintain discipline)
4. The maxim of encouragement (seek ways to encourage student learning)
5. The maxim of accuracy (work for accurate student output)
6. The maxim of efficiency (make most of the efficient use of class time)
7. The maxim of conformity (make sure your teaching follows the prescribed method)
8. The maxim of Empowerment (give the learner's control)

A major problem of learning and education policy in educational system is the separation of 'academic' and 'practical' subjects. Regrettably, learning and education policy are seas and oceans separate from 'practical' subjects. E-assessment has undoubtedly to play a major role in redefining and implementing curriculum change in education. Governments have strong commitment to implementation of high quality e-assessment by good initial progress has been made in education system; therefore, there is a need to be vigilant that the design of e-assessment systems is driven by considerations.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

- R.Q1: To what extent do learners, teachers and administrators supportive of smart assessments?  
R.Q2: To what extent are the findings of such assessments generalizable and global or just local?  
R.Q3: To what extent are the respondents real representatives of beneficiaries'?

The hypotheses include: Respondents are not qualified and mature enough to determine the value of e-assessment in general and e-assessment-based instruction in particular. Hence, viability and generalizability of the agenda needs a review.

## METHODOLOGY

Generally, e-assessment-based instruction has newly become a requirement in educational settings to put the burden of knowledge construction on the learners and free the time for more emphasis on nurturance. To prepare the young for a safe life, this setting needs more attention to be paid to individualization and socialization standards.

Expansion of virtual E-assessment is supposed to be means to that end by triggering certain concepts such as electronically self instruction and convenient access to self-assessment.

### *Design*

This qualitative study relies on the evaluation the e-assessment effects on improving learning quality, favors descriptive/correlational method for survey because variables are non- experimental. Therefore, the correlation of independent variables such as Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats are considered with dependent variables, which are the attitude of administrators, teachers and learners towards e-assessment. The qualitative data



are gathered from learners, teachers and educational administrators through five Likert-point questionnaires along with virtual interviews. Interviews are done at each selected e- learning center in order to obtain the participants' perceptions towards the effectiveness of e-instruction-based courses. The qualitative approach was preferred as it would help the researcher to capture accurately the standpoints of participants in more facets. The whole process involved collecting information through the virtual interview, asking questions about the data collected, decoding the meaning through a combination of techniques, analyzing and evaluating the conclusions and disseminating the findings.

### ***Participants***

Samples selected were as follows:

statistical population (N=110) consisting of three groups: 10 educational administrators; 30 teachers and 60 learners from three Universities, which offered their General English course in e-assessment-based instruction format and 10 testing experts. It should be noted that none had a clear understanding or the rationale behind the agenda. Note to say, they were actually noble savages. The participants were invited to respond to items, receiving information in a virtual oral interview.

### ***Instrument***

Three questionnaires were developed to elicit data from administrators, teachers and learners. The questionnaires covered four areas: 1) Strengths features; 2) Weaknesses features; 3) Opportunities features; 4) Threats features; main components of e-learning in higher e-assessment extension and educational system, which were measured on a five-point Likert scale which ranged from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (No idea).

Content and face validity of research instrument was done by committee members and some specialists in this field. Questionnaire reliability was separately calculated by Alpha Cronbach coefficient for each question of three questionnaire templates. Based on the results of this test and the correlation coefficient, some questions were eliminated and some others were modified. In general, the reliability for the each questionnaire as research instrument was estimated respectively students' questionnaire=0.80, teachers' questionnaire=0.89 and administrators' questionnaire=0.76. The compiled data from completed questionnaires, saving at data bank, were analyzed by SPSS version 18 for description and inference.

### ***Data analysis***

Responses were evaluated using a self-administered 40-item, Likert scale questionnaire (items regarding Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of E-assessment method). Administrators, teachers and students ranked these choices in an order of completely agree (score: 5) to no idea (score: 1) in a manner which best described their opinions. In addition, open-ended questionnaires as a research instrument inviting administrators, teachers and learners to reflect their viewpoints about implementation of educational programs through E-assessment:

I) Strengths: If the method attracts the administrators, teachers and students to follow the E-assessment eagerly (10 items: e. g. "E-assessment enables administrators, teachers and students to use a wide range of sources for discussing teaching subjects in an easier way than in traditional ways of teaching"; "Online assessments can provide increased instruction time for administrators and teachers for students").

II) Weaknesses: How do the administrators, teachers and students feel defenselessly in learning within e-assessment (5 items: e. g. "One of the noted barriers to use e-assessment is related to growing up professional candidates for planning and using online tests for evaluation processes"; "Lack of good experience in e- assessment history hinders new administrators, teachers and students from getting interested in its possibilities").

III) Opportunities: How do the administrators, teachers and students think about the effectiveness use of the e-assessment on learning outcome (12 items: e.g. "E- assessment can create co-operation in teaching among administrators, teachers and students"; " Using e-assessment make an opportunity for administrators, teachers and students to use new teaching methods in cyber teaching environments")

IV) Threats of using E-assessment: How do the administrators, teachers and students feel not enough ability to provide and use electronic educational materials in the e-assessment (8 items: e.g. " E- assessment courses can result in an overload of work that administrators, teachers and students find hard to cope with"; " the administrators, teachers and students specializing involved in e-assessment may see their work undervalued and downgraded by colleagues because it be considered more as a hobby than as rigorous academic teaching expertise").



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To determine the factors and effective fields for E-assessment application development in educational setting, the determined variables from administrators, teachers and students were entered in to factor analysis.

Descriptive Statistics of the students 'questionnaire

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Threats	40	8	20	14.70	2.356
Weaknesses	40	12	23	8.22	2.778
Strengths	40	20	47	36.25	6.134
Opportunities	40	20	53	38.90	6.961
Sum	40	70	138	108.08	14.759
Valid N	40				

The above descriptive statistics in the table seems to lend support to the fact that based on the completed students' questionnaire; the students prefer items, related to the strengths and opportunities rather than the weaknesses and threats for implementing and improving e-assessment model in Iranian educational system.

### *Learners' Questionnaire*

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Cases Valid	40	100.0
Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
Total	40	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.806	30

### *Teachers' Questionnaire*

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Cases Valid	40	100.0
Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
Total	40	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.891	30

### *Administrators' Questionnaire*

Case Processing Summary

	N	%
Cases Valid	10	100.0
Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
Total	10	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.766	30

### *Testing experts' Questionnaire*

**Case Processing Summary**

		N	%
Cases	Valid	10	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	10	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.766	30

### **Discussion**

But the testing experts and qualified test developers had different conceptions. They believed certain introduction and application of interfaces workshops are required for anyone, who wishes to have a word in this respect. A final tangible conclusion refers to the virtual communication and interaction mode. Respondents select questionnaires' items based on the information they received from the researcher. This adds to Illium's (2012) finding that virtual mode can not be a reliable one since the distance between what goes on in the beneficiaries' mind and the researcher's cognition were pools apart. Hence, our data will be altered based on the attitude of the researcher. But testing experts guidelines should be carefully attended to in future related researches.

### **CONCLUSION**

E-assessment is reported to be neither an art nor a craft but science and in scientific data elicitation, learners, teachers, or administrators are no longer qualified enough to be regarded beneficiaries; Hence, scientists and testing experts can highlight the path to the desirability and viability of the protocol. Future researchers are invited to rely on the consensus model of SWOT, based on the intuition and expertise suggestions, solutions and elucidations of both IT and testing experts.

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## **ABSTRACT**

More recently, Day, Kington, Stobart, and Sammons (2005) have claimed that teachers' emotional or personal identities have not received adequate attention from educational researchers which leads to an incomplete understanding of issues such as teacher motivation, satisfaction or commitment to the job. The main purpose of this study is to shed light on the current paradigms in language teacher self and identity research with the special aim of presenting the contributions of possible selves theory to this field. A careful analysis of literature on language teacher research indicates that there have been three different conceptions of self and identity held by traditional, modern, and postmodern theorists. Each paradigm, as a reaction to the previous one, accounts for only some aspects of the complicated issues of self and identity. The fragmentation of the self and the existence of multiple identities can be accounted for by possible selves theory. The contents of teachers' possible selves are in fact their identity goals, that is, teachers' possible selves are the representations of their different compartmentalized but interconnected identities including language, personal, sociocultural, and professional. It is through a thorough analysis of the contents of possible selves that we can arrive at an ascertained number of values, beliefs, expectations, and aspirations that the teachers have strongly held as their core identities. The theory of possible selves might be adopted as a new exploratory mechanism for approaching different aspects of language teachers self and identity and it also provides an interpretive context for the current view of the self.

**KEYWORDS:** Possible selves theory, self, identity

## **INTRODUCTION**

Major philosophical figures such as Plato, Descartes, Locke, Hume, and Kant have attempted to answer questions such as "Who am I?", "Who could I have been?", "Who will I become?", "What is it to be a person?" and "How do we find out who is who?" There is not a unique answer for these questions and most answers are illuminated by each philosopher's view about the world and the nature of reality and knowledge (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2007). It seems reasonable to conclude that questions regarding self and identity have existed almost since the emergence of philosophy. For example, positivist and post-positivist philosophers would attribute self and identity features to nature and development, meaning that the unfolding of a person's identity is in a way beyond their control or the control of society (Gee, 2000-2001).

It is possible for almost all researchers to detect three different theories of self and identity raised in history-traditional, modern, and post modern. What is interesting to note is that recently the new construct of possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986), attempts to cover not only the different principles borrowed from already proposed theories but also to account for what actually people would like their selves to develop to.

Traditional identity theories propose that identity is determined by factors such as race, nationality, or kinship and it remains essentially static during people's lives. However, modern thinkers assign a much more central role to a person's culture, history, and agency in the development of a self or identity. This does not mean that they attempt to deny the role of natural factors in self and identity construction but they are not considered as important as culturally mediated actions. George Herbert Mead contended that identities evolve through the process of creating meaning as people interact with one another and their environment, in which process language and other semiotic systems play an important role (Williams, 2007).

Finally, postmodern philosophers resist the concept of a unique stable self or identity claiming that these are multifaceted and in constant creation/recreation through discourse (Zembylas, 2003). Postmodernists go as far as

considering self and identity as continuously changing states of mind and refer to them as subjectivity or intersubjectivity. Postmodernists consider culture a paramount factor that affects identity and the self; they, however, argue for the deconstruction of identity in order to challenge the power structures (e.g. culture and/or history) that attempt to limit the possibilities of the self. A detailed description of each view towards self and identity in general is beyond the scope of this study; therefore, their conceptions of language teachers' self and identity in particular are discussed in the following sections.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF AND IDENTITY IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH**

What would it be like to become a teacher; how would I get there, what are the stages and obstacles along the way? What kinds of teachers would we like to become? How do we become the kinds of teachers we are? What makes us adopt certain core moral values throughout the exercise of our professional lives? What motivates us to take the professional decisions we take? These questions are placed at the heart of this investigation which makes identity a central issue.

One of the earliest references regarding the centrality of identity in education came from John Dewey, who, in 1916, shifted the discourse away from the what is to be taught to one of dialogical exchange between the self (i.e. the teacher's identity) and the contextual influences that affect the self (Dewey, 1916). Identity research in education began to gain importance only in the early nineties when educators and educational researchers realized that it was an important unit of analysis that enabled them to understand a large number of phenomena inside classrooms, schools and within the broader community of schools (Gee, 2000-2001).

Varghese, Morgan, Johnston and Johnson (2005) contend that educators and educational researchers could only arrive at the understanding of teaching and learning by seeking ways of knowing more about teachers. One of the best ways of understanding teachers is by having a clear idea of who they are. This means knowing about the different roles they play in life, the obligations they are concerned about, the people who are important to them, the perception that they have about students and about themselves as persons and professionals, what values they believe are important for teaching and learning, critical moments throughout their lives, etc.; that is to say their self and their identities.

One of the most important reasons why identity research became so central in education was the rapidly changing nature of schools. Freeman and Johnson (1998) argue that in defining the knowledge base for language teachers, teacher educators must focus not only on students as learners of language, but also on teachers as learners of language teaching. The knowledge base of language teacher education must account for how individuals learn to teach and for the complex factors, influences, and processes that contribute to teachers' identities.

It was thus of utmost importance to understand how teachers adjusted to a variety of simultaneously occurring changes and how these impacted on the teachers' sense of self. A second reason that motivated the flourish of identity research in education was the possibility of providing rich data on contextually specific issues that facilitated decision making processes. Identity was considered of vital concern, not only to teacher educators, but also to educational leaders and decision makers.

As an outstanding education area, TESOL has followed the steps of mainstream education in many research issues such as professional development, motivation, and leadership and management, but teacher self and identity research has not received enough importance. It is therefore important to know which type of academic events gave rise to teacher self and identity research in the TESOL area. Traditionally, language teachers were often conceived as technicians who just needed to learn the right ways to teach. Before the emergence of the TESOL profession, identity did not play a role in TESOL professionals' research agendas. However, with the increase of classroom research, there was a growing awareness of the central role that language teachers' beliefs played in classroom instruction practices.

Researchers realized that the moment by moment decisions that teachers took inside the classroom were not only informed by the techniques and methods that they learned in workshops or training sessions. The teacher thus became a central unit of study and what began as a quest to find out what the teacher's beliefs about learning,

teaching and their profession were, has in many cases transformed itself into an investigation of how more complex identity issues impact on classrooms and schools' lives (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005).

The role of culture and marginalization is among the issues that TESOL identity research has explored more thoroughly. The conflicts that emerge when language teachers' assigned and claimed identities clash are determinant factors in the establishment of commitment and permanence in the profession and various other issues such as their attitude towards a new curriculum or professional development opportunities. A second agenda in TESOL self and identity research is the status of English language teaching as a profession and English language teachers in local contexts. Finally, the role of non-native language teachers is a continuously emerging theme in TESOL self and identity research; this is an aspect of many language teachers' identities over which they have no control, since it is a nature or institution identity (Gee, 2000-2001) that has been imposed on them that carries weight in the kinds of opportunities that are available for them in different teaching contexts.

Another topic of interest in TESOL self and identity studies is morally heated affinity groups (Gee, 2000-2001), that is to say groups of people that have a common goal towards a specific situation. In many cases we have observed how groups of this kind, such as professional associations, can operate towards resistance of dominant discourses (e.g. the argument that TESOL is not a profession) and generate a new discourse (e.g. Non-Native English Speaking Teachers special interest groups) that changes the current state of affairs and empowers the members of those affinity groups.

The different approaches of self and identity mentioned in the introduction section will be closely examined as they represent three differing views regarding self and identity development. Each of these views about self and identity resulted in three identity research paradigms. These identity research paradigms exist simultaneously as different responses to the importance of professional identity in education. How each research paradigm impacts on the study that is conducted on teacher identity and self, and the implications it has for teacher education will be discussed in the following sections.

### **TRADITIONAL STUDIES ON TEACHER SELF AND IDENTITY**

Traditional concepts of self have universally been considered to build on a repertoire of "perceived facts about oneself, including such things as one's traits, values, social roles, interests, physical characteristics, and personal history" (Bergner & Holmes, 2000, p. 36). Traditional identity research is characterized by the primacy it gives to the analysis of institution identities (Gee 2000-2001). This means that researchers concentrate on investigating how teachers define themselves in terms of the roles they play inside schools. These studies employed survey questionnaires, self-reports or structured interviews to collect the related data. In many cases the purpose was to explore how passively or actively participants played the role that they were assigned to fulfill by the institution where they work. There was very limited room for resistance towards the institutional identities that may have been imposed on teachers. Therefore; results of this kind of research may have unintentionally made the researcher arrive at the conception of who a teacher is, since the participants' discourse, and thus what they could convey about their selves as teachers, was limited to a great extent to the researcher's agenda.

Traditional identity research is considerably influenced by Ericksonian and neo-Ericksonian approaches, which seem to give analytic primacy to the individual, leaving aside important local and contextual issues, and to create and maintain a dynamic conception of oneself as a coherent whole. This implies a notion of fragmented identity construction and a view of identity as a set of relatively independent, interacting factors. One gains insight into self and identity by examining how people describe themselves in the various compartments of their lives. However, the role of power relations in the sociocultural context in which one is situated is not taken into consideration.

It is worth mentioning that the imposition of pre-packaged fool-proof (language) teaching methods that are formulated by experts or policy makers can be conceived as the outcomes of traditional self and identity research. Teachers are only required to respond to a set of goals or quality standards such as student retention rates or the achievement of good results in official (language) tests. On the other hand traditional self and identity research can illuminate decision-making processes in educational institutions. By knowing the state of the identity of school members, educational leaders can be more aware if they are helping their faculty to walk the development paths that are important to them. It also enables decision makers to re-orient their efforts towards actions that are more conducive language teachers' selves and identities.



### **MODERN STUDIES ON TEACHER SELF AND IDENTITY**

Perhaps the best known modern social philosopher is Anthony Giddens. His theories about the impact of modernity and globalization on self and identity have certainly evolved into a new identity paradigm. Giddens (1991) claims that modern society confronts the self with four different dilemmas, whose successful resolution enable the individual to develop a coherent identity. Agency plays a more important role in modernist identity theories. Identity formation is no longer perceived as a process that happens independently of people's lived experiences.

Modern teacher identity research attempts to pay special attention to human action and speech that is mediated by tools and signs, which are not only representational systems, but also resources that empower, constrain, or transform action. Discursive identities (Gee 2000-2001) become as important as, or even more important than, institution identities. Therefore, data collection methods now include in-depth semi-structured or unstructured interviews, life histories, portfolios, observations, autobiographies, reflective journals and ethnographic investigations in addition to those employed by traditional researchers. Modern studies on teacher self and identity enable participants to construct their teacher selves in a freer manner and this is why it becomes an amalgamated identity that is made up from the various roles that participants play, not only in their professional but also in their personal lives. Dillabough (1999) claims that modern professional identity research is no longer large scale since it attempts to provide in depth descriptions of local situations.

Story telling turns into a valuable data collection method that facilitates the understanding of teachers' personal and professional lives. By narrating the histories of their lives, teachers are provided with the foundations needed to construct their professional identities. Life histories also shed light on the factors that have shaped teachers' pedagogical beliefs. Sugrue (1997) contends that some of these factors are immediate family, significant others or extended family, observation of colleagues, and atypical teaching episodes. Teachers' life stories become the vehicles through which aspects of experiential knowledge are brought to the fore; they allow teachers a voice by offering stories about teaching which provide a counterbalance to the more powerful discourses of academics or policy makers.

### **POSTMODERN STUDIES ON TEACHER SELF AND IDENTITY**

Postmodern perspectives on identity examine identity from a larger social, political, economic and cultural system to address relations between identities and power relations (Bourdieu, 1991). Trinh (1992) claims that a postmodern approach to researching teacher identity departs from solely asking questions about who teachers are and takes a closer look at questions of when, where and how teachers are becoming who they are.

Therefore, postmodern research aims at revealing how power structures shape teachers' selves and identities and how teachers respond to these influences. Discursive identities similarly play a very important role in postmodern research and research participants are conceived as "fluid actors and thinkers" (Gee, 2000-2001:104) who can transform their reality and reconstruct themselves to resist the power structures that attempt to impose institutional identities on them. Affinity identities (ibid) are paramount in the achievement of this objective. The fact that teachers have a purpose in common and are able to employ their knowledge, language, and discourse as empowerment emancipatory tools empowers them to transform their teaching realities; teachers may be physically far away from each other, though.

A postmodern focus on teacher identity establishes a strong link between learning and identity, since identity is understood as a process of identification. Learning takes place in dialogical exchanges and different kinds of dialogical exchanges produce distinct types of learning. And also teaching is no longer conceived as a set of standards and proved methods but as different ways of being and engaging with teaching issues. This is why postmodern teacher identity research places as much emphasis on local situations as in fact modern research does. The focus of the analysis of the self within the postmodern conception of identity is the discourse of experience rather than the experience itself (Foucault, 1984).

Postmodernists present us with an integrated notion of identity rather than a dichotomy between individual functioning and socio-cultural processes, as traditional thinkers do. This is an approach that refuses the singularity of each component of identity formation. A more critical awareness of how the existing power structures impact on the construction of identities is among the objectives of postmodern studies conducted on professional identity.

Postmodern research may similarly add a collaborative dimension to the establishment and maintenance of an emancipatory school culture.

The fragmentation of the self and the existence of multiple identities brought about by traditional, modern, and postmodern theorists can be accounted for by possible selves theory as it is a framework encompassing the different types of identities including personal, social, and professional. Possible selves are important because they function as incentives of behavior and provide an interpretive context for the current view of the self (Markus & Nurius, 1986). It is also among the characteristics of this theory to account for not only the past and present experiences but the future wishes and expectations which are core constituents of teachers' self and identity.

Moreover; the construct of possible selves as a theoretical framework can be used for a better understanding of language teacher cognition and development. Its particular privilege is in the way it addresses the current gap in the language teacher cognition domain and bridges the various cognitive, motivational, affective and contextual factors which play a role in language teacher conceptual and behavioral change. In the following section the history of possible selves and self-discrepancy theories along with their implications in language learning and language teacher development in general and in this piece of work in particular will be discussed.

### **POSSIBLE SELVES THEORY**

Possible selves as a potentially powerful bridge between one's mental representations and actual behavior were first introduced in personality psychology by Markus and Nurius (1986). The construct, defined as the individual's "conceptions of the self in future states" (Leondari, Syngollitou, & Kiosseoglou, 1998, p. 219), "identity goals" (Pizzolato, 2006) or "hypothetical images" (Oyserman, Terry, & Bybee, 2002, p. 314), refers to individuals' personalized as well as socially-constructed (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Norman & Aron, 2003) images of who they could potentially become in the future.

In their original work, Markus and Nurius (1986) described possible selves as a form of future-oriented self-knowledge that can be divided into three distinct parts: the expected self, the hoped-for self and the feared self, each with varying impacts on motivation and self-regulation. The expected self is a future self that a person feels he or she can realistically achieve, and it may be positive or negative in valence. The hoped-for self represents a highly desired possible future, which is often not fully grounded in reality. A feared self is what a person is afraid of becoming in the future, despite wanting to avoid that future. It is important to note that these differentiated possible selves can, and typically do occur concurrently.

Possible selves are important because they function as incentives of future behavior and provide an interpretive context for the current view of the self (Markus & Nurius, 1986). Individuals are motivated to act in order to reaffirm their sense of identity with their present sense of self, or as a potential goal in the case of possible selves.

Oyserman and James (2009) refer to possible selves as possible identities. Possible identities are aspects of the future or possible self; they are the identities one might hold in the future. From a theoretical perspective, possible identities are important; they provide a goal post for current action and an interpretive lens for making sense of experience and so should influence both well-being and motivation. Similarly, possible identities are sometimes, but not always, implicated in current action.

If a possible identity feels connected to the current self and the actions needed to attain the future identity feel congruent with the current self, then people are more likely to interpret difficulties they encounter as meaning that the future identity is important rather than impossible to attain, and consequently to persist in their pursuit of this future identity (Oyserman & James, 2009).

The future self provides a sense of potential. People are motivated to act in ways that feel identity-congruent, to attain the futures they believe that people like them can attain, and to avoid identity-incongruent futures. Carver and Scheier (1998) propose that, once an individual sets possible identity goals, he or she uses these goals as comparison standards, compares progress against possible identity goals, and then modifies his or her thoughts and behaviors to increase fit between the current and future self.

Identity is typically viewed as a dynamic process involving a search for self-definitions in the present. In other words, people seek some coherence in their present or immediate self-definitions by drawing on both their past, remembered selves (retrospective selves) as well as their future, imagined selves (prospective selves), which are structured around and through identity elements, including goals, values, and beliefs (Packard & Conway, 2006).

This definition highlights the dynamic, temporal, and integrative aspects of identity, for which possible selves provide a generative framework. Several key identity researchers have emphasized a dynamic future-oriented process of identity development, where identities are explored and created as people gain information about themselves through life experiences (e.g., Berzonsky, 1989; Dunkel, 2000; Grotevant, 1987).

As Dunkel (2000) argued, the development of possible selves can serve as an important mechanism in identity development, with the process of generating or “trying on” possible selves being viewed as an integral aspect of identity exploration. Packard & Conway, (2006) build their work on that of Dunkel (2000); they see possible selves as a useful framework for understanding how people develop self-knowledge and for contributing to identity formation research more broadly. Furthermore, they draw attention to the temporal and future-oriented nature of identity formation by situating our examination of possible selves in the wider literature on the future-oriented aspects of the self.

## **CONTRIBUTIONS OF POSSIBLE SELVES THEORY TO LANGUAGE TEACHERS SELF AND IDENTITY RESEARCH**

The construct of possible selves as a theoretical framework can be used for a better understanding of language teacher cognition and development. Its particular privilege is in the way it addresses the current gap in the language teacher cognition domain and bridges the various cognitive, motivational, affective and contextual factors which play a role in language teacher conceptual change.

From the approximately 200 articles that incorporated a discussion of possible selves, Packard & Conway, (2006) analyzed 141 empirical articles published in the English language that used possible selves as a framework to guide their inquiries. They found that the possible selves construct has gained wide appeal across many fields of research, extending beyond human development, identity development, or personality more broadly construed.

In accordance with possible selves theory and self-discrepancy theory in particular (Higgins, 1987, 1998), Kubanyiova (2009) cleaves possible Language Teacher Self into (1) Ideal Language Teacher Self, which constitutes language-teaching specific identity goals and aspirations of the language teacher; it is assumed that, whatever the content of this Ideal Self, the teacher will be motivated to expend effort in order to reduce the discrepancy between her actual and ideal teaching selves; and (2) Ought-to Language Teacher Self, which refers to the language teacher’s representation of her responsibilities and obligations with regard to her work. As opposed to the previous type of self, the teacher’s activity geared towards reducing the actual versus ought-to self discrepancy is motivated by extrinsic incentives and the primary source of this motivation is believed to be the teacher’s vision of negative consequences, in other words, the teacher’s Feared Language Teacher Self which could materialise if the perceived obligations and responsibilities are not lived up to. The distinction between the Ideal and Ought-to Selves may not be immediately obvious to empirical researchers particularly if a single method of data elicitation is relied on, but can be inferred from a combination of data sources examining how teachers talk about their work in different contexts, the degree of specificity with which teachers describe their various goals and motivation, and how these seem to be reflected in their classroom discourse and instructional practice.

As it is typical of all identity theories, identity clash is also considered in possible selves theory and it happens when the desire to live up to expectations which are associated with some kind of temporary externally defined identity (Ought-to Self) clash with the more internalised and permanent one (Ideal Self). For example, the fear of not meeting students’ expectations may become a factor inhibiting change when it is associated with an imminent threat to the teachers’ ideal selves, irrespective of whether or not students’ real expectations are at play. Without specific cognitive representations of future identity goals materialized in possible selves “there should be little instrumental behavior in the direction of mastery” (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 961) and thus little prospect of language teacher conceptual change.

Kubanyiova (2009) contends that the identity goals that the teachers adopt permeate all facets of their work as language teachers and impact on (1) what they know, think and believe about teaching, learning, their students or their own self; (2) what they carry out in the classroom; (3) what contextual factors inform their decisions (4) how they approach their professional development; and (5) how they process any reform input.

These identity goals, which are conceived as 'possible selves' (ideal, ought-to and feared), appear to be at the very centre of language teachers' mental lives and further systematic inquiry into these constructs is therefore warranted. A systematic examination of these identity goals in a variety of environments may therefore be instrumental to our understanding of why some contexts seem to be more conducive to teacher cognitive development than others.

Woolfolk Hoy et al.'s (2006) review of teacher beliefs demonstrates that self beliefs which are obviously represented in the teacher's possible selves seem to be particularly important with regard to teachers' implementation of reforms: "Research on teacher identity, efficacy, and change reminds us that the teacher's motivation, emotional responses, and openness to change are closely tied to beliefs about self" (Woolfolk Hoy et al., 2006, p. 729). Self-beliefs should therefore receive considerably more attention than is presently the case especially within the teacher education tradition.

## CONCLUSION

Traditional, modernist and postmodernist theorists have put it right when they claim that the development of the self is under the influence of culture, lived experiences, politics, and individual choices. The analysis of traditional, modern, and postmodern teacher self and identity paradigms and some examples of research that represent them has made it clear that each has its shortcomings. This might explain why nowadays there is still self and identity research being conducted within modern, traditional, and postmodern traditions. Modernity and postmodernity have certainly brought about the fragmentation of the self and the existence of multiple identities. As educational researchers, we need to explore a new framework which has the capability of encompassing different aspects of identity and self coincidentally and taking one step further to envisage what would be the ideals, fears, and obstacles to consider in identity development. This complicated process can be more systematically dealt with using possible selves theory which is referred to as possible identities. It is a useful framework for understanding how people develop self-knowledge and for contributing to identity formation research more broadly.

1. Identity and self are treated by many sociologists and philosophers as closely interrelated and dependent on each other. It is thus necessary for discussions of identity to go hand in hand with those of self and this is why they appear alongside each other in this piece of work.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-EFFICACY BELIEFS, LOCUS OF CONTROL AND READING  
COMPREHENSION ABILITY OF IRANIAN EFL ADVANCE LEARNERS

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**ABSTRACT**

Self\_efficacy and Locus of control are believed to affect learners' academic achievement. This effect has scarcely been researched in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context. This co-relational study explored the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs, Locus of control and reading comprehension level of Iranian EFL advance learners. In this study, Michigan reading comprehension test, a Reading Self-efficacy Questionnaire and an Internal Control Index were administered to eighty one advance EFL students. The results of Pearson Correlation coefficient, descriptive statistics, and independent t-test indicated that a) there were significant strong positive correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and Locus of Control, between self-efficacy beliefs and reading comprehension, and also between Locus of Control and reading comprehension b) in addition there was a significant difference between internalizers' and externalizers' reading comprehension ability. The findings of this study indicate that encouraging students, to improve their self-efficacy and Locus of Control can be quite helpful for them to achieve higher scores in the reading comprehension. Since most researches on Self\_efficacy and Locus of Control have been conducted in the field of psychology and little research in this regard has been done in the field of second/foreign language acquisition especially in the context of Iran, the researchers aimed to focus on Self\_efficacy and Locus of Control in this study.

**KEYWORDS:** self-efficacy, Locus of Control, EFL reading comprehension

**INTRODUCTION**

Reading is a complex cognitive activity essential for sufficient functioning and for obtaining information in modern society (Alfassi, 2004). It is not exaggeration to say that reading is an important skill in ELT among the four well-known ones through which one acquires most of his/her knowledge (Aliakbari & Mashhadialvar, 2001).

Early decades of studies on IDs labeled learners as good or bad, intelligence or dull, motivated or unmotivated ones (Horwitz, 2000). Recently more research has concentrated on considering why some learners are more successful than others (Fatemi & Elahi, 2010). It is certificated that the beliefs people hold about their capability to succeed in their attempts are vital factors in their success or failures in these attempts (Bandura, 1986; Pajars, 2000). Self-efficacy provides the foundation for motivation in all areas of life and influence language learning and achievement.

According to Bandura (1986) self-efficacy is learners' beliefs in their capability to succeed and acquire new information or complete a task or activity to an appointed level of performance. This affective variable, affect our decision, behaviors and attempts when facing challenges. Later on, Pajars (2000) extended this definition by adding features to Banduras' definition which connects to the way students' judges their academic competence. He believes that self-efficacy beliefs affects every aspect of people's lives, whether they think productivity, self-debilitating, pessimistically or optimistically, how much effort they expend on an activity and how well they motivated themselves. Bandura believed that there is difference between students with high self-efficacy and low self-efficacy in which high self efficacious learners feel confident about solving a problem because they have developed an approach to problem solving that has worked in the past. They assign their success to their own efforts and strategies, believe that their own abilities will improve as they learn more, and recognize that errors are a part of learning, but students with low self-efficacy believe that they have innate low ability, choose



less demanding tasks on which they will make few errors, and don't try hard because they believe that any effort will reveal their own lack of ability (1992).

Furthermore, the sense of control that individuals believe they have over their academic performance is a crucial factor to take into consideration when working towards improving academic achievement. It can be considered as a bipolar continuum spanning from internal to external and refers to people's generalized expectations for control over reinforcements (Matricardi, 2006). Locus of control is a concept that has a significant effect on our daily lives. Individuals with an internal locus of control view events as resulting from their own action whereas those with an external locus of control believe that their own actions do not influence future outcomes (Wise, 1999). Internalizers mostly believe in their own abilities and deficiencies. So, the responsibility for whether or not they get reinforced ultimately lies with themselves they don't rely on powerful others as the source of the outcomes (Bolig, Brown, & Kuo, 1992). External locus of control orientation which relates to more depression and anxiety (Gomez, 1998), internal one relates to self-esteem and coping with stress (Bolig, Brown, and Kuo, 1992). According to Rotter (1966) those with external loci attribute success and failure to some extraneous factors. They believe that reinforces in life are controlled by luck, chance, or powerful others. Locus of control proved to have a significant relationship to reading achievement.

In spite of this fact, the available literature on affective variables indicates the deficiency of research on the effect of self-efficacy and Locus of Control on EFL learners' reading comprehension. This is the motivation behind this study to focus attention on examining the effect of self-efficacy beliefs and Locus of Control on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL learners.

Although much of the research on foreign or second language learning has focused on reading performance between skilled and unskilled readers, a limited amount of research has examined the effects of reading self-efficacy beliefs and Locus of Control when reading academic text. It is true that some studies have been conducted in other countries about reading self-efficacy beliefs, Locus of Control and their impact on reading comprehension, but the relationship between these beliefs, Locus of Control and reading performance of Iranian English learners has not been fully examined.

The present study is going to provide insights about the effectiveness of self-efficacy beliefs and Locus of Control on reading proficiency as a way of improving reading comprehension among Iranian English learners. These learners need self-efficacy Locus of Control to apply in all kinds of reading situations to help them get the most out of text. Many novice readers decode the words and move on; they are unaware of any connections they make between the text they are reading and other aspects of their lives. The lack of connections is what leads to lifelong comprehension problems. Overall purpose of this study is to explore relationships between Iranian EFL learners reading self-efficacy, Locus of Control and reading comprehension

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In the field of teaching English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL), reading, listening, speaking and writing have been identified as the four basic skills in language learning. Reading is considered especially valuable under the foreign language context because it is one major source for students to obtain language input (Ediger, 2001), therefore it is crucial that students become proficient in the reading process. Alfassi (2004) stated that students should "understand the meaning of text, critically evaluate the message, remember the content, and apply the new-found knowledge flexibly" (p. 171).

### *Self-efficacy*

The construct of self-efficacy is a topic that first was introduced by Bandura (1977) with the publication of *Self-efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavioral Change*. Then, Bandura (1986) located the construct within a social cognitive theory of human behavior that deviated from the common cognitivism of the day and embedded cognitive development within a socio-structural network of influences. This theory assumes that people are capable of reflecting on their own actions and regulate them and that they can shape their environments instead of just passively reacting to them. Social cognitive theory also assumes that most human behavior is purposive or goal-oriented and is guided by forethought. It also assumes a meta-cognitive activity, which implies that people are self-reflective and capable of analyzing their own behavior and experiences. They are also capable of self-regulation and thus exercise direct control over their behavior by selecting or controlling conditions in their environment.

Later on, Bandura (1997) in his book *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control*, further situated self-efficacy within a theory of personal and collective agency that operates in concert with other socio-cognitive factors in regulating human well-being and attainment.

Bandura stated self-efficacy beliefs are "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances." (1986, p. 391). Furthermore, he viewed self-efficacy as people's beliefs about their abilities to exercise control over events that are likely to affect their lives, and their beliefs in their capabilities to put together the motivation, cognitive resources, and other action needed to control task demands (Bandura, 1989). In addition, Bandura advanced the idea that "what people think, believe, and feel, affects how they behave" (p. 25). Therefore, self-efficacy is a relatively new construct in academic research (Schunk, 1994).

#### *Effects of Self-efficacy Beliefs*

As pajars argue Self-efficacy beliefs, influence motivational and self-regulatory processes in several ways.

Choices: Self-efficacy beliefs influence the choices people make and the courses of action they follow. Most people take part in tasks in which they feel competent and confident and avoid those in which they do not.

Effort: they also help determine how much effort people will expend on an activity,

Persevere: how long they will persist when dealing with obstacles and failures

Resilient: and how resilient they will prove in the face of adverse situations--the higher the sense of efficacy, the greater the effort, persistence, and resilience.

Stress and anxiety: Efficacy beliefs also influence the amount of stress and anxiety individuals experience as they engage in a task and the level of accomplishment they realize (Pajares, 1996).

#### *Sources for Self-efficacy*

Bandura (1994) posits that four major sources of information are primary in the development of self-efficacy beliefs. First, mastery experiences or "enactive attainment" (Zimmerman, 2000), that is the most effective way of creating high level of efficacy, and refers to the way people evaluate their own personal attainment in a given domain. It covers prior task achievements and plays a central role in establishing a sense of self-efficacy. Second, the vicarious (observational) experiences which is provided by social models, is another way for creating and strengthening self-beliefs of efficacy.

Third, social persuasion is a third way of strengthening people's beliefs that they have what it takes to succeed; and ultimately, reducing people's stress reactions and altering their negative emotional proclivities and misinterpretations of their physical states is the last source of modifying self-beliefs.

#### *Locus of control*

Locus of control is a construct developed by Rotter (1966) from his larger personality theory referred to as the social learning theory. The social learning theory states that one's personality is a result of the individual's interaction with his or her environment. Behavior cannot be viewed as an automatic response to stimuli, but it can be seen as an interaction of the individual's personal experiences and the environment. Rotter defined locus of control as a "generalized expectancy of internal versus external control over behavior outcomes. Locus of control was viewed as a cognitive expectancy which defined the individual's view of fundamental factors related to these outcomes" (as cited in Nunn, 1995, p.421). According to Jarvis (2005; cited in Ghabanchi and Golparvar, 2011) locus of control refers to a person's beliefs about control over what happens to him or her. Individuals with an internal locus of control view events as resulting from their own actions. Persons with an external locus of control view events as being under the control of external factors such as luck (Marsh & Weary, 1995). In some situations, people think that, they are between these two extremes, but it is clear that, finally, they are involved in one of this continuum. As cited in Badakhshan (2009) in other studies by Lefcourt and Siegel (1970), lefcourt and Telegdi (1971), lefcourt, Gronnerud, and McDonald (1973), it is concluded that learners own internal locus of control are more deliberate, sensitive, active, exclusive in intrusive thoughts and concentration, verbally fluent and more flexible, but less rigid, and on the other study, according to Haanstand (1978), learners with external locus of control are willing to put more value on any trait that resulted in more influence by them on their environments. Totally, internalizers and externalizers' reaction toward success and failure is different. So, it means that when the result is satisfactory, internalizers feel pride but when the result is not as it was expected to be, they feel shame and experience less

strong feelings (Ghonsooly and Moharer, 2012). Bender (1995) maintains if a student tries hard at school tasks and yet continually fails to get good grades, this will lead to an external locus of control. Internalizers are likely to consider a bright future for them, whereas externalizers are not likely to do this (Anderman & Mindgly, 1997).

### ***Related Researches***

Bandura believed that efficacy will be raised by successes and it will be lowered by failure, but when a strong sense of efficacy is developed, a failure may not have much impact (Bandura, 1986). Mills, Pajares and Herron (2006) argue that research of findings from several academic domains have demonstrated that students' judgments of their own academic capabilities, or self-efficacy beliefs, influence their academic behaviors and performances.

There are several researchers who examined the relationship between self-efficacy and language skills. To investigate the links between self-efficacy beliefs and language skills, Rahimi and Abedini, (2009) surveyed the role of EFL learner's self-efficacy regarding listening comprehension in their listening test performance. The results of statistical analyses indicated that listening comprehension self-efficacy was significantly related to listening proficiency.

Mills, Pajares and Herron (2006) studied the relationship between self-efficacy, anxiety, and French proficiency in reading and listening. Results showed that Students' reading self-efficacy in French was positively related to reading proficiency, whereas reading anxiety was not related. Listening self-efficacy was positively associated with listening proficiency only for the female participants, and listening anxiety was positively related to the listening proficiency of both males and females. Ghonsooly and Elahi (2011) surveyed the relationship between EFL learners' self-efficacy in reading comprehension and their reading anxiety, also the relationship between EFL learners' self-efficacy and their reading achievement. The results showed that high self-efficacious participants achieved higher scores in reading comprehension course than low self-efficacious participants.

Chen (2007, as cited in Rahimi & Abedini, 2009) examined the relationship between EFL learners' self-efficacy beliefs and English listening achievement at two large universities in Taiwan. Results indicated that there was a significant and positive relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and listening achievement. The results also showed that students self-efficacy beliefs were much stronger predictors of students' achievement in the field of listening.

Phares (1976) has examined the relation between LOC and achievement among children. He used the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility (IAR) Scale as LOC measure and grades or standardized test scores as indexes of academic achievement in most of his studies. The result of study showed that internalizers were more successful than externalizers and had a better performance.

Smith (1986) in his research on 430 high school sophomore and senior students regarding locus of control found out that, this factor can be considered as a major predictor of reading achievements and grade point average. Nowicki and Strickland (1973) performed a study to investigate the relationship between locus of control and academic achievement. As a result they found a significant relationship between these two variables. High achieving seventh grade males were more internally controlled than their lower achieving classmates.

Anderman and Midgley (1997) in a survey understand that students who find their poor performance caused by factors out of their control are unlikely to hope for improvement. In contrast, students who attribute their poor performance to a lack of skills or poor study habits are more likely to try harder in the future. Students having an external locus of control are more likely to give up hope and not try any harder in the face of failure, while those with an internal locus of control may try harder to improve in the face of failure.

Culver, Victor, Morgan, and Raymond (1997) in a study investigated the relationship of locus of control with reading achievement. The Rotter I-E scale produced no significant relationships to any measure of reading achievement. The result of study showed that 1) Levenson's internal scale produced a significant positive relationship with reading comprehension scores 2) Significant negative Correlation was demonstrated between Levenson's chance scale and total reading scores. It was concluded that internal –versus-external locus of control is a significant variable related to achievement and should be considered in developing strategies for reading instruction.

Park and Kim (1998) in another study compared university top students with those students who were not much successful. Then they analyzed the students' behavior patterns and their locus of control. The results of study revealed that top students showed higher internalized LOC and lower externalized locus of control.

In another study Kernis (1984) examine the way Locus of control influence an individual responds to success. Participants were guided to make either internal or external attributions for their success at a certain task. Those who made internal attributions had a better performance on the same task than on a different task when tested again, whereas those who made an external attribution had a better performance on a different task than on the same task. Therefore, internalizers are more likely to continue working at a task that they have performed well at, while externalizers may stop working on the successful task and focus their efforts on a different task.

Anderson, Hattie, and Hamilton (2005) investigated the relationship between generalized locus of control and academic achievement and related behavior within an action-theoretical model in three different types of school. 215 students (121 were female and 94 were male) participated in this study. They were selected from three schools which were considered by expert judges to differ on the possibilities of structure, co-cooperativeness, and competitiveness Sample Selection Process. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences between schools for motivation and achievement and also a mediating effect between locus of control and school type, proposed that interactional models are essential in investigations of motivation and achievement.

Akina (2011) examined the possible links between academic locus of control and self-handicapping. Participants were 382 university students from Sakarya University. The Academic Locus of Control Scale and the Self-handicapping Scale were used as measures. Findings of research showed that self-handicapping correlated positively with internal academic locus of control. According to the results, self-handicapping was predicted positively by internal academic locus of control and external academic locus of control.

Important areas influencing locus of control and self-esteem of people were surveyed in many studies, for instance culture, self-handicapping and etc. Many psychologists believe that deaf people should be considered as bicultural communities, so with this point of view, Sabery (2005) in her research examined locus of control, self-esteem and relationship between them in deaf and hearing girls. These effects of locus of control on self-esteem were tested on a sample of 40 deaf students and 140 hearing students (girl) in Tehran. Their mean age was 15 years. Both two groups educated separately in different schools. The result of study showed no significant difference in self-esteem and locus of control in deaf and hearing students.

Ghasemzadeh , and Saadat (2011) studied locus of control and its determined link to educational achievement of college students. Considering the results obtained from study Internal locus of control had a direct and positive relationship with the educational achievement of students. Akca and Yamana (2010) designed a study to determine whether the teachers are internally controlled or externally controlled. The results of study showed that the teachers generally have internal locus of control .

Saadat, Ghasemzadeh, Karami, and Soleimani (2011) studied the relationship between self-esteem and locus of control of university students. .Results of the study shows that all self-esteem components have a positive and meaningful relationship with internal locus of control, while this relationship becomes negative while talking about external and chance kinds.

As cited in Wang (1983) people with high internality or internal locus of control show a great deal of persistence and willingness to delay rewards in order to maximize them, and they are completely eager to find information for solving different problems. On the other hand, those possess external locus of control are more passive, compliant and inattentive.

Schunk, (1990) in a study focused on the self-regulated learning processes of goal setting and perceived self-efficacy. Students enter learning activities with goals and self-efficacy for goal attainment. As learners worked on tasks, they observed their own performances and evaluated their own goal progress. Self-efficacy and goal setting were affected by self observation, self-judgment, and self-reaction. When students perceived satisfactory goal progress, they feel capable of improving their skills; goal attainment, combined with high self-efficacy, leads students to set new challenging goals.

Ghonsooly and Moharer (2012) in a study investigated the effect of Locus of Control (LOC) on translation students' achievement. The results of the statistical analyses revealed that students' Locus of Control has a significant and positive relationship with their translation achievement. Also Fateme and Elahi (2010) in a study surveyed the possible connection between Locus of Control (LOC) and L2 learners' reading achievement and use of language learning strategies. The results of this study demonstrated a positive relationship between LOC and L2 reading achievement. It also showed a positive relationship between EFL learners' locus of control and their use of language learning strategies. Also, the result of study revealed that EFL learners identified with internal LOC (internalizers) used metacognitive strategies more frequently than those with external LOC (externalizers).

Ghabanchi and Golparvar (2011) in a survey investigated the association between students' LOC and their religious orientation. The results of the study indicated that there was a significant positive association between LOC and religious orientation. Ghabanchi and Golparvar (2011) in another study investigated the differences in General English (GE) achievement in the university entrance exam among students of humanities, sciences, and engineering. They also explored the effect of locus of control (LOC) on GE achievement in the entrance exam among these three groups of students. The results of study showed that there was a significantly positive relationship between student's LOC and their GE achievement in the entrance exam and, there are significant differences in GE achievement in the university entrance exam across the three groups of student which took part in this study.

Badakhshan (2009) in another survey evaluated the possible relationship between reading anxiety and locus of control among Iranian EFL learners. The results of study indicated that there was a negative correlation between external locus of control and reading anxiety. Also, it was demonstrated that, there was a negative correlation between internal locus of control and reading anxiety, but this correlation was not so strength and meaningful. Finally, it was revealed that, gender did not have any effect on the degree of relationship between reading anxiety and locus of control.

Lahey (1987) conducted a study to investigate the possibility of raising the comprehension scores through the use of attribution theory in moving the student's locus of control, concept work, and imaging. The result of study showed that there was a positive relationship between using attribution theory, increasing locus of control and raising scores. The above-mentioned review and results make it clear that self-efficacy theory is of high importance for explaining many aspects of student achievements. Therefore, this study aimed at exploring the relationships between reading self-efficacy beliefs, reading strategies use and reading comprehension level of Iranian EFL learners.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

The present study focuses on the following research questions:

- 1) Is there any relationship between Iranian EFL advance learners' reading self-efficacy and their LOC?
- 2) Is there any significant relationship between Iranian EFL advance learners' reading self-efficacy beliefs and their reading comprehension ability?
- 3) Is there a significant relationship between Iranian EFL advance learners' LOC and their reading comprehension ability?
- 4) Is there a significant difference between internalizers and externalizers' reading comprehension ability in Iranian EFL context?

H<sub>O1</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Iranian EFL advance learners' self-efficacy and their LOC.

H<sub>O2</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Iranian EFL advance learners' self-efficacy and their reading comprehension ability.

H<sub>O3</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Iranian EFL learners' LOC and their reading comprehension ability?

H<sub>O4</sub>: There is no significant difference between internalizers and externalizers' reading comprehension ability in Iranian EFL context.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*



Participants of this study were drawn from the pool of college advance English major students participating in classes during the second semester of the 2013 academic year at University of Neishabour (a north-eastern city in Iran). Eighty-one English students participated in this study (63 females and 18 males). All participants were English students who spoke Persian as their first language; they were informed that participation in this study was voluntary. The participants were selected from four classes.

### ***Instruments***

Michigan reading comprehension test, Reading Self-efficacy Beliefs Questionnaire and Internal Control Index (ICT) Questionnaire were three main instruments used in this study.

#### ***Michigan Test***

Michigan Test, as a test of English language proficiency, consists of one-hundred questions which are implemented to test students' knowledge in grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension. In order to determine students' reading comprehension level, the reading comprehension part of Michigan Test which contains twenty reading comprehension multiple-choice tests was implemented in this study. This part of the test includes four reading comprehension passages each followed by five questions. The obtained information from this test that ranges from zero to 20 shows students' reading comprehension levels.

#### ***Reading Self-efficacy Beliefs Questionnaire***

In order to assess the participants' self-efficacy in reading comprehension we used a new scale for assessing EFL learners reading self-efficacy based on these three related questionnaires:

1) The Persian Adaptation of General Self-efficacy Scale developed by Nezami, Schwarzer, and Jerusalem (1996); 2) Morgan-Links Student Efficacy Scale (MLSES) constructed by Jinks and Morgan (1999); 3) Beliefs about Language Learning (BALL) designed by Horwitz (1988). This new questionnaire was developed by Ghonsooly and Elahi (2011); this scale includes 14-5-point Likert type items ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" based on the items of the previous Questionnaire and some added by Ghonsooly and Elahi (2011). Three items were deleted based on their low factor loading and commonalities after factor analysis. A value of 1 is assigned to strongly disagree, and 5 to strongly agree. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the scale, and a principle component analysis was used to analyze its construct validity. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the scale was 0.78. This scale was also translated into Persian, and the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for it was 0.81.

#### ***Internal Control Index questioner (ICI)***

For the purpose of this study, the Internal Control Index, ICI, (Duttweiler, 1984) was used to measure the participants' LOC. The original study of the ICI was developed and tested with several samples of junior college, university undergraduate and continuing education students. The main sample chosen included 1365 respondents of both sexes. Means were broken down by age, group, sex, race, educational and socioeconomic levels and range from 99.3 to 120.8.

Based on ICI questionnaire, the items are scored on a 5-point Likert scale from A (rarely) to E (usually). Half of the items are worded so that the high internally oriented respondents are expected to answer half at the "usually" end of the scale and the other half at the "rarely" end of the scale. The "rarely" response is scored as 5 points on items 1, 2, 4, 6, 11, 14, 17, 19, 22, 23, 24, 26 and 27. For the rest of the items, the response "usually" is scored as 5 points. A range of scores from 28 to 140 would be produced with higher scores reflecting higher internal locus of control. The Cronbach alpha coefficient for this scale was 0.77. For the sake of clarity and simplicity the scale was translated into Persian by Ghonsooly and Elahi (2010). Three experts commented on sequencing the format, the formulations of questions, and the language. Thus, the questionnaire was edited to ensure that the content and the physical appearance of the questionnaire were appropriate. Cronbach's alpha was used to check the reliability of the translated version and resulted in a coefficient of 0.82.

### ***Procedure***

In a study like this, data on different variables are collected within a fairly short time. The participants took part in this study during their regularly-scheduled class period. At first, the reading comprehension test was administered. After that, the Reading Self-Efficacy Questionnaire was administered, and based on the statements covered in this questionnaire, the participants were asked to choose one of the five choices. After completing the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire the LOC Questioner was administered. Later, the researcher calculated the participants' scores. One



set of scores showed the participants' scores in the Michigan Reading Comprehension Test, the next showed their scores in the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, and the last one showed their scores in the Locus of Control Questionnaire.

### **Data Analysis**

In this study, reading self-efficacy and Locus of control were considered as the dependent variables while students' reading comprehension level was independent variables. By using descriptive and inferential statistics, the data were analyzed. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 17) was manipulated in analyzing and estimating correlations and the differences between variables.

To estimate the correlation coefficient between variables, based on the nature of students' scores, the Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted. For interpreting correlation coefficients between variables, they were converted into variance overlap or covariance. And to see whether the difference between internalizers and externalizers in terms of reading scores is significant, an independent t-test was run.

In order to investigate more results from this study, along examining the four main research questions, the mean differences between the reading self-efficacy beliefs and reading comprehension level and the mean differences between reading self-efficacy beliefs and Locus of control and finally mean difference between the Locus of control and reading comprehension were also computed. Since the sample size was small, for comparing the means of students' scores in different variables, t- test procedures were conducted. When three sets of scores were obtained from the same subjects, the Dependent-Sample t-test or Matched-sample t-test was used and where scores came from two independent groups, the Independent-Sample t-test was manipulated.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research question 1**

The first research question concerned the relationship between participants' reading self-efficacy and their LOC. Self-efficacy Beliefs Questionnaire and ICI were administered and the Pearsons' correlational coefficient was used to answer the question.

*Table 1: Correlation Coefficient of the Reading Self-efficacy Beliefs and the LOC*

#### **Correlations**

		Self-efficacy	LOC
Self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.834**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	81	81
LOC	Pearson Correlation	.834**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	81	81

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

As table 1 shows, the correlation between the participants' reading self-efficacy level and their reading comprehension is .54 ( $r = .54$ ). There for as the results show, the null hypothesis is rejected because there is a significant, correlation between self-efficacy and internal LOC in general. Result of this study support findings in the literature. Waller and Bates 2009; Bandura, 1986; Wise, 1999.

### **Research question 2**

The second research question explored the relationship between the participants' self-efficacy beliefs and their reading comprehension ability. The Michigan reading test and Self-efficacy Beliefs Questionnaire were administered and the Pearsons' correlational coefficient was used to answer the question.

As Table 2 shows, the correlation between the participants' reading self-efficacy level and their reading comprehension is .84 ( $r = .84$ ). A much more useful way of interpreting a correlation coefficient is to convert it into

variance overlap between the two measures. This helps us to see how much variance in one measure can be accounted for by the other. To obtain the common variance between two tests, we simply square the correlation coefficient. Since the shared variance is usually stated as a percentage, the squared correlation is multiplied by 100. Therefore, the shared variance is computed through:  $r^2 \times 100$ . To the degree that the two tests correlate, they share variance. Since our correlation is .84, the shared variance is: 70% ( $.84^2 \times 100 = 70\%$ ). This overlap tells us that the two measures are providing approximately similar information. The .70 is the amount of the variation of reading level variable which is accounted for by the variation in the reading self-efficacy variable.

Table 2: Correlation Coefficient of the Reading Self-efficacy Beliefs and the Reading Comprehension Ability

Correlations		Reading comprehension	Self-efficacy
Reading comprehension	Pearson Correlation	1	.840**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	81	81
Self-efficacy	Pearson Correlation	.840**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	81	81

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

As Table 2 shows the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.84, and the level of significant is 0.000 [ $r = 0.84, p = 0.00$ ]. As can be seen,  $r$  value is positive, and it is significant. Therefore as the results show, the null hypothesis is rejected because there is significant relationship between Iranian advance EFL university students' reading self-efficacy beliefs and their reading proficiency. There are several researchers who have examined the relationship between self-efficacy and language skills which result of this study support their findings. For example, Rahimi and Abedini (2009); Mills, Pajares; Herron (2006); Ghonsooly and Ellahi (2011); Chen (2007); Wigfield (1994).

### Research question 3

The third research question explored the relationship between participants' LOC and their reading comprehension ability. A Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated to estimate the strength of the relationship between these two variables. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlation between LOC and the Reading Comprehension

Correlations		Reading comprehension	LOC
Reading comprehension	Pearson Correlation	1	.960**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	81	81
LOC	Pearson Correlation	.960**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	81	81

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

As Table 3 shows the correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.96, and the level of significant is 0.000 [ $r = 0.96, p = 0.00$ ]. As can be seen,  $r$  value is positive, and it is significant. Therefore as the results show, the null

hypothesis is rejected because there is significant relationship between Iranian advance EFL university students' r LOC and their reading proficiency.

#### **Research question 4**

The fourth research question aimed to explore the difference between the internalizers and externalizers' reading comprehension ability in Iranian EFL context.

In order to see whether the difference between internalizers and externalizers in terms of reading scores is significant, an independent t-test was run. First of all, the descriptive analysis of the participants' performance is presented to see whether there is any difference with regard to the two groups' reading scores. The sample includes 81 subjects that were categorized as internalizers (40) and externalizers (41). It is worth mentioning that the median of the LOC scores was used to determine internalizers and externalizers. Therefore, students with scores above 98 were grouped as internalizers and those with scores below 98 were considered as externalizers. Table 4 shows the results.

<i><b>Table 4: A Comparison of Externalizers' and Internalizers' Mean Scores in Reading Proficiency</b></i>				
	LOC	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Reading	Internalizers	40	11.60	7.84
	Externalizers	41	8.30	12.88

Based on the above table, internalizers proved to have the mean score of 11.60 and standard deviation of 7.84 while the mean reading score of the externalizers turned out to be 8.30 with the standard deviation of 12.88. In order to see whether this difference in mean scores is significant or not an independent t-test was run. The result is presented in table 5. As Table 5 shows, the difference between the two mean scores is significant at  $p < .01$  and internalizers have higher scores in reading than externalizers. In other words, internalizers are better L2 reading achievers than externalizers.

*Table 5: Independence T-test*

	LOC	N	Mean	S.D	Df	T	P
Reading	Internalizers	40	11.60	7.84	79	13.83	0.00
	externalizers	41	8.30	12.88			

The results of the 2 last research questions illustrated that L2 learners who believe they can influence their own learning are more likely to succeed in their L2 reading. This can be interpreted with regard to the previous research findings mentioned in the literature section (Anderman & Midgley, 1997; Bender, 1995; Phares, 1979; Kernis, 1984; Lonky & Reiman, 1980; Wang, 1983). Internalizers' high achievements in L2 reading may be due to their higher persistence, assertion, attempt, and exploration than externalizers.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study was done to explore the relationship between the Iranian EFL advance learners' reading self-efficacy beliefs and their LOC, the relationship between the reading self-efficacy beliefs and the reading

comprehension ability of Iranian EFL advance learners, to find out the relationship between Iranian EFL advance learners' LOC and their reading comprehension ability and, finally, discover the difference between internalizers and externalizers' reading comprehension ability in Iranian EFL context.

First, regarding the relationship between reading self-efficacy beliefs and LOC, a positive relationship was observed between perceived self-efficacy beliefs and internal LOC. The results of a correlation analysis in this study provide empirical support for a strong relationship between these two constructs recommended in the literature (e.g. Wise, 1999). Indicative of this fact that whether or not people will undertake a particular activity, attempt to do a particular task, or try to meet a particular goal depends on whether or not they believe we will be efficacious in performing that action (Bandura, 1986). Result of this study support findings in the literature. Waller KV and Bates RC (2009) studied health locus of control, self-efficacy beliefs, and lifestyle of 57 healthy elderly subjects. As hypothesized, positive relationships were found among these variables, individuals with an internal health locus of control and high generalized self-efficacy are more likely to benefit from a health education program than those with an external locus of control and low self-efficacy. Locus of control has a significant impact on Bandura's self-efficacy theories, and how individuals' expectations shape the goals they set for themselves. If individuals believe they have control over future events, then they will attempt to apply that control in order to achieve a positive outcome (Bandura, 1986). It does not matter whether an outcome is or is not achievable; the perception of control determines if one will try to get it (Wise, 1999).

Second according to the results, it can be concluded that there is a meaningful positive relation between students' self-efficacy beliefs and their reading comprehension ability. Iranian EFL advance learners with high reading self-efficacy level obtained better scores than those with low reading self-efficacy level. Third regarding the relationship between Iranian EFL advance learners' LOC and their reading comprehension ability a strong positive relationship was observed between their internal LOC and reading comprehension ability. The results of a correlation analysis in this study provide empirical support for a strong relationship between these two constructs proposed in the literature (e.g. Fatemi & Elahi, 2010). And finally, as the result of study shows internalizers has higher scores in reading than externalizers. In other words, internalizers are better L2 reading achievers than externalizers. It was concluded that internal –versus-external locus of control is a significant variable related to achievement and should be considered in developing strategies for reading instruction (Culver, Victor, Morgan, and Raymond, 1997).

#### ***Limitations/ delimitations of the study***

The present study, like any other studies, endures some limitations and delimitations that may place restrictions on the conclusion of the study. Here some of them are mentioned.

The first limitation deals with the sample size and the characteristics of the subjects included in the sample. Because the study targeted a few Iranian EFL learners at Neyshabour University, the behavior of other types of participants with different backgrounds and fields might prove somewhat different from the participants of the present study.

The second limitation relates to the restricted set of variables that were included in this study. Reading comprehension, reading self-efficacy, locus of control were the only factors that were examined in this study. While these components have been found to be extremely relevant for second language reading comprehension, a more in-depth study of actual foreign language reading behaviors, processes, cultural background, cultural orientation and effective factors like self-esteem and intrinsic and extrinsic motivations could provide a more complete picture of foreign language reading comprehension processes.

The third limitation is that because this study only focuses on investigating students' comprehension performance on the Michigan test, more studies with different types of tests should be conducted in the future to examine the major barriers in reading English texts. The investigation of the variables mentioned above is outside the scope of this study.

The fourth limitation is that this study only covers advance students; therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalized to freshmen and sophomores.

The fifth limitation is that self-efficacy and locus of control, being an internal attitude, is difficult to isolate and study exhaustively and objectively. It may be confused with some other constructs such as motivation and self-esteem.

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## FIRST LANGUAGE TESTING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PERSIAN AND ENGLISH

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### ABSTRACT

Whereas the testing of English as Foreign language has been the subject of extensive research, the testing of Persian language remains an uncharted territory. This paper reports on the preliminary findings of a large-scale study which investigated the content of two high-stakes tests of two different languages. One was a test of Persian as a native language (PNL) and the other was a test of English as a native language (ENL). Results showed that the testing of Persian language has remained immune from the scholarship of modern language testing. In other words, the underlying theory of the PNL test is to a great extent structuralist whereas that of the ENL aligns with the category of language theories that give consideration to aspects of context of language use. Furthermore, the PNL test follows a discrete-point approach but the ENL adopts an integrative one allowing for generous context for each test item. Finally, in the PNL test, the only skill tested is comprehension and memorization whereas the ENL exam tests comprehension of both written and spoken discourse as well as writing, all in an integrated fashion. The findings carry implications for the assessment of Persian as well as that of English. Language policy makers concerned with the maintenance of Persian language can also derive profound implications from the findings of the present study.

**KEYWORDS:** testing Persian as a native language (PNL), Testing English as a native language (TNL)

### INTRODUCTION

In today's world tests are everywhere. We test everything and almost all important decisions are based on a test. Languages have also for long been the object of testing and evaluation. History has it that in fact the testing of language predates that of other subject areas (see McNamara & Roever, 2006; MacNamara, 2000). As a means of identity detection, a language test as simple as the pronunciation of phone has served to decide whether individuals should be killed or should be allowed the right to live.

Language tests continue to serve as the basis of important decisions. Whether people are granted residence in a foreign country or not is usually mainly based on how well they can perform on a test of language. Asylum-seekers and refugees are also granted or denied the right to escape or face tragic fates on the basis of language tests. Language testing has in fact evolved into a huge industry; many powerful organizations like ETS, the British Council, and Cambridge ESOL are behind the two giants of language testing: IELTS and TOEFL. They earn huge revenues through designing and administering language tests. The average Iranian should spend a month's salary to take an IELTS test.

Parallel to the rapid expansions in language testing, the field of language testing research has grown over the last century. The journal of *Language Testing* is approaching the end of its fourth decade of life. Many other journals are either entirely dedicated to studies in language testing or consider language testing within the range of the areas they cover. In Iran, in addition to the numerous ELT journals that accept articles related to language testing, the *Iranian Journal of Language Testing* exclusively focuses on issues related to the measurement of language ability.

All the above advances in the area of language assessment are about the testing of English, with marginal attention given to a few other languages like German, French, and Spanish. A search in Google Scholars for articles on testing Persian yields almost nothing. Thus, there exists an obvious paucity of research on assessing Persian language. This paper aims at exploring this mysterious territory of Persian testing in the hope that this might spark further investigations into the history, nature, policies, methods and a host of other related areas of testing Persian language. No doubt, the way Persian is tested has important consequences in the way Persian language is taught, learnt, viewed, and maintained.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

It is no irony that the field of language testing in its today's extended scope is indebted to one of the most tragic events in human history; that is the World War I and II. Since the American soldiers needed to learn the languages of the rival countries in a short while, an unprecedented need was felt for effective ways of learning foreign languages. With the surge of interest in learning foreign languages, came a need to assess whether the new methods have worked in producing fluent soldiers in non-English languages. Moreover, the post-war world made people more mobile. Giant international companies started to seek business opportunities overseas and, hence; foreign languages were in great demand like never before in the history of mankind. As learning foreign languages became a main concern for a large population of people so did the testing of language knowledge.

The history of language testing is usually narrated in three phases. The first phase is, the pre-scientific era, was mainly literature-based not language-based. According to Weir (2005), "the emphasis in this early pre-scientific era was thus on language use, though some attention was paid to form in the grammar and phonetics sections" (p. 5). In the 1960s, language testing gradually abandoned its literature guise and new tests of language began to measure knowledge of language independent of its literature. Such innovations emerged mainly under the influence of the methods of natural sciences that trickled into psychology and from there to language education and testing. Language testers in this era were predominantly concerned with producing reliable tests of language, sometimes at the cost of validity. In other words, language testing was primarily psychometric in nature and priority was given to ensuring the psychometric characteristics of language tests. The American tradition of intelligence testing is said to have exerted much influence on the way language tests were perceived and constructed though Fulcher (2014) challenges this assumption. The discrete-point testing, with its typical multiple-choice format, gained popularity in this era primarily because they were thought to be objective and lent themselves easily to the kind of psychometric testing testers engaged in at the time.

In the 1980s, English language testing took a communicative turn. Language educators began to question the beliefs on which the theories and practices of language teaching were premised. The Chomskyan generative linguistics escalated the decline of structural linguistics, which was the underlying language theory of language teaching pedagogies in vogue at the time. As structural linguistics lost its momentum, applied linguists searched for alternatives of understanding and describing language. The post-structuralist linguistics distanced itself from formal aspects of language and began to make room for the social, contextual and political aspects of language. Therefore, emphasis was taken away from teaching the form of language; instead, it was the communicative aspects of language that were thought to be the main focus of language educators.

Such developments in English language teaching translated into a quest to develop language tests that measured test-takers' ability to handle communication in the foreign language not to test their knowledge of the forms or grammar of language. Hence, came the era of communicative language tests. To provide for theoretical foundations, new theories of language ability were proposed, the most sophisticated among which was Bachman's (1990) theory of communicative ability. Viewed through the lenses of communication, the knowledge of language forms is considered just one constituent of the ability that allows for successful communication among people. A host of other abilities are believed to be involved in the process of communication including language of registers, knowledge of contextual factors, topical knowledge, knowledge of functions of language, and the metacognitive strategies that regulate the whole process (see Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Douglas, 2010). The characteristics of communicative language tests are summarized in the following way in Brown (2005, p. 22):

- The test setting should require meaningful communication
- The situation should be authentic
- The language input should be unpredictable
- The language output should be creative
- All language skills should be integrated.

The next development in the evolution of language tests is what has come to be known as performance testing. Aiming at promoting authenticity, performance tests require candidates to perform tasks that resemble what they usually encounter in their daily life. Brown (2005, p. 23) lists the following characteristics for language a performance test: a) examinees must perform tasks b) the tasks should be as authentic as possible c) success or

failure in the outcome of the tasks must be rated by qualified judges. Essays, interviews, and extensive reading tasks are cited as tests of language performance.

As pointed out at the outset, all these developments in language testing have occurred in the testing of English language whether as a first or as a second language. The extent to which the Persian language tests are informed or have been informed by such developments is yet to be examined. This study is a modest attempt in that direction; to see how the high-stakes tests of Persian test candidates' first language competence. Below the research questions of the study are presented.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What content areas are tested in tests of Persian as a first language?
- What is the test method in tests of Persian as a first language?
- To what extent such tests reflect current literature of language testing?
- What differences exists between tests of Persian as a first language and those of English as a first language?

## METHODS

The materials used in this study comprise two high-stakes of tests of Persian language and literature and one test of English as a first language. The Persian test was the school-leaving test that was given at the end of high school to prospective graduates in 2010. The test mainly consists of short constructed-response questions with a few selected-response items (see Brown & Hudson, 1998). Of the 48 items that were on the test, almost half assess test-takers on their knowledge and understanding of the classic literary works. The remaining items tap students' comprehension of either prose or poetry, their knowledge of the meaning of individual lexical items, or their memorization of the name of poets and authors as well as the title of their books. The test can be accessed at <http://www.aee.medu.ir/>.

The English test as a first language was that of General Certificate of Education (GCE) administered in January, 2013. Contrary to the Persian test, the GCE test begins with an elaborate prompt, instructing test-takers in full details what they need to have (e.g., a 12 page answer book, black ball-point pens, etc.), what they are required to do, and the criteria based on which their performance would be assessed. It comprises two sections: The first section is on the analysis of spoken language, and the other on the analysis of written language. In the first section, the spoken language, test-takers are supposed to read two transcribed talks, one from a radio broadcast and another on a TV broadcast. Test-takers should analyze, discuss, and compare the language used in the two conversations. The test is available at the following website: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/english>.

What the both English and the Persian test have in common is that both are given to students in the two countries for school-leaving purposes at the end of high school program. Both tests measure test-takers' competence in their native languages.

The two tests were analyzed and compared in terms of their general approach, content domains, skills, and question formats to see how similar or different they are in their approaches, methods, and formats to evaluating first language skills. To enhance the dependability of our analyses, each of us analyzed the two tests independently followed by cross-checking to see the degree of agreement. As we come from two different backgrounds, each of us brought a different perspective to the analysis which helped enrich the insights that gained from the analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The two tests start in two different ways. The Persian test goes directly to the first item of the test with no introduction to the test. The English test takes a very different approach by giving a detailed introduction to the test. First, it tells the test-takers what additional materials they need to have besides the test paper. It reads: "you need a 12 page answer book", which indicates that test-takers are going to have much writing to do. This is evidence of the integrated nature of the ENL; that is, the two skills of reading and writing are not treated as separate skills. Rather, they are closely interdependent and are assessed together.

The fact that writing is not tested at all in the PNL test sends a very negative message to both learners and teachers. The literature on test has washback remarkably shown that tests, especially high stakes ones, immediately affect the

content of teaching and learning (see Wall, 2000, 2005; Watanabe 2004; among others). A language skill that is not tested is not taught and, hence, is not learned. Denying learners chances to learn to write in their first language is a great disservice to twenty-first century citizens.

The other apparent difference is the criteria based on which candidates' performance is to be assessed. In the PNL test, no mention has been made of the criteria for assessment probably based on the assumption that the test enjoys a high level of face validity because they are familiar with this format of Persian test. The ENL test, on the other hand, gives a full a detailed description of the criteria for assessing their performance. Students are assessed on their ability to:

- select and apply a range of linguistic methods, to **communicate** (emphasis added) relevant knowledge using appropriate terminology and **coherent** (emphasis added), accurate written expression (AO1);
- demonstrate understanding of a range of concepts and issues related to the construction and analysis of meanings in **spoken** (emphasis added) and written language, using knowledge of linguistic approaches (AO2);
- analyze and evaluate the influence of contextual factors on the production and reception of spoken and written language, showing knowledge of the key constituents of language (AO3).

At the end of the prompt, candidates are reminded that the quality of the written communication they use in their answers will be taken into consideration in their assessment.

The prompt in the ENL shows that it is a test of assessing communicative language ability. The three words bolded in the prompt are indicative of fundamental differences between the two systems of testing. First, the emphasis on communication indicates that ENL is concerned not with language per se but with applying language knowledge to communication situations. The word *coherent* also signifies that discourse features of language are given priority in the test of ENL. It should be noted the test is concerned not with recognizing coherence but with observing coherence in test-takers' productive language, a feature totally absent in the PNL test.

A more striking difference between the two tests is that the ENL test spoken English language is tested whereas the PNL test exclusively tests written language, mainly literary works. This brings to mind the issue of authenticity, which characterizes ideal performance language tests (see Lewkowicz, 2000). Simply put, authenticity refers to the extent the test tasks or content reflect what learners will do with language in target language use situations. It is obvious that the TLU situations include much spoken interaction, therefore; choosing to remove the spoken language hurts the authenticity of the PNL test.

The kinds of tasks required of students in the GCE are more similar to what test takers are likely to do with language outside of classroom walls. They are more in accordance with the most advanced level of reading literacy; that is reading to do. Reading literacy in the L1 begins with learning to read. The early years of schooling has one of its primary objectives as to enable children to read in their first language. After children master the skills of learning to read, in later years of schooling, junior and senior schools, students read to learn. Through reading they begin to know about a wide range of subjects that are on the school curriculum including their country's history, culture, mathematics, science; and language and literature. The final stage of reading literacy is reading to do. People read to do things accordingly. For example, citizens may be required to fill out a wide range of forms for registration or application purposes. A times, they read instruction manuals to operate mechanical or electrical devices. Or they may simply read an article in a newspaper, a book, or a magazine to reflect on it or criticize it. The PNL test seems to rest on the assumption that the highest level in reading high school graduates are to achieve is reading to learn.

The GCE test is made of three items whereas the PNL test contains 48 items, with the difference being that in the former items are holistic and integrative but they are of a discrete nature in the latter. The discrete-point, atomistic tests encourage a fractured knowledge approach. This is at variance with the ultimate education wherein developing an integrated knowledge in learners is to be fostered (See Aue, 2007). When the knowledge that learners pick up is fractured, they cannot establish meaningful links between the various pieces of information they have stored. This in turn leads to learners' inability to think creatively and critically. In other words, such fractured knowledge does not lead to development. The observation that Persian literature is tested mainly through a piecemeal approach impacts learning in detrimental ways. Teachers in their quest to meet the needs of their students to do well on the exam, adopt an approach to learning that might work well in test taking but fails to foster meaningful, holistic leaning.

Knowledge stored in a fractured way usually disappears from memory in a short while because the pieces of collected information are not anchored together. The PNL test with its predominantly discrete-point format encourages learners to commit to memory individual pieces of language or language literature among which weak or no links can be made on the part of the learner.

Finally, the items in the GCE were embedded in an extended context but in the PNL, test items are almost all decontextualized. This is also evidence of the different underlying theories of language of the two tests. A language test that gauges students' competence using out-of-context items has as its underlying theory a view that language is a system independent of context of use. In other words, it bears resemblance to the structuralist theory of linguistics. On the contrary, taking account of the demands of the situation and context reveals that the underlying theory is sensitive to aspects of context and it subscribes to the communicative theories of language manifested in the works of Hymes and Bachman (see Bachman & Palmer, 2010).

The aforementioned characteristics of the PNL test examined in this study characterize a large number of high stakes tests of Persian, which have important ramifications for language education at all levels of educational system. The failure to place any emphasis on writing skill, the skill that fosters creative and critical thinking more than other language skills, has extremely negative washback effects on the way Persian language is taught and learnt. Citizens who are poor in writing cannot meet the demands of life in the twenty-first century, which entails much emailing, chatting, and filling out electronic and nonelectronic forms. To give no space to spoken discourse in the PNL test also takes emphasis away from this primary medium of language use, which has negative consequences for citizens' language beliefs, their language practices, and the maintenance of Persian language in the long term.

## CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to examine how the two languages of Persian and English are assessed as first languages. In so doing, two school-leaving tests of Persian and English were selected for comparative content analysis. It was revealed that the assessments of the two languages are informed by different paradigms of linguistics theory. The underlying theory of the Persian language test is heavily influenced by structuralism, hence a preference for discrete-point format, whereas the English test is informed by theories of communicative competence, in which knowledge of language forms is considered as one of the many components of communicative. The two tests were also at variance with regard to their authenticity; the content of the GCE test is all about the everyday English but the PNL test is mainly limited to the Old Persian used in classic tests. The construct measured in the PNL is the comprehension of texts which test-takers have already studied in their school textbooks. On the other hand, the constructs that are tested in the GCE test are integrative in nature, requiring candidates to draw on their overall language proficiency to comprehend, analyze, relate to their background schemata, and to communicate their thoughts through writing. Those in charge of the design of the PNL can learn a lot from the way English is assessed as a native language.

This study carries numerous implications for a wide range of stakeholders. First, given the pressure and threat that all languages are under because of the spread of English and the now taken-for-granted impacts of assessment on language learning, Persian language policy makers should take measures not to unknowingly conspire, through bad testing, with English to endanger Persian language. Those in charge of designing the Persian test need to enhance their language assessment literacy in order to be able to tailor their tests to meet the demands of the current communicative theories of language. Second, insights can be derived from the findings as to how cultural specifics have bearings on the languages assessment practices. Such insights can then help in the development, translation and adaption of language tests in different countries. Finally, those involved in the assessment of EFL should take account of their clients' mindset about tests, which determines whether or the extent to which they find face validity in a language test.

This study was based on a limited sample of tests in two countries. Studies founded on larger samples from a larger number of cultures would be very welcome. Nor could we afford to seek the opinions and attitudes of test designers, test administrators or test-takers in either to the two countries. Comparative studies that can rectify these shortcomings would provide more solid evidence supportive of the interplay of cultural values and language assessment practices.

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## POLITENESS STRATEGIES AND POLITENESS MARKERS IN EMAIL-REQUEST SENT BY IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS TO PROFESSORS

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### ABSTRACT

This study attempts to investigate politeness strategies and politeness markers in email-request sent by Iranian male and female English as foreign language (EFL) learners to professors. The comparison between strategies used by males and females in email-request were also analyzed. 52 actual emails of M.A students of teaching English as foreign language (TEFL) studying at Takestan Islamic Azad University in Ghazvin province in Iran consisted the data in this research. To analyze the corpus, politeness strategies in each email were examined according to the four strategies adapted by Brown and Levinson's (1978) Politeness Theory. Finally, the frequency of syntactic and lexical politeness modifiers in each email-request of male and female were found and compared. The results showed that negative politeness strategy was the most frequent strategy used by males and females in email-requests. Also, *embedding* was the most frequent syntactic politeness modifier and *subjectivizers* were the most frequent lexical politeness modifiers used by both males and females in email-requests.

**KEYWORDS:** Politeness Strategies, Syntactic Politeness Modifiers, Lexical Politeness Modifiers, Politeness Theory

### INTRODUCTION

Email exchanges are now an effective medium among people and it is becoming increasingly an accepted means of communication in all social relationships such as those between friends and university students and their professors or academic contexts. Nowadays, applying email as a useful means of communication has many advantages for users such as high speed, availability, low cost, and etc. "In fact, e-mail constitutes a unique, hybrid type of text, and this hybridity also allows its users to display a wide range of discourse styles in e-mail when used in different contexts and for various communicative purposes" (Chen, 2001, p.1).

These features influence the structure that students apply in their emails and may lead to an inappropriate or impolite email. Some faculties complain from students' request email due to inappropriate request, salutation, abbreviation, mechanical and structural errors, and impoliteness (Biesenbach-Lucas, 2007). "E-mails have brought professors and students to a closer contact, removing some of the traditional boundaries between students and their professors. This has caused students to write to their supervisors using the language and style meant for their friends" (Najeeb, Maros & Nor, 2012, p.127). In many countries such as Iran where English language is a foreign language, most of the students of English are not sufficiently aware of the socio-linguistic and socio-pragmatic norms of email writing. Also, they never have been trained on email etiquette writing.

According to Chen (2006), email has both features of spoken language and features of written language. The absence of some features of real communication such as body language or non-verbal cues through email may lead to misunderstanding or miscommunication and may create difficulties for some users.

As email becomes the most convenient way for communication among people in general and in academic context in particular, it is completely necessary that EFL learners should be familiar with email writing etiquette and rules. Politeness strategies and markers are some of the essential factors that students should be familiar with them. Therefore, this study focused on politeness strategies and modifiers on students email and that whether Iranian EFL learners are familiarized with these strategies and their application sufficiently or not.

### **Politeness theory**

Politeness theory is one of the most popular universal theories proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). The universality explains politeness theory across languages and cultures around the world. "Politeness is a pervasive phenomenon in all communities" (Najeeb, Maros, & Nor, 2012, p. 129). According to Quraishi (1994, p.14), "Politeness is one characteristic of language use and is in essence consideration of others and showing concern about how to behave with others appropriately according to their social status and social norms".

Reiter (1997) stated that some acts such as requests, threats, orders, prompting and alarming are exposed to face threatening acts. Therefore, politeness strategies are used in order to decrease infliction of face threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

### **Politeness strategies**

Politeness strategies that were established by Brown and Levinson (1987), present the best known framework for classification of politeness strategies and were applied to many studies around the world so far. Goffman (1967, cited in Izadi & Zilaie, 2012) ascertain that "This model revolves around the concept of face, which is defined as the public self-image that all members of the society have and seek to claim for themselves"(p. 86).

Two important classifications of face are negative face and positive face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Najeeb, Maros, and Nor (2012) defined as follows:

Negative face is threatened, when an individual does not intend to avoid the obstruction of his interlocutor's freedom of action. Positive politeness is used to satisfy the speaker's need for approval and belonging, while the main goal of negative politeness is to minimize the imposition of a face-threatening act (p. 130).

Figure 1 shows Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies.

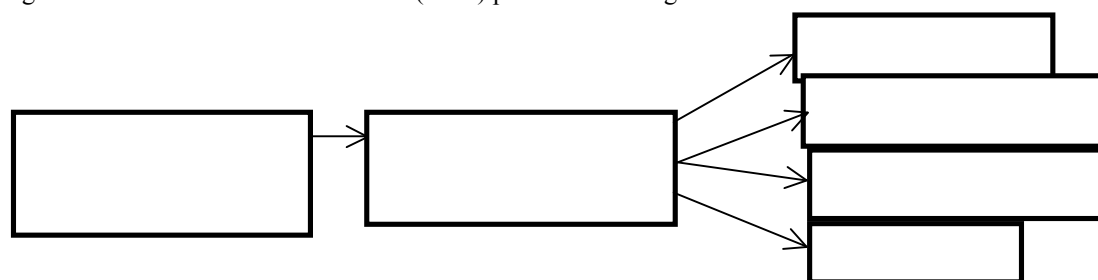


Figure 1: Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies adapted from Najeeb, Maros & Nor, 2012, p. 134)

Brown and Levinson (1987, cited in Najeeb, Maros, & Nor, 2012 ), formalized politeness strategies as follow:

### **Bald On-record**

This strategy does not generally decrease the possibility of jeopardizing the hearer's face and astounds or ashames the addressee. This is often utilized when the hearer and the speaker have an intimate interaction with each other (e.g. family member, sincere friends) "instances of urgency: 'Watch out!' or 'Be careful!'" (p. 131).

### **Positive Politeness**

Threats to the hearer's positive face are reduced by applying this strategy. Also, this requires that the hearer is relaxed, and to prevent disagreement and jokes, be optimistic, use solidarity, make a promise, listen to the hearers' needs and wants.

### **Negative Politeness**

This strategy is commonly accommodated with the hearer's negative face. For example: being pessimistic, being indirect, decreasing the imposition, using hedges or questions, apologizing and using the plural forms of pronouns.

### **Indirect Strategy**

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), this strategy employs implications as a substitution of direct requests. "For example, a speaker might say 'wow, it's cold here', which would imply to the listener to take an action, such as increasing the temperature of the heater in the room, without directly asking him/her to do so" (p. 131).

Rafieyan (2012) notes that these strategies show the four different levels of politeness, that is, the first strategy is completely impolite, and the last one is very polite. Parviz (2012) demonstrated these levels with a good example as follows:

- (1) The student can state the request baldly on record in the imperative and most direct way (e.g., *Meet with me!*);
- (2) The student can express solidarity by phrasing the request using positive politeness (e.g., *Let's meet to discuss your ideas*);
- (3) The student may attempt to minimize the imposition by wording the request with negative politeness (e.g., *Would you be willing to meet with me for just a minute about this concept?*);
- (4) The student can make an off-record request by hinting or using ambiguous language to minimize the threat (e.g., *Usually when I talk through a concept, I can understand it better*);
- (5) Or the student may not make the request at all (p. 130).

### ***Syntactic and lexical politeness modifiers***

Syntactic and lexical politeness modifiers are devices that are added within each request to extenuate the impact of the position of the request and lead to realize politeness (Biesenbach-lucas, 2007). Table 1 shows the category of syntactical and lexical politeness modifier used in this study adapted from Biesenbach-lucas' classification with some modification.

*Table 1: syntactic and lexical politeness modifiers in this study*

<b>Syntactic</b>	<b>lexical</b>
Past tense	<i>Please</i>
Present tense	Downtoners: <i>possibly, maybe, perhaps</i>
Modals: <i>could, should, would</i>	Understaters: <i>just, a little, a minute</i>
Embedding : <i>I would appreciate it if you could...</i> <i>Do you think I ....?</i>	Subjectivisers: <i>I was wondering, I think, I feel, I wanted to know</i>
Interrogative	Consultative devices: <i>do you think, is there any chance</i>
Declarative or imperative	Hedges: <i>some, any, somehow</i>

### ***Research on request strategies and politeness in student E-mail***

Bunz and compbell (2002) reported a study that investigated politeness accommodation indicators in personal electronic mails. This study was based on Buzzanell et al.'s (1996) research in which politeness accommodation within telephone messages had been surveyed. In this study one of four versions of a message was sent to subjects. The content of each version was the same but varied in politeness. Verbal politeness makers (i.e., please, thank you), or structural politeness makers (i.e., greeting, closing remark), or both, or none messages were included. Results indicated that participants accommodated to verbal politeness markers in the body of a message and to structural politeness marker of greeting. In addition, the messages including both verbal and structural politeness markers stimulated the most polite responses.

Duthler (2006) conducted a study that analyzed requests made via email and voicemail from the point of view of politeness. The author predicted that email users create more polite speech voicemail. The researcher believed that due to the lack of time or not having enough time, voice mail or users have less control over planning, composing, and editing than users of email. One hundred fifty-one messages were analyzed for properties of politeness. Although there are many politeness measures, in this study the author preferred to use Hotgraves and Yang's (1992) measuring technique. Variables in this analysis were politeness super strategy for request and for reply formality of address phrase, number of words and number of adjuncts. The results of this study strongly supported Walther's (1996) hypersonal model and also showed that email users create more polite content than voicemail users.

Bisenbach-Lucas (2007) reported a study among native and nonnative speakers of English. This study focused on e-politeness in email-request of the students to faculty members. Blum-kulka, House, and Kasper's (1989) speech act analysis was used by the researcher. Email-requests were analyzed from pragmatic and lexico-syntactic point of view, directness of requests, and syntactic and lexical politeness markers. The findings of this study revealed that students applied more direct strategies for the lower imposition request and more politeness devices with direct request strategies (e.g. feedback requests).

In another study, Najeeb, Maros and Nor (2012) investigated cross-cultural differences among Arab students who were studying in Malaysia as international students. In this study researchers analyzed emails that were sent by Arab students to their supervisors. The results showed that Arab students applied different politeness strategies, and were more direct in their requests. Arab students had some problems during their studies in Malaysia, one of which was lack of fluency in English and another problem was lack of knowing sociolinguistic and pragmatics norms sufficiently in email writing. "While certain ways of expressions would be acceptable in the Arabic language, they may be considered as impolite or unacceptable by their Malaysian supervisors communicating in English" (Najeeb, Maro & Nor, 2012, p.127). Thus, students should be aware of sociolinguistics and sociopragmatics norms in order to have effective and appropriate email communication in cyber space. The other important factor is that politeness strategies may vary in different cultures (Najeeb, Maros & Nor, 2012).

In a similar study, Izadi and Zilaie (2012) attempted to find out politeness strategies in email exchanges in Persian. The researchers focused on positive strategies and what positive strategies are more common or used by Iranian speakers. In this study 60 emails exchanged between fairly intimate friends written in Persian by the authors were analyzed. The most frequent positive politeness strategies were "group identity markers", and "give gifts to H". The results could help cross cultural communication.

In another study on electronic text genre, Hayati and Shokouhi (2011) carried out a study to analyze reprint request emails sent by EFL and physics postgraduates. The researchers tried to identify their strategies, move, and most typical lexico-grammatical features. According to Hayati and Shokouhi (2011), reprint request "is a request for a copy, reprint or off print of a research article mailed by a researcher (or occasionally librarian) to the author or of that publication" (p. 25). In this study one hundred emails of requesting a reprint were selected for analysis. The authors followed the approach for analysis taken by Swales (1990). Swales (1990) reports that a request should have four stages: a) opening salutation, (b) request statement, (c) expression of thanks, and (d) closing salutation. The researchers analyzed the differences and similarities in writing styles between these two corpora of reprint request. The results showed that the move schemata of the two corpora were much alike, but there were differences at the level of strategies and microstructures, and the physics group affected by conventions of their first language or Persian and previously learned text.

Parviz (2012) designed a study to examine politeness accommodation in e-mail messages. The number of the participants of the this study was one hundred Iranian postgraduate students of EFL. They were M.A students of TEFL, Translation Studies, English Literature, and Linguistics from both state universities and Azad universities in Iran. The participants received four different types of messages, messages with verbal politeness markers, messages with structural politeness markers, messages with both verbal and structural politeness markers, and messages with neither verbal nor structural politeness markers. The messages were written by different levels of politeness but the same content. The results showed that students accommodated noticeably to verbal politeness and structural politeness markers, and the participants answered significantly more politely if they had received a message with those features.

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The fact is that being polite in English is one of the most essential components of language proficiency. E-politeness might be noticeable by prevalent use of email by students and professors of the universities for pedagogical purposes. Studying writing email etiquette and style is necessary for students especially for nonnative speakers. They are likely to write emails different from native speakers. The fact is that only lexical and grammatical knowledge does not guarantee having successful email exchanges. Thus, this study will be an attempt to examine politeness strategies and syntactical and lexical politeness modifiers in different types of email-request used by male and female of Iranian EFL learners to professors.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 1) Are politeness strategies differentially used by male and female Iranian EFL learners in their email-requests to professors?
- 2) Are syntactic politeness modifiers and the lexical politeness modifiers differentially used by male and female Iranian EFL learners in their email-requests to professors?

## METHODOLOGY

The present study investigate politeness strategies and syntactical and lexical politeness modifiers that are used by males and females EFL learners in their email-request to professors. This part reports the methodology of the research and covers a full description of the participants, materials as well as procedures.

### *Participants*

The participants of this study were Fifty two (N=52) males and females; males=21(%40) and females=31(%60); M.A students of TEFL studying at Takestan Islamic Azad University, Qazvin, Iran. Their level of general English language were advanced; therefore, they had enough proficiency of general English language. They had studied English in their undergraduate studies for four years; translation, literature, and TEFL; at universities in Iran (both state and Azad). They have never had any course to learn email writing rules.

### *Material*

Two actual email corpora consisted the data for this study which have been written by two groups of males and females of M.A students to their professors. The content of each email which students sent to their professors contained a request. Some of emails did not contain request and had to be left out. The students were not informed that their emails used as data. Without revealing personal information, email-request used as data in this study.

### *Procedure*

Quantitative and qualitative approaches for analysis of email-request were used by the researcher. This study focused on politeness strategies and politeness markers in email-request of Iranian EFL learners to professors. In the first step, email-request of male and female were separately classified into three different groups (request for topic, request for sending files, and request for feedback) by the researcher and frequency of them sent by males and females were elicited and analyzed. In the second step, politeness strategies in each email were examined and tabulated according to the four strategies adapted by Brown and Levinson's (1978) Politeness Theory. The finding will answer the first research question: Are politeness strategies differentially used by the male and female Iranian EFL learners in their different types email-requests to professors?

In the last step, the frequency of syntactic and lexical politeness modifiers in each email-request of males and females was found and compared. The finding will answer the second research question: Are the syntactic politeness modifiers and the lexical politeness modifiers differentially used by male and female Iranian EFL learners in their email-requests to professors?

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed at investigating email-requests written by male and female EFL learners to find out the, politeness strategies and syntactic and lexical politeness modifiers in students' email to professors. Email-requests were classified in three different groups. Data analysis were separately used to find out the probable differences and similarities among different group of email-requests and between males and females. Furthermore, tables and figures are provided to show statistical analysis.

### *Investigation of the first research question*

The first question raised in the study was:

1) Are politeness strategies differentially used by the male and female Iranian EFL learners in their email-requests to professors?

Politeness strategies used by males and females were bald-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, and off-record strategies (*Table 2*). In general, negative politeness strategy was the most frequent strategy used by males (%52) and females (%39) in all types of email-requests. In requesting files and feedback requests both males and females and in topic requests females applied negative politeness strategy as the most frequent strategy. But, in email-requests for topic, the most frequent strategy used by males (%50) was positive politeness strategies. *Table 3*. shows politeness strategies and frequencies regardless of gender in emails-requests (topic, sending files, and feedback). Generally, negative politeness strategies were the most frequent strategies in all types of email-requests. In general, with regard to gender, there are insignificant differences between males and females in email-requests. For males, negative politeness strategies, followed by positive politeness strategies, off record, and finally bald

record were the most frequent strategies used. For females, negative politeness strategies, followed by off record, positive politeness strategies, and finally bald record were the most frequent strategies used.

*Table 2: Politeness strategies and frequencies used by males and females in email-requests (topic, requesting files, and feedback)*

Politeness strategies	Frequency in email-request for topic		Frequency in email-request for sending files		Frequency in email-request for feedback		Total	
Bald-record	Male	0(%0)	Male	0(%0)	Male	5(%18)	Male	5(%10)
	Female	1(%9)	Female	5(%24)	Female	5(%11)	Female	11(%14)
Positive politeness	Male	8(%50)	Male	0(%0)	Male	2(%7)	Male	10(%21)
	Female	3(%27)	Female	1(%5)	Female	11(%25)	Female	15(%20)
Negative politeness	Male	5(%31)	Male	5(%100)	Male	15(%55)	Male	25(%52)
	Female	5(%45)	Female	10(%48)	Female	15(%34)	Female	30(%39)
Off-record	Male	3(%19)	Male	0(%0)	Male	5(%18)	Male	8(%17)
	female	2(%18)	female	5(%24)	female	13(%30)	female	20(%26)

*Table 3: politeness strategies and frequencies regardless of gender in email-requests (topic, requesting files, and feedback)*

Politeness strategies	Frequency in email-request for topic	Frequency in email-request for sending files	Frequency in email-request for feedback	Total Percentage
Bald-record	1(%1)	5(%4)	10(%8)	16(%13)
Positive politeness	12(%9)	1(%1)	13(%10)	26(%21)
Negative politeness	10(%8)	15(%12)	30(%24)	55(%44)
Off-record	5(%4)	5(%4)	18(%14)	28(%22)

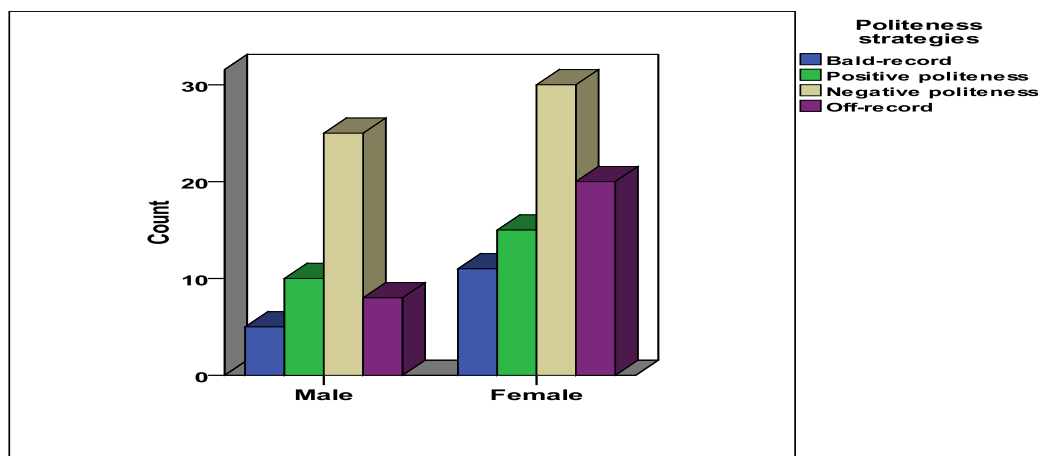


In order to find the relationship between gender and politeness strategies in email requests, the Chi-square test was utilized. The result present in *Table 4*.

*Table 4: Chi-Square Tests for the use of Politeness strategies by males and females in email-requests*

	Value	Df	Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.660	3	.447
Likelihood Ratio	2.704	3	.440
Linear-by-Linear Association	.023	1	.880
N of Valid Cases	124		

The relationship between using politeness strategies and gender was not significant because the Chi-Square test revealed the Sig. of .44 which is higher than 0.05, and the Chi-Square value observed was 2.6 6 which is less than the critical value of Chi-Square i.e. 7.82 with df of 3 (Chi-Square value = 2.66,  $p = .44$ ). As a result the second null hypothesis which states politeness strategies are not used differentially by **male** and **female** Iranian EFL learners in their email-requests to professors was **supported**.



*Figure 2: Politeness strategies used by males and females in email-requests*

#### **Investigation of the second research question**

The second research question raised here was:

2) Are the syntactic politeness modifiers and the lexical politeness modifiers differentially used by male and female Iranian EFL learners in their email-requests to professors?

Syntactic politeness modifiers used by males and females across requests for topic, requesting files, and feedback were analyzed. As *Table 5*. illustrates, in email-request for topic, the most frequent syntactic politeness modifier was

*embedding* used by males (%22) and females (%29). As the percentages show there is no significant difference between males and females in applying syntactic politeness markers in email-request for topic and both of them preferred *embedding*. In email-request for requesting files, the most frequently syntactic politeness modifiers used by males and females were *embedding*, *modals*, and *interrogative*. For females *embedding* (%21) and for males *modals* (%27) and *interrogative* (%27) were equally the preferred syntactic politeness modifiers. As the results demonstrate, in request requesting files there is insignificant difference in applying syntactic politeness markers comparing to request topic. Similar to request topic, in request feedback *embedding* was the most frequently syntactic politeness marker employed by males (%22) and females (%24). Generally, *embedding* was the most preferred syntactic politeness modifiers used by males and females in all types of email-requests.

Table 5: Syntactic politeness modifiers used by males and females across requests for topic, sending files, and feedback

	Request topic		Request sending files		Request feedback		Total	
Past	Male	4(%17)	Male	2(%18)	Male	5(%14)	Male	11(%6)
	Female	2(%14)	Female	7(%18)	Female	10(%18)	Female	19(%11)
Present	Male	3(%13)	Male	1(%9)	Male	6(%17)	Male	10(%6)
	Female	2(%14)	female	5(%13)	Female	5(%9)	Female	12(%7)
Modals(could, should, would)	Male	3(%13)	Male	3(%27)		6(%17)	Male	12(%7)
	Female	2(%14)	Female	6(%16)	Female	11(%20)	Female	19(%11)
Embedding	Male	5(%22)	Male	2(%18)	Male	8(%22)	Male	15(%8)
	Female	4(%29)	Female	8(%21)	female	13(%24)	Female	25(%14)
Interrogative	Male	4(%17)	Male	3(%27)	Male	5(%14)	Male	12(%7)
	Female	1(%7)	Female	5(%13)	Female	9(%16)	Female	15(%8)
Declarative or imperative	Male	4(%17)	Male	0(%0)	Male	6(%17)	Male	10(%6)
	Female	3(%21)	Female	7(%18)	female	7(%13)	female	17(%9)

Table 6: Chi-Square Tests for the use of Syntactic Politeness modifiers by males and females in email-requests

	Value	Df	Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.846	5	.974
Likelihood Ratio	.840	5	.974
Linear-by-Linear Association	.000	1	.984
N of Valid Cases			
177			

The relationship between using syntactic politeness modifiers and gender was not significant because the Chi-Square test result showed a Sig. of .97 which is higher than 0.05, and the Chi-Square value observed was .84 which is less than the critical value of Chi-Square i.e. 11.07 with df of 5 (Chi-Square value = .84,  $p = .97$ ). Accordingly, the third null hypothesis which states syntactic politeness modifiers are not used differentially by **male** and **female** Iranian EFL learners in their email-requests to professors was **supported**.

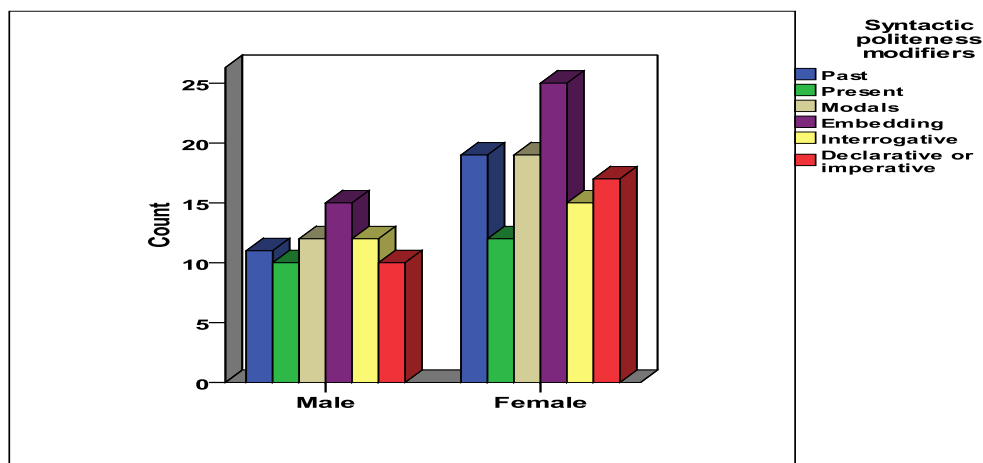


Figure 3: Syntactic Politeness modifiers used by males and females in email-requests

Lexical politeness modifiers used by males and females across requests for topic, requesting files, and feedback were analyzed. As Table 7. shows, in email-requests for topic, the most frequent lexical politeness markers were *subjectivizers* (%38) for males, and *subjectivizers* (%36) and *consultative devices* (%36) equally for females. In contrast, in email-request for requesting files, for females *please* (%35) and for males *hedge* (%50) were the most frequently used politeness markers. In request feedback, *subjectivizers* for males (%26) and for females (%26) was the preferred lexical politeness marker. Totally, *subjectivizers* was the preferred lexical politeness modifier in email-requests.

Table 7: Lexical politeness modifiers used by males and females across requests for topic, sending files, and feedback

	Request topic		Request requesting files		Request feedback		Total	
Please	Male	1(%8)	Male	1(%25)	Male	8(%23)	Male	10(%7)
	Female	2(%14)	fem	8(%35)	female	11(%20)	Female	21(%15)
Downtoners	Male	1(%8)	Male	0(%0)	Male	4(%12)	Male	5(%4)
	Female	0(%0)	female	0(%0)	female	6(%11)	Female	6(%4)
Understaters	Male	1(%8)	Male	0(%0)	Male	0(%0)	Male	1(%1)
	Female	0(%0)	female	0(%0)	female	3(%6)	Female	3(%2)
Subjectivizers	Male	5(%38)	Male	1(%25)	Male	9(%26)	Male	15(%11)
	Female	5(%36)	female	6(%26)	female	14(%26)	Female	25(%18)
Consultative devices	Male	2(%15)	Male	0(%0)	Male	8(%23)	Male	10(%7)
	female	5(%36)	female	3(%13)	female	12(%22)	Female	20(%14)
Hedges	Male	3(%23)	Male	2(%50)	Male	5(%15)	Male	10(%7)
	Female	2(%14)	female	6(%26)	female	8(%15)	female	16(%11)

Table 8: Chi-Square Tests for the use of Lexical politeness modifiers by males and females in email-requests

	Value	Df	Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.026	5	.960
Likelihood Ratio	1.027	5	.960
Linear-by-Linear Association	.050	1	.823

N of Valid Cases 142

The relationship between using lexical politeness modifiers and gender was not significant because the Chi-Square test result showed a Sig. of .96 which is higher than 0.05, and the Chi-Square value observed was 1.02 which is less than the critical value of Chi-Square i.e. 11.07 with df of 5 (Chi-Square value = 1.02,  $p = .96$ ). In conclusion, the fourth null hypothesis which states lexical politeness modifiers are not used differentially by **male** and **female** Iranian EFL learners in their email-requests to professors was **supported**.

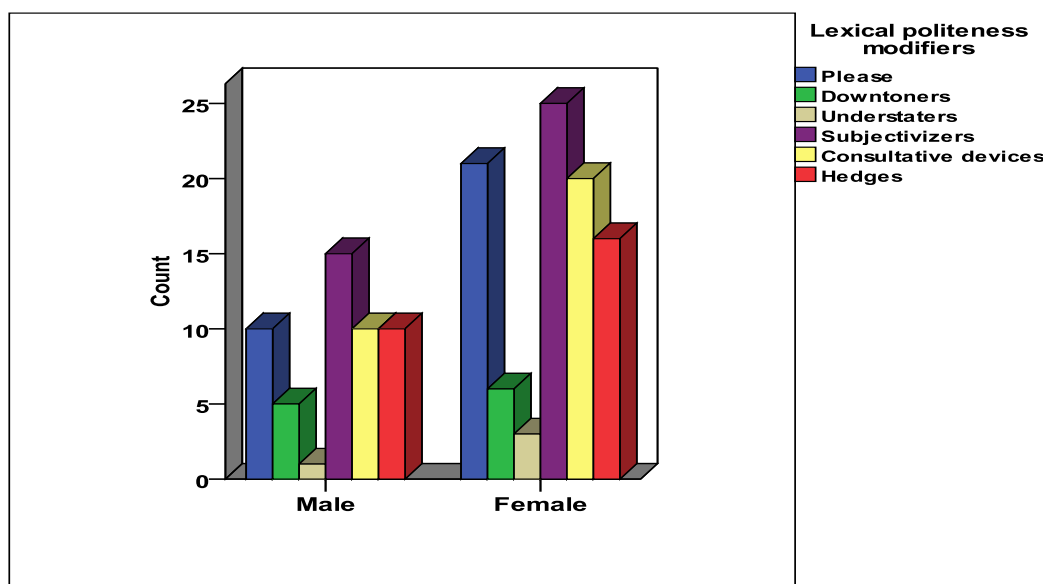


Figure 4: Lexical politeness modifiers used by males and females in email-requests

The first research question in present study focused on politeness strategies. Negative politeness strategy was the most frequent strategy used both by males and females in all types of email-requests. As the results show, there is not much difference with regard to topic request for males, and the most frequent strategy was positive politeness strategy. In this case, the finding is in accordance with Najeeb, Maros, and Nor's (2012) who reported that the majority of Arab nonnative speakers used positive politeness strategies in their request via email to their supervisors. Generally, the obtained results showed that the differences between politeness strategies used by males and females were not significant.

Regarding the second research questions, concerning in topic request and feedback, both males and females, and females in requesting files used *embedding* as the most frequent syntactic politeness modifiers in their emails. With little difference in requesting files, males used *interrogative* and modals as the most frequent syntactic politeness markers. The finding of the present study is not in line with Biesenbach-Lucas' (2007) study who reported that nonnative speakers in request appointment, request extension, and in request feedback used past tense as the most frequent syntactic politeness markers. Generally, performance of males and females with regard to applying syntactic politeness markers in email-requests was almost equal and statistically not different.

With regard to lexical politeness modifiers, in email-request for topic, the most frequent lexical politeness markers were *subjectivizers* for males and *subjectivizers* and equally *consultative devices* for females. In contrast, in email-request for requesting files, for females *please* and for males *hedging* were the most frequent politeness markers. In request feedback, *subjectivizers* for males and females was the preferred lexical politeness markers. In general, *subjectivizers* were the preferred lexical politeness modifiers in email-request. The finding of this study is in line with the result of Biesenbach-Lucas' (2007) study in that in the case of requesting files for females, *please*, was the most frequent lexical politeness marker which is in accordance in with Biesenbach-Lucas' (2007) study for nonnative speakers in request feedback. Also in requesting files for males in this study, *hedging*, was the most frequent lexical politeness marker which is in accordance with nonnative speakers in request appointment. Generally, the results showed that the performance of males and females with regard to lexical politeness strategies in email-request was almost equal and statistically not different.

## CONCLUSION

The first research question aimed at investigating whether or not there are any significant difference among politeness strategies applied by males and females in email-requests. The findings of present study showed that there are no significant differences among politeness strategies used by males and females in email-requests. Besides, the second research question attempted to examine whether or not there are any significant differences among syntactical and lexical politeness modifiers used by males and females in email-requests. The obtained results demonstrated that there are no significant differences among syntactical and lexical politeness modifiers used by males and females in email-requests.

The findings of present study also showed that negative politeness strategy was the most frequent strategy used by males and females in email-requests. Moreover, syntactic politeness modifiers were analyzed in this study, the results showed that syntactic politeness modifiers were used in the same way by males as females across email-requests to professors. The most frequent syntactic politeness marker was *embedding*. With regard to lexical politeness modifiers, males and females used *subjectivizers* as the most frequent modifiers in their email-requests. The outcome of this study can be useful for instructors, professors, and supervisors for preparing and gathering teaching materials. Students might be familiar with a variety of helpful different politeness strategies, different levels of politeness in those strategies, and increasing the level of politeness with using lexical and syntactical politeness indicators and learn how they can increase the level of politeness with the use of those strategies and markers to communicate more effectively and appropriately. This study like other studies certainly has limitations. The first limitation is that participants' general language proficiency and language background may make them utilize politeness strategies and markers differently. Second, the number of emails examined in this study can be considered as another limitation. This study conducted in EFL context, further research can be conducted in ESL context. In addition, some variables such as age, personality, different levels of education, and different academic majors of the students can be organized in further research.

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**METAPHOR AND SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF POLITICAL CARTOON IN THE POLITICAL CARTOON  
COMPILATION  
BOOK *POLITIK SANTUN DALAM KARTUN***

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**ABSTRACT**

This research is entitled “Metaphor and Social Functions of Political Cartoon in the Political Cartoon Compilation Book *Politik Santun dalam Kartun*”. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. It aims to describe types of metaphor and social functions of the political cartoon in the book *Politik Santun dalam Kartun*. The results show that types of metaphor, that is anthropomorphic metaphor, animal metaphor, from concrete to abstract metaphor, and synesthetic metaphor are used in the political cartoons. Another type of metaphor, that is plant metaphor, is also found. The social functions carried by the political cartoons in the book are joking, satirizing, and criticizing. In addition, there is also another social function found, namely expressing hope. Metaphor makes every conversation in the political cartoons more expressive to create humor. Moreover, it is also used by the cartoonist for hiding the political cartoons’ social functions.

**KEYWORDS:** metaphors, social functions, political cartoon

**INTRODUCTION**

Cartoon in newspaper columns has special meanings to its readers. It becomes a kind of pleasant distraction for those who have read some more serious information in other columns. Cartoon in newspaper brings the readers into a relaxing situation because of its pictures combined with some funny dialogues.

Political cartoon in newspaper contains comment, criticism, response, and hope on current political issues or events. As Anderson (cited in Wijana, 2004: 5) states, cartoon is a sort of political communication which is usually created as a reaction towards particular events. This kind of cartoon is commonly called editorial, political, or opinion cartoon.

The word ‘cartoon’ originated from Italian ‘*cartone*’ meaning ‘paper’ and referred to sketch on stout paper used for canvas or wall painting design. However, cartoon is currently used not only as the expression of art but also for the purposes of joking, satirizing, and criticizing (Wijana, 2004: 4).

Nowadays, political cartoons issued on both daily and weekly newspaper can also be found on political cartoon compilation books. For instance, the political cartoons in *Rakyat Merdeka*, one of Indonesian newspaper, from 2010 to 2011 by Muhammad Mice Misra was compiled to be a specific political cartoon compilation book entitled *Politik Santun dalam Kartun*.

Political cartoon consists of two elements, that is picture and verbal language (Wijana, 2004: 10). While picture visualizes political events or issues taken as theme of the cartoon, verbal language realizes some short conversations discussing current political issues.

The language used in political cartoon differs from other political writings, such as political essay and news. While essay and news in newspaper tend to use simple language, the political cartoon applies figurative one. This figurative

language seems to be uncomplicated yet conceiving a wide range of meaning. One of the figurative expressions mostly used in political cartoon is metaphor.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***Metaphor***

Metaphor is defined as the use of language or group of words not literally to express something based on its similarity or comparison with other things (Poerwadarminta, 2003: 766). It is viewed as a changing process between two entities, qualities, conditions or references (Subroto, 2011: 121). Metaphor is used to express other objects or concepts based on simile or analogy (Kridalaksana, 2008: 152).

Metaphor actually refers to transfer of meaning based on similar character of two objects. It semantically transfers meaning of an entity by referring to its similarity of meaning perception to another. Metaphor is not explicitly expressed by prepositions such as *like*, *as*, *as if*, and so on. Rather, it directly relates the first entity to the second one (Keraf, 1991: 139). Meanwhile, Leech (1974: 217) views metaphor simply as a process of meaning transfer as he states that '*for a meaning 'A' we substitute the meaning something similar to 'A'*'. This notion is also supported by Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 5) who suggest that the "*essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another*". Thus, it can be concluded that metaphor is a word or group of words derived from the process of meaning transfer between two similar references based on either their characters or their perception.

### ***Types of metaphor***

Ullman in Subroto (2011: 131) divides metaphor into some types, that is (1) anthropomorphic metaphor, (2) animal metaphor, (3) from concrete to abstract metaphor, and (4) synesthetic metaphor. Anthropomorphic metaphor refers to parts of human body. In this kind of metaphor, human body can also be named as animal body or other things. Meanwhile, animal metaphor primarily refers to the nature or characters of animals. From concrete to abstract metaphor is derived from transfer of concrete to abstract experience or vice versa, while synesthetic metaphor refers to transfer of responses from one sense to another (for instance, from sight to sound or from senses to sound, etc.).

### ***A glance at political cartoon***

Political cartoon is commonly used to visualize newspaper or magazine feature. This kind of cartoon usually talks about current political issues or events. Political cartoon has clearly become one of multi-functioned media since it does not only represent the expressions of art but also carries some social functions. Some of its social functions are joking, satirizing, and criticizing (Wijana, 2004: 4-5).

*Politik Santun dalam Kartun* by Muhammad Mice Misrad is one of political cartoon books containing some selected political cartoons. The political cartoons in the book were issued weekly and daily from 2009 to 2010 on *Rakyat Merdeka*, one of Indonesian newspapers.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What types of metaphor are used in the political cartoon compilation book *Politik Santun dalam Kartun*?
2. What are the social functions carried by the political cartoons in the book *Politik Santun dalam Kartun*?

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To describe types of metaphor used in the political cartoon compilation book *Politik Santun dalam Kartun*.
2. To describe the social functions carried by the political cartoons in the book *Politik Santun dalam Kartun*.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method to reveal an empiric fact objectively and comprehensively underlied by scientific logic, procedure and supported by certain methodology and theories related to the present writers' field of study (Mukhtar, 2013: 29). Descriptive qualitative method in linguistics can be viewed as a way to afford descriptive data in written or spoken language in a speech community (Djadjasudarma, 1993: 10).

The steps taken in this research are (1) conducting a literature study by reading a number of related references, (2) collecting data, (3) classifying the collected data based on the analysis criteria, (4) analyzing the data, (5) drawing some conclusions based on the results, and (6) presenting the research in a scientific article form.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Metaphor*

#### *Anthropomorphic Metaphor*

##### **(1) *Pembangunan Gedung Baru DPR***

##### **'The House of Representatives New Office Construction'**

*Rakyat* : dewan yang terhormat, menara miring di Italy dari dulu nggak pernah mengusulkan dana untuk renovasi tuh! Apalagi sampai triliyunan.

'The people : dear the house of representatives members, even the leaning tower of Pisa has never been proposed to renovate! Not to mention to spend trillions.'

*Anggota DPR* : jalan terus pantang malu!

'House of Representatives Members : go ahead! No need to be ashamed.'

*Rakyat* : benar-benar muka tembok!

'The people : what thick-skinned (*wall face*) people!'

Data (1) is a conversation in a political cartoon between the people and the house of representatives members. The people protest against plan to renovate the House of Representatives office spending up to trillions rupiahs. On the other hand, the House of Representatives members give no response and keep continuing the renovation project.

In data (1), anthropomorphic metaphor occurs. As explained before, this kind of metaphor is derived from human body or parts of human body which is then transfered to other things. In this data, anthropomorphic metaphor is realized by *muka* (face) transfered to another thing, that is *tembok* (wall), to create a metaphor *muka tembok* ('wall face', equally translated into English as 'thick-skinned').

*Muka* (face) is one of parts of head ranging from forehead to chin between ears. It is considered as the center of expressions, such as happy, sad, shocked, and embarrassed. To exemplify, when someone gets embarrassed, he will commonly cover his reddened face. Meanwhile, *tembok* (wall) is a part of building composed of some materials such as bricks and cement and have sturdy characteristic. *Muka tembok* denotes a metaphor referring to a bad character in which the person having it becomes insensitive to criticism or insults. Indonesian culture suggests someone to cover his face whenever he gets embarrassed, while in contrast to the ethic, a *muka tembok* (thick-skinned) person will confidently keep his face uncovered.

#### *Animal Metaphor*

##### **(2) *Penangkapan Susno Duadji***

##### **'The Arrest of Susno Duadji'**

*Polisi* : saya tangkap kamu..

'Policeman : I'm arresting you..'

*Rakyat* : loh.. Polisi kok nangkap polisi juga. Mendingan nangkap tikus-tikus yang masih bebas berkeliaran, Pak!

'The people: It's awkward to see a policeman arresting other policeman. You better seize other wandering rats, Sir!'

Data (2) is taken from a conversation in a political cartoon between a policeman and the people while the policeman attempts to seize his own colleague, Susno Duadji. The people respond to the action by suggesting the policeman to apprehend other freely wandering rats.

Animal metaphor is used in the conversation. This sort of metaphor is derived from animal or animal parts of body, or anything related to animal character to represent another thing. In the conversation, the animal representing another thing is rats. The rats in data (2) refer to corruptors since both entities are considered to have destructive character. While the former destroy housewares by gnawing at them, the latter destruct economic system as well as government structure by embezzling national budget.

#### *From Concrete to Abstract Metaphor*

### **(3) Reshuffle Menteri 'Cabinet Reshuffle'**

SBY : *sparepart-nya ada yang mesti diganti gak?*  
'SBY : any spare part to replace?'

Montir : *waah.. banyak, Pak! Akinya udah soak, nih.. Businya mati..Olinya juga udah kotor..*  
'Mechanic: The whole lot, Sir! The battery is gone.. The spark plug no longer works.. The lubricant gets dirty as well.'

Data (3) shows a conversation in a political cartoon between the President of the Republic of Indonesia, SBY, and a mechanic. This conversation seems to take place at a workshop as indicated by attributes such as a mechanic and spare parts. In the conversation entitled *Reshuffle Menteri* (Cabinet Reshuffle), SBY asks the mechanic about any spare parts he should replace. The mechanic suggests him to replace some spare parts, namely battery, spark plug, and lubricant.

From concrete to abstract metaphor occurs in this data. This kind of metaphor refers to transfer of concrete things to abstract ones and vice versa. This metaphor views abstract things as if they were alive. Spare parts (battery, spark plug, and lubricant) in this conversation can be interpreted as the ministers to be reshuffled by the president for their improper work. Those ministers are considered to fail to create synergy in improving the government.

#### *Synesthetic Metaphor*

### **(4) Anjuran Beralih ke Makanan Pokok Selain Beras 'Suggestion to Convert Food from Rice to Other Kinds of Food'**

Pemerintah : *diversifikasi pangan, cobalah beralih ke bahan pangan lain selain nasi..*  
'Government : go diversifying, consuming other kinds of food besides rice.'

Rakyat : *udah, Pak.. kalo saya udah beralih dari makan nasi ke makan angin..*  
'A man of the people : I've done it, Sir..by converting from eating rice to eating wind (eat nothing).'

Data (4) is a conversation in a political cartoon between government and a man of the people. In the conversation, the government suggests the man of the people to change his primary food. He then responds to the suggestion by claiming that he has converted his main food from rice to wind.

In this data, synesthetic metaphor appears. This kind of metaphor, as stated in the previous section, refers to transfer of an experience or a response to another one. In the conversation, the metaphor is indicated by the phrase *makan angin* ('eating wind', equally translated as 'eating nothing'). Eating is one of human primary activities indicated by process of taking food into mouth, chewing and then swallowing it. Meanwhile, food can be generally defined as every thing which can be eaten. It may range from snack or dessert to main course.

In data (4), *makan angin* (eating wind) is interpreted as eating unreal food, or in other words, eating nothing.

#### *Plant Metaphor*

**(5) Ketika Tikus tidak Lagi Menyukai Keju**  
**‘When Rats are No Longer Interested in Cheese’**

Koruptor 1 : lebih senang ‘apel malang’ ya?  
‘Corruptor 1 : You’re more interested in ‘malang apple’, aren’t you?’

Koruptor 2 : kalo saya sih lebih suka ‘apel washington’!  
‘Corruptor 2 : I prefer ‘washington apple’!’

Data (5) is taken from a conversation in a political cartoon between two corruptors. The conversation entitled *Ketika Tikus tidak Lagi Menyukai Keju* (When Rats are No Longer Interested in Cheese) tells about corruptors represented by rats which prefer fruits, especially malang and washington apple.

In the conversation, plant metaphor is used. This type of metaphor refers to plant or parts of plant, or anything related to plant to represent another thing. In conversation (5), plant representing another thing is fruit, in this case malang and washington apple. The metaphor of the two kinds of apple is closely related to a corruption case perpetrated by Angelina Sondakh. It is revealed in the case that Angelina Sondakh used two uncommon terminologies, that is malang apple and washington apple, while having financial dealings. Malang apple is interpreted as Indonesian Rupiah while washington apple refers to US Dollar.

**Social functions**

*Joking*

**(6) Barang Impor Ternyata Dekat dengan Rakyat Kecil**  
**‘Imported Products Turn Out to be A Part of The people’**

Pembeli : kecil, makin tipis, agak transparan? Ini tempe apa selotip?  
‘Buyer : tiny, thinner, and kinda transparent? Is it *tempe* (a snack made from fermented soybean) or cellophane?’

Penjual : yang penting kedelai, tepung, ama minyaknya barang impor  
‘Vender : at least it was made from imported soy, wheat flour, and cooking oil’

Data (6) is a conversation in a political cartoon between a fried *tempe* buyer and vender. The conversation generally tells about a buyer complaining the quality of *tempe* he is going to buy, which is tiny, thin, and rather transparent. However, the vender seems not to care about the buyer’s opinion. He replies the comment by arguing that what really matters is the imported ingredients, instead of the appearance of the *tempe*.

In data (6), the political cartoon represented by the conversation functions to make a joke. By comparing *tempe* to cellophane and exposing the vender’s indifference, the cartoonist attempts to make the readers burst out laughing. Thus, the political cartoon in data (6) carries one of its social functions, that is joking.

*Criticizing*

**(7) Listrik Mati tidak Merata**  
**‘The Uneven Blackout’**

Bapak : kok mati lampunya? Belum bayar yaa?  
‘Man : why does the electricity go off? Have you paid the bill yet?’

Tetangga : bayar mah lancar, Pak.. peningkatan yang nggak ada! Malah kena jatah mati lampu!  
‘Neighbor : I always do pay it on time, Sir. But the service is totally disappointing! All I get just the rolling blackout instead.’

Data (7) is taken from a conversation between a man and his neighbor in a political cartoon. It tells about a man asking why his neighbor’s electricity goes off. The man supposes that his neighbor gets the disconnection of

electricity supply due to his arrears. However, his neighbor responds to the question by telling that he always pays the bill on time while the service is really disappointing, not to mention the rolling blackout.

The conversation in the political cartoon shows its social function for criticizing, that is in this case, expressing criticism of the unsatisfying service given by the government.

*Satirizing*

**(8) Korupsi di Negeri Ini**  
**‘Corruption in This Country’**

*Bapak : hiks hiks.. Pupus sudah.. tidak ada lagi yang bisa dibanggakan dari republik ini..*  
‘Father : huu huu.. No hope.. There’s nothing to be proud of in this country..’

*Tong : sabar, Pak.. korupsi di republik ini masih juara kok!*  
‘Tong : Be tough, Dad.. at least the corruption still rank the highest!’

Data (8) is a conversation between a father and his son named Tong taken from a political cartoon. The conversation tells about a father hopelessly thinking that there is nothing to be proud of in being an Indonesian. Nevertheless, his son, Tong, tries to relieve the disappointment by assuring him that there is still something which can make people proud of the country, that is its corruption.

The conversation of political cartoon shows one of its social functions, namely satirizing. By using the kind of conversation in the political cartoon, the cartoonist expresses criticism or even convey an insult in implicit way.

*Expressing Hope*

**(9) Obrolan Siang Hari**  
**‘A Noon Conversation’**

*Anak : cihuy... kita udah dapet presiden baru, Mak!*  
‘Buyer/young man : Yeaah... we got a new president, Mam!’

*Pedagang : halah! Kirain ada apaan.. Kalo itu mah gue juga udah tau!*  
‘Vender/old woman : Not as interesting as I thought.. I’ve known it already!’

*Anak : oooo.. udah tau yaaa?!*  
*Gado-gadonya boleh juga nih, Mak! Mau dooong!*  
‘Buyer/young man : oh you turn out to have known.  
By the way, your *gado-gado* (Indonesian salad with peanut sauce) looks very delicious. Could you please make it for me?’

*Pedagang : hehehe.. tumben lu beli gado-gado gue, biasanya lu kemari cuman nongkrong doang!*  
‘Vender/old woman : hehehe.. how odd you order my *gado-gado*. You usually come here just for hanging out, don’t you?’

*Anak : abis girang ada presiden baruuu.*  
‘Buyer/young man : I just can’t help being enthusiastic to have a new president.

*Pedagang : girang mah boleh aja, menaruh harapan juga boleh.. yang penting presiden kita kudu bisa memenuhinya.*  
‘Vender/old woman : Well it’s okay to be enthusiastic and full of expectations. But the most important thing is the president should be able to fulfill the expectations.’

*Anak : memenuhi apa, Mak? Bak mandi? Kok ngomongnya jadi serius gitu siiih..*  
‘Buyer/young man : what to fill, eh? Bathtub? Why are you so serious, Mam?’



*Pedagang* : ya memenuhi harapan rakyat laaah.. terutama soal ekonomi gitu...  
Kalo sekarang kan yang terjepit masih banyak!

'Vender/old woman : I meant, to fulfill the people's expectations, mainly in solving economic problems. You know there are still a lot of people economically oppressed nowadays.'

*Anak* : yang masih bisa gaya juga banyak, Mak! Contohnya kayak saya gini...

'Buyer/young man : and there are also the many who are still able to pose, Mam! Like me..'

Data (9) is a conversation taken from a political cartoon between a *gado-gado* (Indonesian salad with peanut sauce) vender (an old woman) and her buyer (a young man). The conversation is set at a *gado-gado* hut. The buyer looks very pleased after a new President of Indonesia has been elected. He then decides to order a plate *gado-gado* as a small celebration. While making the *gado-gado*, the vender discusses some topics with the buyer regarding the new president and hopes of his new government. They hope that the new president and government will fulfill their promises to improve Indonesia's condition, especially in economic sector.

What tells in data (9) seems to look like a light story, while it is anything but unserious as the conversation actually reflects the people hope of the new government in order to improve their economic condition. For this reason, the political cartoon reveals another function of its that is expressing hope.

## CONCLUSIONS

Types of metaphor found in the political cartoon compilation book *Politik Santun dalam Kartun* are anthropomorphic metaphor, animal metaphor, concrete metaphor, and synesthetic metaphor. It is also found that another type of metaphor appears in the book, namely plant metaphor. Regarding the social functions, it is found that the political cartoons are used for joking, satirizing, and criticizing. In addition, however, it is also found that they are used for expressing hope.

Metaphor makes the conversations in the political cartoons more expressive to create humor. Moreover, it is also used by the cartoonist for hiding the political cartoons' social functions.

## Limitations of the study

Research in metaphor and political cartoons can still be extended in the future. While research in metaphor can be conducted by using some other data, such as news column and political advertisements. Study on political cartoon can be developed by applying deeper research language, such as irony.

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A NEEDS-BASED APPROACH TO TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ENGLISH FOR MEDICAL  
SCIENCES PURPOSES

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**ABSTRACT**

The present study aims at identifying the needs and expectations of postgraduate and undergraduate students in the context of Tehran university medical sciences Education in Iran. This is to be achieved through the development of a needs analysis project that took place as the course proceeds. The research used quantitative method to collect information. Postgraduate students' views reported that reading and writing by Medical students revealed that the students need to develop their Journal articles for language skills in their future career and reading and comprehension in proficiency level need to develop. Importance of Educational skills studying at the University by Postgraduate' views reported that the students should be helped to increase their Web Search skills and reading and comprehension in proficiency level. Undergraduate Students Prioritize reported that the students need to develop their Listening and comprehension in proficiency level and reading and comprehension in proficiency level and Web Search.

**KEYWORDS:** needs analysis, ESP courses, Medical Students, Iran.

**INTRODUCTION**

Needs analysis (also known as needs assessment) has a vital role in the process of designing and carrying out any language course, whether it be English for Specific Purposes (ESP) or general English course, and its centrality has been acknowledged by several scholars and authors (Munby, 1978; Richterich & Chancerel, 1987; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Berwick, 1989; Brindley, 1989; Tarone & Yule, 1989; Robinson, 1991; Johns, 1991; West, 1994; Allison *et al.* (1994); Seedhouse, 1995; Jordan, 1997; Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Iwai *et al.* 1999; Hamp-Lyons, 2001; Finney, 2002). Also, the importance of carrying out a needs analysis for developing EAP tests is emphasized by Fulcher (1999), McDonough (1984), and Carrol (1980, cited in Fulcher, 1999). According to Iwai *et al.* (1999), the term needs analysis generally refers to the activities that are involved in collecting information that will serve as the basis for developing a curriculum that will meet the needs of a particular group of students. Brindley (1989) and Berwick (1989) offer definitions of different types of needs and accounts of various problems and limitations in making use of this concept, including ways in which we might usefully distinguish between needs identified by analysts and those expressed or experienced by learners.

In his state-of-the-art article, West (1994) gives a thorough overview of needs analysis in language teaching, including its history, theoretical basis, approaches to needs analysis, etc. According to Iwai *et al.* (1999), formal needs analysis is relatively new to the field of language teaching. However, informal needs analyses have been conducted by teachers in order to assess what language points their students needed to master. In fact, the reason why different approaches were born and then replaced by others is that teachers have intended to meet the needs of their students during their learning. Needs analysis is about an on-going and systematic process of collecting information on learners' needs (Richards, 2001; Graves, 2000); how much students already know and what they still need to learn (Brown, 1995). The information gained from needs analysis will serve as the basis for constructing a language curriculum (goals setting, materials selection, teaching methodologies and evaluation) that represents the students' needs (Brown, 1995; Santopietro & Van Duzer, 1997; Jordan, 1997).

In the area of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), different groups of learners are believed to have specific language needs, therefore, needs analysis should be conducted to achieve a complete description of the students' language needs (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998; Johns & Price-Machado, 2001). English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a branch of applied linguistics that focuses on relating the teaching and learning process to learners' needs. Widdowson (1981), a linguist and an early pioneer of the approach, describes the general concept of ESP by stating

that “if a group of learners’ needs for a language can be accurately specified, then this specification can be used to determine the content of a language program that will meet these needs.

The difference between ESP and general English is not a matter of the “existence” of a need; it is rather the “awareness” of a need. A child at a school might have a simple need to pass an exam. However, what influences the content of a language course is the awareness of a need. Hutchinson and Waters (1992) argue that if learners, sponsors, and teachers know why learners need English, that awareness will have an influence on what will be accepted as reasonable content in the language course and what potential can be exploited.

The ESP approach uses the needs analysis framework as the main tool to define learners’ needs in a specific field because the awareness is more recognizable in a specific target situation representing a “real-life-situation”. The ESP approach represents a shift in focus from a Chomskyan influenced register analysis to needs analysis. Previously, language needs had been based on formal linguistics categories focused theoretically on creating a register to develop a special language for a certain group of learners. This method is called register analysis and is based on the principle that different groups of learners require different lexical and grammatical rules to learn English (Hutchinson & Waters, 1992). For example English for physicians requires a special register that includes the most common grammatical and lexical features used in their field. Hymes’ (1972) formulation of communicative competence had a major impact on linguistic theory, leading theories to develop in a new direction. Hymes (1972) criticized Chomsky’s restricted view concerning the notion of competence and performance. Chomsky had introduced the concept of competence (e.g. speakers’ grammatical knowledge of their language) and performance (e.g. the actual production of language as an imperfect image of competence) to propose the existence of innate properties of language which he considered to be the central force guiding language acquisition. Though Hymes adopts Chomsky’s distinction between competence and performance, he points out that Chomsky’s notion of competence is too restrictive and does not take into account underlying rules of performance (e.g. Chomsky’s concept of competence does not deal with the interpersonal aspect of language in relation to the social context). Hymes considers the underlying rules of performance to be part of competence and thus he proposes a wider view of competence. Hymes points out that the Chomskyan restriction of the concept of competence to the perfect knowledge of an ideal speaker-listener, in a homogeneous speech community, unaffected by sociocultural constraints, cannot account for the communicative function of language. It only accounts for the grammatical competence of language. Thus, Hymes proposed that the definition of competence has to be revised to include four categories; knowledge of grammar and vocabulary (e.g. grammatical competence), knowledge of rules of speaking (e.g. knowing how to begin and end a conversation, knowing what topic to talk about in different types of speech events, and knowing which address forms can be used in different situations), knowing how to use different forms of speech act (e.g. request, apology, invitation etc), and knowing how to use language appropriately (Hymes, 1972; Savignon, 1997). Hymes proposed the term “communicative competence” for this concept to account for the social dimension of language acquisition. He bases his proposal on both psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic notions of language acquisition. Thus, communicative competence represents grammatical competence as well as sociolinguistic competence. Language needs analyses have been widely used since the 1970s, yet not very much studied, though they can provide vital information for the benefit of language policy and language program planning and of curriculum content design.

EMS (English for Medical Students) programs have been developed without conducting a systematic needs analysis from both the students’ and instructors’ point of view. On the importance of needs analysis there are myriad of viewpoints. Widdowson (1981) states that “if a group of learners’ needs for a language can be accurately specified, then this specification can be used to determine the content of a language program that will meet these needs.” Hutchinson and Waters (1992) argue that if learners, sponsors, and teachers know why learners need English, that awareness will have an influence on what will be accepted as reasonable content in the language course and what potential can be exploited. The ESP approach uses the needs analysis framework as the educational tool to define learners’ needs in a specific field because the awareness is more identifiable in a specific target situation representing a “real-life-situation”. Witkin and Altschuld (1995) define needs analysis as a systematic set of procedures undertaken for the purpose of setting priorities and making decisions about programs or organizational improvement and allocation of resources. These statements are a mean to channel our thought toward the importance of needs analysis and how it can help to teachers, curriculum designers and students to reach the goal of language learning in academic contexts as well as in any other settings. English teachers in academic levels (EAP) are responsible to help students develop the kind of English proficiency that will lead to success in their academic life.

Bosher (2002) in his research on Nursing students English language proficiency, conducted a needs analysis study to account for the perceptions of these students on their need students in English classes.

The findings indicated that communicating with clients and colleagues in the clinical setting were the major areas of difficulty. Al-Busaidi (2003) investigated academic English, Almulhim (2001) and Al-Bazzaz (1994) looked at business English, and Al Gorashi (1988) investigated military English needs. However, very rare studies have considered widely and specifically the English language needs of medical students. To gather information on a large scale, questionnaire surveys are the most common and the most efficient method of needs analysis compared to other procedures (Brown, 1992; West, 1994). Through a survey, the learners' profiles, including their background, language mastery, difficulties as well as learning styles can be obtained. An overall picture of students' perceived needs will emerge (Jordan, 1997).

Typically, needs analysis is done on language programs serving adults in academic and professional programs. The following overview provides a sampling of recent studies in needs analysis conducted in different parts of the world. This overview will first present studies conducted within the field of medical English and then present other studies in English for specific purposes. Shi (2001) developed an English course for junior medical students in the first part of their clinical training at the University of British Columbia. Transcripts of video and audiotapes of six 1-hour sessions of ward teaching were analyzed to investigate the cognitive demands placed on students as they participated in making diagnostic hypotheses with experienced doctors. The aim was to identify the linguistic skills students needed in order to achieve various cognitive learning objectives. These included the skills of using appropriate everyday and technical terms to translate information from doctor-patient to doctor-doctor discourse. In the course that was developed, video sequences were used along with carefully designed teaching tasks to raise students' awareness of some of the cognitive and linguistic features of the discourse and to improve students' performance through practice. The findings indicated that authentic data from student performance can be exploited to construct a tightly focused curriculum addressing students' needs. Mohammad Salehi (2010) investigated the English language needs of Engineering Students. The purpose of the study was three-folds: to evaluate students' needs, to evaluate the psychometric qualities of the developed questionnaire, and to explore the possibility of writing a textbook based on the insights gained from the study.

To evaluate the students' needs, wants, and lacks (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987), a questionnaire was administered to 225 students at Sharif University of Technology when they took their final exams. Students' scores were made use of with respect to one dimension of the questionnaire that dealt with students' self assessment of themselves most of which correlate positively with their final scores. Another purpose of the study was to evaluate the questionnaire itself in terms of its statistical properties. In other words, a construct validation study was conducted. There were distinct parts to this questionnaire. A confirmatory factor analysis using Principal Components Analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was applied to see if different needs were neatly delineated by the questionnaire (see Hatch and Lazaraton, 1991 for limitations of PCA). Having applied a CFA with PCA using a three-factor solution, it was seen that items loaded on the expected factors with high loadings. In terms of students' needs, here are the findings: Translation was not deemed appropriate. Note taking was not considered important in their future careers. Technical writing was considered to be very important. Unfortunately, the skill has been totally ignored in the English curriculum in the university.

Eslami (2010) investigated the English language needs for Academic Purposes (EAP) in Iran. She believes EAP plays a highly important role in countries where English is used mainly for academic purposes. However, EAP programs have been developed without conducting a systematic needs analysis from both the students' and instructors' perspective. The purpose of this study is to describe the perception that EAP students and instructors have of the problematic areas in EAP programs. A total of 693 EAP students majoring in different academic fields and 37 instructors participated in this study. Survey information included respondents' perception the importance of problematic areas in EAP programs. The results show discrepancy between the perceptions of EAP learners in different academic fields and between learners and instructors. The study has implications for curriculum design and instructional delivery of EAP courses for college level students.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

There were 320 undergraduate students, and 30 postgraduate students participating in this study. All the students study at Tehran University medical sciences would be of different proficiency levels in Iran. This variance is due to the fact some of the students may have English courses apart from the ones needed for university.

### ***Instrument***

A quantitative method was employed to collect data. The process involves the researcher to compare two or more different sources, methods, investigators or theories, and sometimes combinations thereof (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Long, 2005). In this study, the data sources are of two kinds: one is the language instructors and the other is the students. The obtained information would be more reliable and as put forward by Jick (1979) would depict a more complete, holistic and contextual portrayal of the unit(s) under study. In the present study, the methodology underlying the research was quantitative through the implementation of the questionnaire.

### ***Data collection and analysis***

Data for the study were collected over the winter semester of 2013. The interviews were semi-structured and the main theme of the questions would be based on the items in the questionnaire in order to elaborate on some of the issues and gather some supportive data to clarify the already mentioned aspects in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire lent itself to quantitative data collection procedures. All the items in the questionnaire are in Likert-scale form within the range of 1 to 6. This part of the questionnaire constructs the quantitative section of it. The data obtained from this phase would be analyzed using SPSS software. Besides, there is another part to the questionnaire, too. After each main section in the questionnaire, the participants asked to write open-ended answers about their own perceptions and preferences about that particular section. This part analyzed qualitatively and it can be a confirmation to the outcome of the interviews, as well.

Data were collected from the following Tehran Medical Sciences University in the Tehran area. The data collection phase would start by distributing the questionnaires among the students during their class time. The students who are willing to be interviewed would volunteer and afterwards would take part in the interviews too. The second step to collect data is the interview. All the discussions would be voice-recorded and then transcribed. The transcription would be closely scrutinized to make inferences that are as accurate as possible. This discrepancy might well be useful, because in this way we can have a collection of ideas from different viewpoints around the same subject.

In TUMS all the students from all language proficiency levels have to pass the same course, therefore, there may be sharply different attitudes about the course among the students. Therefore these students are expected to show high productivity in their academic life in terms of research, etc.; and in their future vocational life. Gaining supremacy in this areas demands proficiency in English language according to the present status of this language in the academic context of almost all countries. Regarding the above-mentioned issues, the participants of this study, who are under-study as well, are likely to manifest high expectations from the ESP courses offered at TUMS. It can be true for the instructors as well; due to their expectations from the students and what they perceive to be most crucial for the students' future.

The data obtained through the data collection phase are of two distinctly different types; one is the numerical data gathered via the questionnaire and the other one is the qualitative data which were gathered during the interviews. Analyzing either of these groups requires different approaches.

To analyze the quantitative outcome of the questionnaire, the data would be given to SPSS software. Using this software, a factor analysis process would manifest the underlying foundations of the ideas elicited by the questionnaire items. By using factor analysis, the malfunctioning items can be found as well. The factor analysis used will be of two types: confirmatory and exploratory. The items would be studied one by one and the ones which malfunction would be deleted. Analyzing the qualitative data might well be a time-consuming task which requires plenty hours of close scrutiny.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Comments faculty members (instructors) priorities***

In order to clarify the priorities of views on the need of students with language skills (current), the Friedman test was used to rank the results in the table below.

*postgraduate' views and priorities*

Table 1: Friedman's test for postgraduate' views and priorities about importance of language skills Studying at the University

Importance of language skills Studying at the University	Mean Rank
١. Listening and comprehension(general)	٤,٢٩
٢. Listening and comprehension(proficiency)	٥,٠٣
٣. Speaking (general)	٣,٩٨
٤. Speaking(proficiency)	٣,٩٨
٥. Reading and comprehension(general)	٥,٦٠
٦. Reading and comprehension(proficiency)	٥,٩٧
٧. Writing (general)	٣,٥٩
٨. Writing(proficiency)	٣,٥٥
Chi-Square	٥٥,١٥٣
Df	٧
Asymp. Sig.	.٠٠٠

The results of the above table1 indicates that the calculated Friedman test at 1% level of perception is greater than the critical Friedman level .So with 99% confidence we can conclude there are significant differences( $p < 0.050$ ) among postgraduate' views and priorities about importance of language skills Studying at the University. The mean scores of Importance of language skills Studying at the University confirmed that reading and comprehension(proficiency)has been allocated the highest score .

Table2: Friedman's test for postgraduate' views and priorities about importance of Educational skills studying at the University

Importance of Educational skills Studying at the University	Mean rank
٩. Web Search	٤,٤٨
١٠. comprehension graphs and tables	٤,٤٣
١١. Taking notes from texts	٤,٠٥
١٢. Lecture notes	٣,٤٨
١٣. Summary writing	٣,٤٦
١٤. Translation	٤,٢٧
١٥. Writing Scientific Articles	٣,٨٢
Chi-Square	١٥,٤٥٧
df	٦
Asymp. Sig.	.٠١٧

The results of the above table 2 indicates that the calculated Friedman test at 1% level of perception is greater than the critical Friedman level .So with 99% confidence we can conclude there are significant differences( $p < 0.050$ ) among postgraduate s' views and priorities about importance of Educational skills Studying at the University. The



mean scores of Importance of Educational skills Studying at the University confirmed that Web Search has been allocated the highest score.

Table3: Friedman's test for postgraduate' views and priorities about importance of language skills in job status

Importance of language skills in job status	Mean Rank
١. Listening and comprehension(general)	٤,٢٦
٢. Listening and comprehension(proficiency)	٤,٨٤
٣. Speaking (general)	٣,٤٧
٤. Speaking(proficiency)	٤,٢٨
٥. Reading and comprehension(general)	٥,١٩
٦. Reading and comprehension(proficiency)	٥,٥٧
٧. Writing (general)	٣,٨٤
٨. Writing(proficiency)	٤,٥٥
Chi-Square	٢٥,١٥٤
df	٧
Asymp. Sig.	.٠٠١

The results of the above table 3 indicates that the calculated Friedman test at 1% level of perception is greater than the critical Friedman level .So with 99% confidence we can conclude there are significant differences( $p<0/050$ ) among postgraduate' views and priorities about importance of language skills in job status. The mean scores of Importance of language skills in job status confirmed that reading and comprehension(proficiency) has been allocated the highest score .

Table4: Friedman's test for postgraduate' views and priorities about importance of Educational skills in job status

Importance of Educational skills in job status	Mean Rank
٩. Web Search	١١,٤٣
١٠. comprehension graphs and tables	٩,٥٧
١١. Taking notes from texts	٨,٩١
١٢. Lecture notes	٧,١١
١٣. Summary writing	٧,٧١
١٤. Translation	١٠,٤٣
١٥. Writing Scientific Articles	٩,٥٧
١٦. Technical Letter writing	٧,٨٤
١٧. Preparation of career reports	٦,٨٨
١٨. Resume Preparation	٨,٨٠
١٩. comprehension film and tape	٦,٥٥
٢٠. Preparing research proposals	٧,٧٩
٢١. Preparation of the Bulletin catalog and brochure etc	٥,٨٠
٢٢. Marketing and Commercial Affairs	٣,١٨
٢٣. Papers presented at conferences	٨,٤٣
Chi-Square	١١٢,٦٧٤
Df	١٤
Asymp. Sig.	.٠٠٠

The results of the above table 4 indicates that the calculated Friedman test at 1% level of perception is greater than the critical Friedman level .So with 99% confidence we can conclude there are significant differences( $p<0/050$ ) among postgraduate' views and priorities about importance of Educational skills in job status. The mean scores of Importance of Educational skills in job status confirmed that Web Search has been allocated the highest score .

#### undergraduate students Prioritize

Table 5: Friedman's test of undergraduate students Prioritize about Importance of language skills

Importance of language skills	Mean Rank
١. Listening and comprehension(general)	٤,٢٢
٢. Listening and omprehension(proficiency)	٤,٨٣
٣. Speaking (general)	٤,٤٢
٤. Speaking(proficiency)	٤,١٧
٥. Reading and comprehension(general)	٤,٧٤
٦. Reading and comprehension(proficiency)	٥,٢٦
٧. Writing (general)	٤,٠١
٨. Writing(proficiency)	٤,٣٤
Chi-Square	١١٦,٥٤٥
df	٧
Asymp. Sig.	.٠٠٠

The results of the above table 5 indicates that the calculated Friedman test at 1% level of perception is greater than the critical Friedman level .So with 99% confidence we can conclude there are significant differences( $p < 0.050$ ) among undergraduate students Prioritize about Importance of language skills. The mean scores of Importance of Importance of language skills confirmed that Listening and comprehension(proficiency) has been allocated the highest score.

Table 6: Friedman's test of undergraduate students Prioritize about Importance of educational skills

Importance of educational skills	Mean Rank
٩. Web Search	٤,٥٧
١٠. comprehension graphs and tables	٣,٩٩
١١. Taking notes from texts	٣,٨٤
١٢. Lecture notes	٣,٧٢
١٣. Summary writing	٣,٧٨
١٤. Translation	٤,١٧
١٥. Writing Scientific Articles	٣,٩٤
Chi-Square	٦٤,٥٩٠
Df	٦
Asymp. Sig.	.٠٠٠

The results of the above table 6 indicates that the calculated Friedman test at 1% level of perception is greater than the critical Friedman level .So with 99% confidence we can conclude there are significant differences( $p < 0.050$ ) among undergraduate students Prioritize about Importance of educational skills. The mean scores of Importance of Importance of educational skills confirmed that Web Search has been allocated the highest score.

Table 7: Friedman's test of undergraduate students Prioritize about Importance of language skills(In future career and educational)

language skills	Mean Rank
١. Listening and comprehension(general)	٤,٣٢
٢. Listening and comprehension(proficiency)	٤,٧٢
٣. Speaking (general)	٤,٦٣
٤. Speaking(proficiency)	٤,٤٨
٥. Reading and comprehension(general)	٤,٦٤
٦. Reading and comprehension(proficiency)	٤,٩٩
٧. Writing (general)	٣,٩٥
٨. Writing(proficiency)	٤,٢٨
Chi-Square	٧٥,٨٩٧
Df	٧
Asymp. Sig.	.٠٠٠

The results of the above table 7 indicates that the calculated Friedman test at 1% level of perception is greater than the critical Friedman level .So with 99% confidence we can conclude there are significant differences( $p<0/050$ ) among undergraduate students Prioritize about Importance of language skills(In future career and educational).The mean scores of Importance of Importance of language skills confirmed that reading and comprehension(proficiency)has been allocated the highest score.

*Table 8: Friedman's test of undergraduate students Prioritize about Importance of educational skills(In future career and educational)*

educationa skills(In reading and writing of Species texts)	Mean Rank
٩. Web Search	٨,٩٦
١٠. comprehension graphs and tables	٧,٩١
١١. Taking notes from texts	٨,٣٢
١٢. Lecture notes	٧,٧٤
١٣. Summary writing	٧,٧٣
١٤. Translation	٨,٧٤
١٥. Writing Scientific Articles	٨,٦٢
١٦. Technical Letter writing	٨,٤٩
١٧. Preparation of career reports	٧,٣١
١٨. Resume Preparation	٨,١٥
١٩. comprehension film and tape	٨,١٣
٢٠. Preparing research proposals	٧,٧٦
٢١. Preparation of the Bulletin catalog and brochure etc	٧,٠٢
٢٢. Marketing and Commercial Affairs	٦,٤٦
٢٣. Papers presented at conferences	٨,٦٥
Chi-Square	١٧٧,٥٥٢
Df	١٤
Asymp. Sig.	.٠٠٠

The results of the above table 8 indicates that the calculated Friedman test at 1% level of perception is greater than the critical Friedman level .So with 99% confidence we can conclude there are significant differences( $p<0/050$ ) among undergraduate students Prioritize about Importance of educational skills(In future career and educational). The mean scores of Importance of Importance of language skills confirmed that Web Search has been allocated the highest score.

*Table 9: Comparison Postgraduate and undergraduate students' views and priorities*

<b>Subject (Skills)</b>	<b>postgraduate' views and priorities</b>	<b>Undergraduate students' views and priorities</b>
language skills (current)	Reading and comprehension(proficiency)	Listening and comprehension(proficiency)
educational skills (current)	Web Search	Web Search
language skills (future career)	Reading and comprehension(proficiency)	Reading and comprehension(proficiency)
educational skills(future career)	Web Search	Web Search
reading and writing of Species texts (Studying at the University)	<b>There was no question</b>	<b>There was no question</b>
reading and writing of Species texts (future career)	<b>There was no question</b>	<b>There was no question</b>

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

A needs analysis study was undertaken in the Iranian medical sciences universities with the aim of investigating undergraduate and postgraduate students' foreign language learning needs, wants and lacks. The assessment of learners' needs was performed with the help of various stakeholders including students who were enrolled in ESP courses, those who had passed their ESP courses. The findings of the study supported the view that the students 'greatly' need to increase their general proficiency in English. It was important to see what the needs of these students are who happen to be select students in the whole country. There was a need for a well-developed and academically standard data elicitation device. The questionnaire was also validated by the present researcher to gain insights into the construct validity of it. Having established the construct validity of the instrument under study, the researcher embarked on the delineation of the needs of the students. Most of the students felt that ESP course is insufficient and reported that they had expected to be offered specialized English courses throughout their undergraduate studies in order to fulfill their short- term needs. postgraduate students views and undergraduate students across different universities covered that the students need to develop their language and educational skills in current and future status. postgraduate students' views reported that about reading and writing of Species texts by Medical students that the students need to develop their Journal articles for language skills (future career). Practitioners' views reported that reading and comprehension(proficiency) need to develop. Importance of Educational skills Studying at the University at postgraduate students' views reported that the students should be helped to increase their Web Search skills and reading and comprehension (proficiency). Undergraduate students Prioritize reported that the students need to develop their that Listening and comprehension (proficiency) with reading and comprehension (proficiency) and Web Search skills need to develop .

### *limitations of the study*

The results of the current study might be treated with circumspection with regard to the following de(limitations): The following limitations might somehow influence the values of the reliability, validity and correlation coefficients of the tests, and the generalizable extent of the results of the research to other situations and participants.

1. The size of the statistical population of this study (30 Postgraduate Students participating in this study except Undergraduate Students) among Postgraduate Students are too small to generalize the findings.
2. The effect of the participants' gender on the results of the research has been ignored.
3. There were not enough sources regarding the issues such as language skills ,academic skills and Specialized skills in career and Academic Future .

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## ABSTRACT

Evidently, a program cannot be improved without evaluation, emphasizing its strengths, and removing the weak points. Therefore, this study aimed at evaluating the current in-service Foreign Language Teacher Education (FLTE) program in Iran to help its improvement. This study was conducted in Isfahan, Iran. The data were collected using a questionnaire. The participants were 56 English teachers. To analyze the data, the frequency distributions of responses accompanied by percentages were calculated. Analyzing the results indicated that the status of the current in-service Foreign Language Teacher Education program is not satisfying with regard to improving English teachers' language proficiency level, teaching skills, management skills, and evaluation skills. It was also revealed that the program suffers a relative inadequacy with respect to increasing teachers' motivation and the administration of the courses. The program was also found to have some merits like preparing teachers for using foreign language teaching materials, presenting certificates which have positive effect on teachers' evaluation and providing an opportunity for them to exchange their ideas with other colleagues.

**KEYWORDS:** in-service education, teachers' professional development, program evaluation

## INTRODUCTION

As the need to learn English is felt more than before, so is the growing request for competent English teachers and more efficient approaches to develop them professionally. Hence, in order to achieve the goal of professional development of English teaching and teachers, some special educational programs have been designed which are common within most of the countries.

One group of these teacher training programs is called pre-service education with the goal of training teachers before their graduation and experiencing real teaching. This kind of academic programs offer some special courses to teacher students in universities and teacher training centers in order to prepare them to teach English and to cope with real language class problems in future. However, due to the relative inadequacy of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers' pre-service education, and teachers' need to update their teaching knowledge based on recent theories and methodological advancement, the need for supporting EFL teachers in in-service programs is also felt. According to Nation and Macalister (2010), in-service courses engage teachers after their primary training and after they have had some teaching experiences. These courses may be long-term leading to Diplomas, Masters' Degrees or Doctoral degrees, or short-term, lasting only a few hours or a day. Taking these in-service courses is usually optional and will bring some certificates for teachers which give them credit in their evaluation. The purpose of this study is to evaluate these in-service programs in Iran and to study English teachers' viewpoints about them.

### *In-service Language Teacher Education*

Due to the dynamic nature of language teaching and its learning theories, English teaching is considered as a developmental profession. After teachers' period of formal training is over, they mostly feel that they have not adequately been trained for their career, or, after some years of doing the job, they believe that their expertise should be updated. Therefore, in-service teacher education is always an integrated part of teacher development program. In-service education is recognized as an efficient method of increasing the knowledge, skills, and positive beliefs of teachers (Bayraktı, 2009).

Moreover, according to Peacock (2009, cited in Coskun & Daloglu, 2010), evaluation of in-service teacher education programs is the starting point on the way towards professionalization of ELT (English Language Teaching). This evaluation, as Rea-Dickins and Germaine (1998, cited in Coskun & Daloglu, 2010) stated, results



in program development; therefore, systematic evaluation should be considered as the very heart of a program. Moreover, according to Duke (1986, cited in Bayraktı, 2009), when a training activity or a presentation is followed by opportunities for practice and feedback, it will make the teacher be best involved in it. In the evaluation of these programs several considerations should be accounted for. Literature in this field shows the content, social skills instruction, teachers' beliefs, and administration as the different dimensions researchers have focused on in the process of evaluation.

### ***In-service Foreign Language Teacher Education in Iran***

After graduation, teachers can enter the job and teach English in classes. Most of the times, these new teachers feel that they have not adequately been prepared to face the real teaching context in classes. They usually think that two or three sessions of observation are not enough to make them a skillful teacher; the pre-service courses they took were mostly general, fairly theoretical, and not directly relevant to their teaching obligations, and thus much of what they need to know has to be learned after entering the job (Richards & Farrel, 2005). On the other hand, there are experienced English teachers that are proficient in class management and teaching skills; however they feel they need to be updated with the new changes in foreign language teaching concepts and methodology and the use of technology as a device in their teaching. Therefore, the need for an in-service teacher development program is strongly felt.

Unfortunately, reviewing the literature does not reveal any systematic planned in-service Foreign Language Teacher Education program in Iran. Although there are very few special courses for an English teacher to take each year, teachers mostly claim that they pass these courses because their certificates are valuable in their evaluation. Teacher educators in charge of these classes are usually those who are accessible and have not received any professional training for the task; the content of the classes is usually determined by the teacher educators' ability and not based on any specified content. In addition, teachers' needs and motivations are not usually considered.

Shahmohammadi (2012) has attempted to study the state of pre-service and in-service programs for teachers in Iran. She specifically tried to find out the aims of in-service programs, their organization, nature of curriculum, the methods of teaching, and techniques of evaluation, educational agencies involved in this program, and its strengths and weaknesses. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the target group. After administering some interview sessions on government officials and teacher educators, she concluded that recent changes towards student-centered learning and qualitative assessment have brought teaching closer to the ideal status. However, her findings revealed that there were specified and defined objectives; the organization was satisfactory. On the contrary, a study conducted by Birjandi and Derakhshan Hesari (2010) in Iran, revealed that most teachers were not satisfied with the in-service program, they believed that the program cannot boost their proficiency level.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study investigated the content of in-service EFL teachers' development program in Iran focusing on these questions:

1. What is the teachers' perception of the content of in-service Foreign Language Teacher Education programs in Iran?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the EFL teacher in-service education program in Iran concerning the Peacock's (2009) model of evaluation?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The participants of this study were 56 English teachers who were engaged in public schools. In order to ensure the external validity of the research, the participants were randomly selected from nearly all the educational districts of Isfahan and from among both the junior and senior high school English teachers. There were 23 male and 33 female teachers participating in this study.

### ***Instruments***

The data related to this study was collected by means of a questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire was adopted from the Peacock's (2009) questionnaire, first used to evaluate the TEFL program in Hong Kong. His questionnaire had 22 items focusing on 15 main questions. It was a five-point Likert-scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Its reliability computed by Peacock was .87 using Cronbach's alpha. Then this questionnaire was used by Coskun and Daloglu (2010) for the Turkish evaluation context. They used the questionnaire without any modifications. The cronbach's alpha was .9 in their study.

In this study, after consulting with experts (nine teacher educators) for the appropriateness of the Peacock's questionnaire for the Iranian context and to confirm its content validity, the questionnaire was modified by the researcher into forty items and two parts. The new questionnaire which was a five-point Likert-scale started with a demographic questionnaire eliciting some personal information including teachers' gender, university degree, years of teaching experience, and the level at which they work. The demographic questionnaire was followed by 20 items with the purpose of reporting teachers' perception of the content of Iranian in-service programs. The next part of the questionnaire consisted of 20 items which were similar to the items of the first part, but their focus was on eliciting the teachers' evaluation of the current status of the content of the in-service program in Iran. The estimated reliability of the modified questionnaire was .861 using Cronbach's alpha.

#### **Data collection procedure**

After modifying the questionnaire and to ensure its content validity by the nine field experts, the teacher educators were asked to write their comments on the questionnaire. Before filling out the questionnaire, the purpose of the study was explained to English teachers. Most of the questionnaires were filled out by teachers who were present in English teachers' gatherings, so they had about 30 to 45 minutes allocated time to answer the questions.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **English Teachers' Perception**

This part reports the results obtained from the first part of the questionnaire and investigated the English teachers' perceptions of the content of the program. According to Peacock's (2009) framework, the data gathered through the questionnaire can be analyzed focusing four main issues including linguistic competence, teaching (pedagogic) skills, testing skills, and classroom management skills.

#### **Linguistic competence**

As it is indicated by Figure 1, 98.2% (nearly all) teachers believed that in-service program should improve their language proficiency. With regard to English grammar, 89.3% of teachers believed that the program should improve it. For vocabulary, 96.4% of participants accepted it as an essential part of the content. For the fourth item, 50 participants (89.3%) agreed that the program should improve their listening comprehension skill. Among the participants, 96.4% also believed that the program should improve their speaking skill. For reading and writing, 87.5% wanted the program to improve their reading skill, and 73.2% agreed in writing skill improvement to be planned in the program. In comparison, the most rated skills were vocabulary and speaking skills (94.6%), while the lowest frequency was related to writing skill improvement in the program (73.2%) as it is shown by following figure.

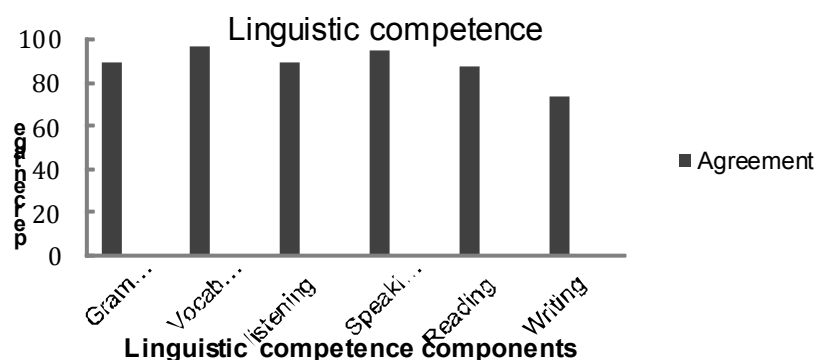


Figure 1: Teachers' results of linguistic competence

### Teaching skills

The next part of data addresses the teachers' perceptions of the program with regard to teaching skills. Only about 2% of the participants did not believe that they need in-service training in teaching skills, while 93% of them regarded it as an essential part of the program. Among the teachers, 12.5 % asserted that there is no need for an in-service program to train them for teaching in different local contexts. Although 78.6% of the teachers believed that they need in-service courses which prepare them to be reflective teacher, 16% of them asserted that they are uncertain about it. There was nearly (Disagree= 2%) no objection in this case.

In the case of training teachers to be more flexible in using different teaching practices for different situations, 91% of the participants accepted it as one of the responsibilities of the in-service education, the rest were undecided, and there was no disagreement. No teacher was found to disagree with the need for in-service program to train teachers for teaching more effectively. For the next items, 94.6% of the participants believed that they need in-service training to promote their ability to use foreign language teaching materials, and 85.7% of the participants believed that they need in-service training to improve their ability to adapt foreign language teaching materials. For the last item related to teaching skills, 78.5% of teachers believed that in-service programs should improve their understanding of learners, their learning styles, and difficulties. The need to be trained for teaching in different local context of Iran through in-service programs received the lowest percentage of agreement while the highest one was related to the need for in-service training to teach English more effectively.

### Testing skills

Two items of the first part of the questionnaire dealt with the inclusion of testing and evaluation skills development within the program. For both the items, the participants showed the same level of agreement (87.5%).

### Management skills

And finally, the last three items tried to elicit teachers' views about the specification of courses that develop their management skills within the content of in-service education. The first item asked them if they think they need in-service training to improve classroom management skills. The percentage of agree teachers was 73.2 % which was more than the level of disagree ones (10.7%). For item two, 80% agreed that the statement was true. And, the last item received about 75% of agreement. For the last item, about 18% of the participants showed their uncertainty. It may suggest that they are not familiar with the concept of action research.

In studying the teachers' perception of the content of an in-service program, the results obtained were related to the content specification of the program with regard to four main issues: linguistic competence, teaching skills, testing skills, and classroom management skills. The comparison, as it is shown by Figure 2, reveals that the teachers' order of preference for the content of in-service courses is: linguistic competence, testing skills, teaching skills, management skills. On the other hand, their order of uncertainty is: management skills, teaching skills, testing skills, and linguistic competence.

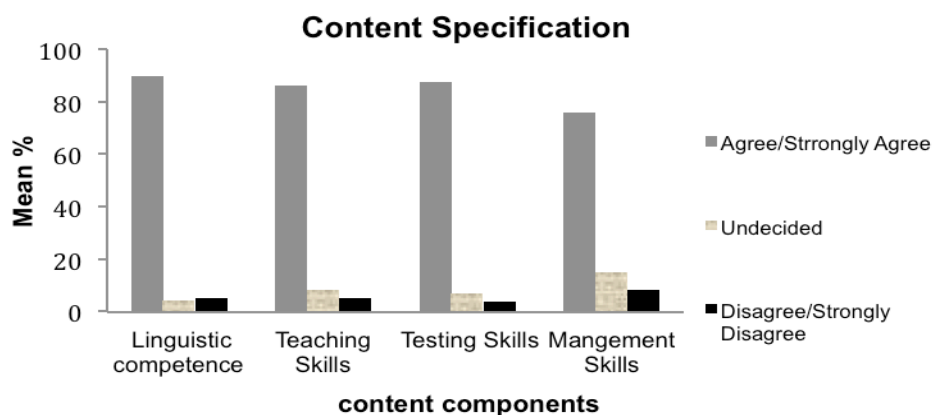


Figure 2: Teachers' views about the content of an in-service

*Program*

*The Status of the In-service English Teacher Education Program in Iran*

The second part of the questionnaire asked the participants about the status of the in-service English teacher development program in Iran. The results obtained from this part have been presented as follows:

The first statement was 'the program improves my foreign language proficiency'. About 53.6% of teachers agreed that the program had given them adequate training in English, 25.3% disagreed and 21.4% were uncertain about the efficiency of the program in improving their language proficiency. For grammar, participants who disagreed and those who were undecided showed the same percentage (23.2%). Among them, 53.5 % were satisfied with the program in this case. The third item wanted to investigate the role of the current program in vocabulary improvement. About 59% of teachers were satisfied with the program, 16% were undecided, and 25% believed that the program has not been efficient in their vocabulary development. For the development of listening comprehension skill, about 34.2% of the participants believed that the program has not any role in their listening comprehension development, 14.3% were uncertain about its adequacy, and 50% were regarded it as adequate which is still below the optimum level. It seems that the most problematic skill was the speaking skill. About 40% of the teachers believed that the program is inadequate in terms of their speaking skill development which is equal to the same level presented by those who were agree (41%). Therefore, disagree and uncertain teachers (58.9 %) got a higher rank than agree ones. For reading comprehension skill, 35.8% of teachers regarded the program as inadequate in terms of reading comprehension skill development. About 18% were undecided and 46.5% were satisfied. The lowest percentage of agreement was related to the last linguistic statement which asked teachers to evaluate the programs in terms of writing skill. About 50% of the participants were not satisfied with the program. Uncertain teachers were 18% and 37.5 % regarded it as adequate.

As indicated by Figure 3, the evaluation of the content of the in-service FLTE program in terms of linguistic competence development reveals that the reported order of inadequacy based on the participants' dissatisfaction and uncertainty is: writing, speaking, reading, listening, grammar, vocabulary.

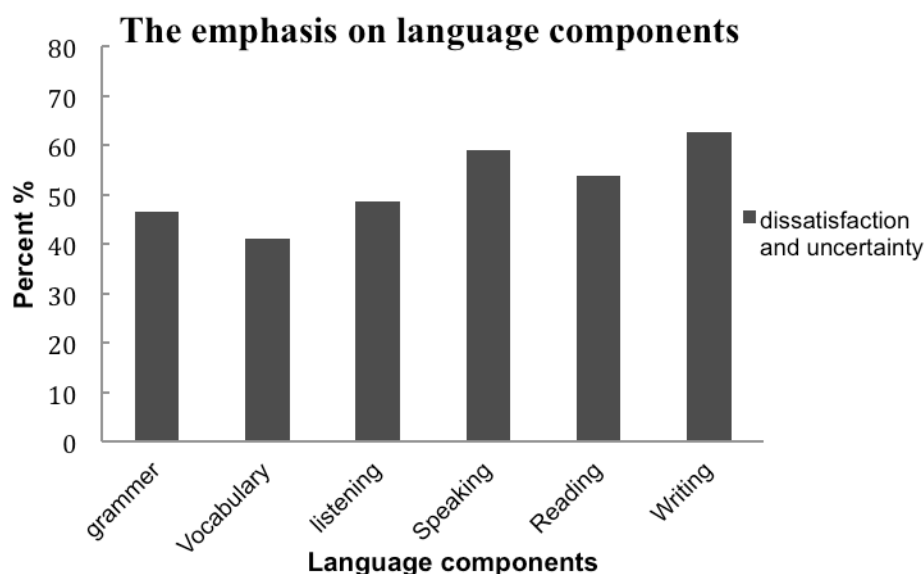


Figure 3: Emphasis on linguistic competence in the current in-service program

The next question addressed the adequacy of the program in terms of teaching skills improvement in general. About 30% of the participants were not satisfied with the adequacy of the program in their teaching skills development. This question had about 23% of uncertainty. However, 46.5% of teachers were satisfied with the program. The next item was 'the program prepares me for teaching in different local contexts of Iran'. As it is evident, when the participants were asked to evaluate the program in general, they showed higher percentage of agreement ( 46.5 %), but for this statement the percentage of participants who disagrees the statement (48.2%) were more than those who

were agree (30.3%), and 19.6% were undecided. The next item asked the participants whether the program encouraged them to be reflective teachers, but 16 teachers (28.6%) were uncertain to agree or disagree. Agree and disagree teachers enjoyed the same rate of frequency, 20 teachers (36%).

The next item addressed the adequacy of the program in encouraging the participants to be flexible teachers. Surprisingly, uncertain teachers were 17 (30.4%) while there were 16 teachers who disagreed. In addition, 23 teachers (41%) were satisfied with the current program which is still below the optimum level of adequacy. The next item addressed the adequacy of the in-service program in terms of helping teachers to teach effectively. Answering the related items, 48% of the teachers showed their agreement for the adequacy, 25% were undecided, and 27% were not satisfied with the program. In the first part of the questionnaire, 94.6% of the teachers believed that the program should promote their ability to use foreign language teaching materials. Consequently, this item asked them about this feature. 57% of the teachers showed their agreement, 16% were uncertain, and 26.8% disagreed. With regard to promoting the ability of the participants to adapt foreign language teaching materials, the program gained a rate of 42.8% of agreement, 23.2% of uncertainty, and 34% of disagreement.

The last item which addressed the teaching skills was 'the program improves my understanding of learners, their learning styles, and difficulties'. As it is shown by Figure 4, the percentage of agreement and disagreement were the same (37.5%). And, 25% had no idea.

It is also indicated by Figure 4 that if the adequacy of the program is studied based on the teachers' training in different teaching skill, a high level of dissatisfaction is observed for all the items. More than half of the participants were not satisfied with the ability of the program to improve their power of localized teaching, reflectivity, flexibility, effectiveness, material adaptation, and understanding the learners' needs and interest.

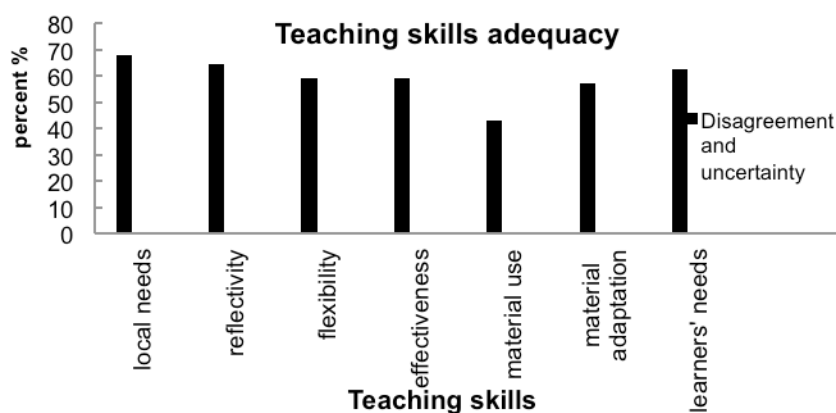


Figure 4: The emphasis on different teaching skills in the program

Items 36 and 37 addressed the improvement of teachers' testing and evaluation skills through in-service courses. Among English teachers, 32.2 % believed that the program could not improve their language testing and evaluation skills, and 44.6% were satisfied with the program. In response to the item "the program improves my ability to evaluate myself as an English teacher," half of the participants (50%) agreed, and the other half disagreed (23.2%), or were undecided (25%).

The last three items deal with investigating the status of the current in-service FLTE program in terms of classroom management skills development. Only about 35.7% believed that the program has improved their management skills, and 36.2% did not think so. Surprisingly, 30.4 % were undecided which may be interpreted as knowing not enough about the concept of management skills. The item statement "the program helps me to keep the balance between English teaching skills, and classroom management skills" received about 43% of agreement, 35.7% of disagreement, and about 23.2% of uncertainty.

And finally the last item deals with the adequacy of the program to help teachers in doing action research in order to solve their problems. Among the participants, 37.7% considered the program as an efficient one, 28% believed that it could not help them, and 34 % were uncertain about its efficacy.

It is worth emphasizing that the process of evaluation in this study involves presenting information on perceptions of a program value, measuring how far they meet their goals and giving feedback to course providers on essential improvements (Robinson, 2003, cited in Peacock, 2009). Correspondingly, teacher educators' comments and English teachers' questionnaires provide us with enough information to evaluate the program from various perspectives in order to help its improvement. In what follows, the research questions are answered in light of the findings of the study:

*1) What is the teachers' perception of the content of in-service Foreign Language Teacher Education program in Iran?*

As Borg (2011) cited, beliefs may be the most obvious measure of a teacher's professional growth (Kagan, 1992). Therefore, the first research question investigated the teachers' perception of the program. As the results showed, except one teacher who was uncertain, all of the teachers believed that they need to improve their language proficiency through the program. This interesting finding can be interpreted in two ways. First, nearly all the teachers are not satisfied with their level of language proficiency; they believe that they have not adequately been trained via pre-service education which is similar to Wong's (2012) finding that even many of those teacher candidates with a specialization in ESL do not feel fully-prepared. Although his study was limited to teaching culturally and linguistically diverse ESL students, it looks the same in EFL context. Therefore, teachers believe that taking part in an in-service program would be an opportunity to compensate for their weaknesses in terms of language proficiency. The second way to interpret this high level of agreement is to suppose that all teachers believed to have a high level of language proficiency is an important characteristic of an ideal English teacher, and consequently its improvement is the most important responsibility of the in-service development program. However, in de Lima's (2001) belief, in-service teacher training programs have to take into account the need to develop the language command of their trainees in order to meet their needs and to respond to their desires.

Analyzing the rest of the results suggested that, although more than two thirds of the English teachers showed their agreement for all the areas of language knowledge to be important, different components of linguistic competence gained various levels of preference for content specification. As it was shown by Figure 1, when the relative importance of English language areas was ranked based on the participants' ideas, their order of preference was: vocabulary, speaking, listening and grammar, reading, writing. As it was found, vocabulary and oral skills were ranked higher than reading and writing. This finding is in line with the Elisha-Primo, Sandler, Goldfrad, Ferenz and Perpignan's (2010) findings for re-evaluating a graduate level EFL academic curriculum. It seemed the participants believed that reading and writing skills have not as much to do with their efficacy as an English teacher as having a high knowledge of vocabulary and speaking skill. These findings reflect our classroom contexts in which students believe that all they need to master the English language is vocabulary (Elisha-Primo et al., 2010). Another interpretation for their preference would be related to the current status of English teaching in Iran. The textbooks that are still taught in Iranian public schools are the ones which do not weigh four language skills equally. Consequently, having a good knowledge of vocabulary and grammar is ideal for each student and there is no focus on improving students' four language skills. Nevertheless, although oral skills are emphasized in private English teaching institutes, reading and writing do not receive enough attention there. Evidently, teachers prefer to practice what they need in their career. However, both teachers and teacher educators believed that the program should emphasize the development of speaking skill in teachers.

In studying the participants' perceptions of the content of the program in terms of teaching skills, the results showed that most of the participants regarded teaching skills development as an essential part of an efficient program and more than two thirds of them showed their agreement in response to the related items.

The third issue under the study was the teachers' ideas about the evaluation skills in the program. The concept of evaluation embraces both self-and other-evaluation. The results showed that most of the participants believed that the program should have a part in evaluating skill development. The teachers' emphasis on testing or other-evaluation skill was equal to their emphasis on self-evaluation skill. These high levels of agreement (87.5%) provide enough evidence that English teachers need to be trained in language testing and evaluation. As Koksall (2004) described such training is essential because we should consider testing as a bridge between teaching and



learning and classroom tests as mirrors in which teachers and learners can observe their reflections obviously. However, the percentage of teachers' agreement was not as high as for linguistic competence. It means that they think the development of their language proficiency is more important than their evaluation skills. In Iran, English teachers usually use ready-made tests which reflect their unpreparedness in constructing their own test, so they do not feel such an urgent need. As Koksai (2004) stated, there is a similar situation in Turkey. However in his word, "the disadvantage of using such tests is that we teach but others test what we teach" (p. 2).

And finally, the last part in the results of teachers' perception described teachers' ideas about the inclusion of management skills within the program. The data revealed similar results in this part. Again, most teachers agreed that they need management skills development in the program. Surprisingly, for all three items, about one third of the participants showed their uncertainty which can be interpreted as they are not sure about the need for management skills development especially the concept of action research in the classroom. However, they should be given the chance to put their perceptions of theory of learning into practice. They must get through the process to observe the impacts on their teaching and students' learning; if not, they will not consider action research is actually useful for their job (Gould, 2008, cited by Chou, 2011). Evidently, for an in-service teacher, it can be done through the professional development program.

Overall, in response to the first research question, English teachers considered the four main issues devised by Peacock as the essential components of the content of an in-service program. As it was shown by Figure 2, the teachers' order of preference for the content of in-service courses is: linguistic competence, testing skills, teaching skills, management skills. Surprisingly, their order of uncertainty is: management skills, teaching skills, testing skills, and linguistic competence which shows that they want to practice on what is more familiar to them, or, they try to learn or know about what is more important for them.

*2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the EFL teacher in-service education program in Iran concerning the Peacock's (2009) model of evaluation?*

It is evident that a program evaluation cannot be done in isolation, but it should be done through studying the ideas of all the stakeholders engaged in. Concurrently, this study is aimed to reveal the status of English teachers' in-service education program in Iran based on the English teachers' ideas that make the learners of the program. Analyzing the results indicated that the program suffers a relative inadequacy in most parts of its specified content.

As it was discussed before, language proficiency development was regarded as the most important component of the program content by all the teachers and teacher educators while the results showed that the program is not satisfactory in fulfilling the participants' needs in most of the language skills and areas. Analyzing the results related to seven language proficiency items indicated that, about half or more than half of the English teachers either disagree or were uncertain about the program adequacy. Evidently, a program cannot be considered as a successful one when more than half of its participants are not satisfied with it. This finding is in line with the Coskun and Daloglu's (2010) finding in Turkey pinpointing that English teacher educating program is neglecting teachers' linguistic competence. The same results were also revealed by Birjandi and Derakhshan Hesari (2010) in Iran, when they found that most teachers believed the program cannot boost their proficiency level.

In detail, among the English language components, the most problematic areas were four language skills. About two thirds of the participants believed that the program do not help them with their writing skill development. Similarly, more than half of them believed that the program has not any role in their speaking and reading skills development, and about half regarded it as the inadequate one for their listening comprehension improvement. Therefore, the reported ranked order of inadequacy is: writing, speaking, reading, listening, grammar, vocabulary. The fact that may reveal the reality of in-service courses in Iran, in which the English teachers are usually provided with the separated knowledge of vocabulary and grammar items rather than the integration of four language skills if there exist any courses. However, language must be viewed as one whole constituted by different components (Rhalimi, 2012). Eventually, Iranian language teaching context in public schools demands low levels of language proficiency. Since the syllabus and the materials are reading based, some teachers feel they do not need high command of language proficiency. This is a fact that has been reflected by the remaining the participants' satisfaction with the level of linguistic competence development included within the program.

The next issue under the study was the adequacy of in-service program in terms of teaching skills development. Similarly, the results showed a high level of inadequacy, and half or more than half of the participants showed either their disagreement or uncertainty in response to the items. Evidently, the success of any instructional program relies on skillful and concerned teachers (Tam, 2007), and a skillful teacher can affect positively the student's achievements. Creemers, Kyriakides and Antoniou (2013) stated that teacher training and professional development should concentrate on specific skills which have an impact on the learners' achievement. Therefore, there is a place for teaching skills to be more emphasized.

In detail, for localized teaching, less than one thirds of the teachers agreed that the program is adequate. Although there is a variety of educational settings and contexts in Iran from modern equipped schools and classrooms to classrooms with just a blackboard and chalks, from students who have learnt English perfectly in private institutes to students who have no perception of the world's international language, there are common pre-made syllabus and prescribed materials for English teachers to follow in all educational local contexts. Consequently, there is not any concentration on teachers' localized teaching within their professional development. It seems that the professional development in Iran is not based on the constructivist approach in which teachers are considered as thoughtful people who make different decisions about their teaching process based on the context in which they work. In addition, the considerable level of uncertainty for this item may indicate that some teachers have no sense of what localization actually means.

It is expected that teacher reflection needs to be encouraged in any professional development program because reflection will give practitioners a stronger sense of independence, giving them ability to make decisions in the classroom rather than waiting for scholarly sanctions as to what can or cannot be done (Akbari, 2007). However, for the program adequacy to raise teacher reflection, only about one third of the participants showed their agreement, and the rest claimed that the program does not encourage them to be reflective teachers or they did not have any strong claim about its adequacy. Similarly, the large number of undecided teachers emphasized the fact that the concept of teacher reflection is unknown to some teachers in Iran, and they do not know who a reflective teacher is, or how the teachers' reflectivity can affect the learners' achievement in the classroom; the issues which are expected to be emphasized within the in-service education programs.

For teachers' flexibility, effectiveness, the ability to adapt foreign language teaching materials and understanding of learners' needs and interests, the same findings were revealed. More than half of the participants were either dissatisfied or undecided with the program. Material adaption is a neglected skill which a teacher should know to be able to fit the teaching context with the course book, and to make the disadvantage of the course books the advantages of teacher-produced materials (Howard & Major, 2004). Surprisingly, the most reported level of dissatisfaction was related to the role of program in encouraging teachers' understanding of learners' interests and needs. It indicates that there is a need to help teachers take the learners' individual differences more serious. English language classrooms are different places not only in terms of where they are located, but also in terms of the individual learners inside each context (Howard & Major, 2004). Consequently, teachers need to understand their learners' skill levels, strengths, preferences and interests, needs and their goals to maximize their learning potentials (Corley, 2005). Professional development programs are expected to facilitate the process.

Among teaching skills, the status of the program with regard to helping teachers to use foreign language teaching materials gained the highest level of satisfaction, and about half of the teachers regarded it as adequate. Although about half of the teachers did not show their satisfaction, this level of satisfaction would be interpreted with regard to foreign language teaching materials used in Iran. English textbooks used in public schools have been designed about thirty years ago. Evidently, teachers know all their exercises and texts by heart. In addition, the uses of new teaching materials like data show, smart board, and the like are totally new for teachers and most of them do not use them. Consequently, there is a long time teachers use the same materials in the classrooms. Inevitably, so many years and no change in English teaching materials made teachers feel they do not need an extra training in this regard and the program is adequate enough.

Next part of the results was related to the program evaluation with respect to teachers' testing and evaluation skills development. Again, analyzing the results revealed that half of the participants did not consider the program as the adequate one and showed their dissatisfaction and uncertainty. Koksall (2004) considered being a tester as one of the most important roles of teachers, but teachers mostly have not the ability to construct their own tests adjusted to their classes, and prefer to use the test in the textbooks or the ones made by others which are sometimes following

traditional approaches in testing and evaluation. Reporting the same status in Turkey, Koksall proposed a distance learning course in testing and evaluation for teachers' professional development on the internet which will allow them to exchange ideas and find answers to their problems.

And finally, analyzing the last part of the results collected by the questionnaire indicated that the status of the in-service EFL teacher professional development program is more problematic with regard to management skills, and only about one third of the teachers were satisfied with the program.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, although participants mostly believed that the four main issues specified within the questionnaire are important considerations for the content of in-service development programs, they are not emphasized enough in the current program. Based on the results obtained by the questionnaire and the interview, the weaknesses of the program are in improving the English teacher' language proficiency level specifically four language skills, teaching skills, management skills, evaluation skills, motivation, and administration and organization of the courses. The advantages of the program were reported in preparing teachers for using foreign language teaching materials, friendly atmosphere of the courses, receiving certificates which have a positive effect on teachers' evaluation, and exchanging ideas with other colleagues. Overall, as it was indicated, the merits are not so considerable. As it was discussed before teachers' satisfaction with their ability to use foreign language teaching materials is due to the unchanging, fixed textbooks and materials. The other advantages like meeting colleagues and getting certificates would be also gained through any successful and unsuccessful program. Moreover, it seems there is a lack of professional staff for planning and organizing in-service development programs in Iran as well as the absence of following evaluation and feedback. Therefore, it sounds current in-service FLTE program has a long way to pass to approach the acceptable status and may not be considered as an adequate program.

### *Pedagogical Implications*

The results of the study can be used to improve the present in-service FLTE program in Iran. First of all, it is the responsibility of the English teachers to improve themselves to those who teach reflectively and move ahead using the last changes in the field of English teaching. According to Richards and Farrel (2005) they can play major roles in their learning by deciding about what to learn about teaching and field, identifying a strategy to explore the interested topics, meeting other teachers in the activities, deciding about the kind of support they need, selecting colleagues to work with, setting realistic goals and a time frame, evaluating what they have learned and sharing the results with others. It is hoped that teachers do not stop supposing themselves as the always learners.

The second responsibility deals with the teacher educators and those who are in charge of running the courses. As it was observed, teachers mostly were dissatisfied with their teacher educators in the courses. These teacher educators and instructors are supposed to choose the courses in which they have enough knowledge and experience. It is their duty to take these classes more serious, and try to help teachers do better in their career; it is the only thing they can do to help learners in the classrooms, and consequently, improving the education in the country.

The last but not the least important responsibility of the program deals with the administrators and all who are in charge of planning the in-service program. The more special courses should be designed for English teachers. Although they need general courses too, they need enough training and development in English teaching to be updated with the World' evolution of Foreign Language teaching. Better and more efficient programs and courses can be planned through doing needs analysis as it was done in this study. Professional training of teacher educators, motivating teachers, and most importantly, specifying the content of the program based on the frameworks suggested by recent studies and are presented by specialist in the field are some other factors help the program to be more efficient. Overall, Mirici's (2006) proposed model of teachers professional development based on the constructivist view in which school-based professionals, Ministry of Education experts, classroom teachers; curriculum designers interact with each other can be applied in Iran to help the program. However, teacher education should not be perceived as presenting the mere accumulation of discrete skills to teachers, but as a process which emphasizes the individual teachers' reflection and contribution to the program.

### *Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research*

This study is limited to the EFL teacher in-service programs which are administered by the Ministry of Education. It was conducted in one city of Iran. Although the data were collected from all educational districts of Isfahan, that

would be better to do the research in the domain of more than one province in Iran. Therefore, conducting this research using a larger sample population and a wider domain will guarantee the more generalized results. In addition, in-service courses in Iran are not adequate in number; consequently, the judgments based on so few courses may not prepare so valid results.

In light of the findings of the study, the researcher recommends that this study can be done evaluating the organization and the administration of in-service FLTE in Iran, the issue which seems more favorable for teachers themselves. The second suggestion, would be studying the difference between the teachers' perceptions of the program in junior high school and secondary high school. This difference can be investigated between more experienced teachers and less experienced ones, too. However, this research can also be a comparative study between Iran and another country.

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## DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT REVISITED: PEDAGOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN L2 CONTEXT

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### ABSTRACT

Dynamic assessment seeks to make substantive changes in the examinee through engaging with the learner in an assessment context by providing feedback finely tuned across an array of cumulative complex or challenging tasks; a manner genuinely different from traditional assessment models. This article reviews a meta-analysis of published studies on dynamic assessment. In so doing, the genesis of Dynamic Assessment (DA), its theoretical basis considering Vygotsky's notion of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), different models of DA, differences between DA and traditional static approaches to assessment, application of DA in educational settings, and pedagogical considerations in L2 context have all been elaborated on. In conclusion, since DA pivots around offering constantly re-negotiated intervention -not sufficed to a specific task but a permanent development in approaching tasks in general- mediators should not only provide any form of mediation demanded by the context, but also be cognizant of the changing needs of the learners and offer cumulative complex tasks to challenge learners' present cognition and form ZPD.

**KEYWORDS:** Dynamic Assessment, Mediation, Traditional Assessment, Zone of Proximal Development

### INTRODUCTION

Dynamic assessment presents a qualitatively different approach to testing compared with traditional taken-for-granted approaches regarding assessment in educational settings. Although, the aim of traditional approaches is measuring the students' current learning ability, besides gaining information to improve instruction, in practice their goal is limited merely to evaluating the learner's present performance level. In contrast, Dynamic Assessment (DA) claims that by providing assistance during learning process, not only can we gain useful information regarding learner's performance level from another perspective, but also he/she can be assisted to improve his/her abilities provided that the mediation is finely tuned to his/her learning abilities while engaging in the process of assessment.

On the other hand, the reason that some students perform very well in the class but are unable to get high grades in exams is not well clarified to teachers. In this case, applying Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory of assessment (DA) can pave the way and provide invaluable information regarding assessment in language classrooms.

The concept of DA is originated from both Vygotsky's (1978) learning theory and Feuerstein's (1979) theory of mediated learning experiences. Vygotsky's (1978) suggests that the development process rather than the product is of great importance. As Lantolf and Thorne (2006, p. 28) believe, Vygotsky maintains that "the only appropriate way of understanding and explaining ... forms of human mental functioning is by studying the process, and not the outcome of development". This is the key factor which characterizes DA and differentiates it from other forms of assessment.

Vygotsky proposed the concept of ZPD while engaging in the context of a massive project concerned with the assessment of school children (Kinging, 2002). He found that what a child is able to do independently is not the child's full ability, as his abilities develop through assistance, or mediation offered by another capable person. Vygotsky's notion of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) refers to the gap between what the child can learn unassisted, and what he or she can learn with the help of an adult or a more knowledgeable peer. In other words, ZPD proposes that learning may be greatly facilitated through interactions between students as novices and a more knowledgeable and experienced person such as a teacher. According to Vygotsky, it is impossible to understand a child's potential intellectual development using a one-way assessment.

The introduction of the ZPD into psychology in general, and educational psychology in particular as a systematic assessment of educability and/or learning potential, formulated a foundation for a qualitative approach to the assessment and analysis of intellectual development as opposed to a quantitative approach including psychometric IQ tests dominating testing practices in 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries. Consequently, ZPD can be recognized as a cultural-historical perspective regarding the dynamic development of human cognition which



incorporates not only maturation aspect and sequential life experiences, but also, more emphatically, the cultural variables. This great emphasis on cultural variables has inspired Feuerstein to elaborate on them more specifically in his theory of structural cognitive modifiability.

Vygotsky believes that abilities are not innate but are emergent and dynamic (Lidz & Gindis 2003, p. 100). Therefore abilities must not be assumed as stable traits which are measurable; rather, they are associated with an individual's history of social interactions in the world. Vygotsky (1962) maintains that any higher mental function to be internalized necessarily passes through an external social stage in its development. We perform cognitively unique through engaging in various activities, and being mediated by those capable people around us. Inter subjectivity is fundamental in mediation process described by Wertsch (1998) as the establishment of mutual understandings between the learner and the tutor (Dixon-Krauss, 1996). There is a transition from social to personal level through transformation of the interactively learnt material. As a result the collaborative act of negotiation and creation of meaning bridges the gap between the inter-psychological or social level and the intra-psychological or individual level.

Ellis (2000) believes that socio cultural theory views learning arising not through interaction but in interaction. Learners need to be aided when approaching a new task and can perform it independently if internalization takes place. Hence, the role of social mediation in internalization process is highlighted in socio cultural theory, and as Nassaji and Cumming (2000) maintain it is essential in socio cultural theory to define the dialogic nature of teaching/learning processes within the zone of proximal development.

DA procedures have proved that many individuals assumed to be somehow biologically impaired were in fact culturally impaired as they had received an insufficient amount and kind of mediated experiences (Feuerstein et al., 1988). Therefore, according to this view cognitive abilities are likely to be developed through mediation and assistance, and DA concentrates both on fully matured as well as those still in the process of maturing. Similarly, Vygotsky argued that traditional forms of assessment focus on only fully matured functions or the products of development rather than the process of development. An assessment which takes maturing abilities into consideration allows for cognitive functions which are still forming to be noticed and considers intervening as likely to promote the development of certain processes or to remediate functions when problems occur (Vygotsky, 1998, p. 205).

### **HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT**

Dynamic assessment is believed to have a long past but short history (Lidz & Elliott, 2000; Wiedl, 2002). Perhaps, Lev Vygotsky can be considered as the founder of DA procedures due to his unique concept of the zone of proximal development within a socio cultural theory (Elliott, 2003; Hamers, Hessels, & Pennings, 1996; Hegarty, 1988).

Others regard Alfred Binet as the father owing to his concept of studying ability during test process and his notion of a continuously developing latent trait. Binet as opposed to Piaget who focused on looking at errors, looked at correct responses as indicative of ability which appeared not to be a state-of-the-art notion then but routinely confirmed notion of today's dynamic assessment (Anastasi, 1998; Chalmers & McGonigle, 2000; Lidz & Thomas, 1987; Sternberg, 1997; Styles, 1999; Ukrainetz, Harpell, Walsh, & Coyle, 2000).

In spite of the fact that DA was originally associated with Vyotsky's writings and particularly his notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (e.g. Feuerstein, Rand, Jensen, Kaniel & Tzuriel, 1987, Stenberg & Grigorenko, 2002;), contemporary studies concerning DA principles have also been under the influence of Structural Cognitive Modifiability theory proposed by Reuven Feuerstein. He emphasized on a bio-ecological model of human functioning which takes into account indirectly impinging variables such as genetic heritage, early childhood experiences as well as cultural and socio-economic factors playing in on the developing child. This model is in line with modern developmental theories of intelligence such as Ceci's bio-ecological theory (Ceci & Bruck, 1994; Ceci, Rosenblum, De Bruyn, & Lee, 1997; Lohman, 2005; Miller, 1997).

As implied by Leontiev (2001), Vygotsky's contribution to psychology is so prominent entailing so many facets concerning his cultural-historical theoretical conception. The quantitative and qualitative orientations of ZPD immediately attracted attention as a result of the prevailing traditions in testing, which called for objectivity through



standardization and statistical analysis. Nevertheless, objectivity includes not standardized procedures but rather interactions which are theoretically grounded around a flexible, open-ended approach to mediation as essential to co-constructing a ZPD with a learner. In turn, DA has been under the influence of these two interpretations of ZPD.

Budoff in the US and Feuerstein in Israel were pioneers in devising the first fully operationalized programs for dynamic assessment of general cognitive functions (see Lidz, 1987). According to Budoff DA served as a better tool for classification of students and prediction of their future achievements. Similarly, Feuerstein perceived the objective of DA as discovering and actualizing the students' propensity toward cognitive change (Kozulin & Falik, 1995). Currently, various forms of dynamic cognitive assessment procedures are available, but the common uniting principle in all of them is their reliance on test-teach-test paradigm, and the differentiating principle is the nature of "teaching" that occurs between pre- and post-tests (Haywood & Tzuriel, 1992); i.e. sticking to a highly standardized sequence of cues during the teaching phase, or tapping into more flexible, interactive and fluid aspects of cognitive functioning providing various forms of mediation according to specific needs of the student during the assessment.

The purposes for which DA procedures have been utilized so far are as follows: distinguishing persons having biologically learning difficulties contrasted with those whose problems can be traced back to social or cultural background, evaluating learners' general intellectual abilities as well as their potential for improving those abilities, recognizing the roots of poor performance in classes and on standardized tests and offering relevant recommendations (See P. Lantolf & E. Poehner, 2004).

#### **SOCIO CULTURAL THEORY-BASED DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT AND MEDIATED LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

As mentioned before, it is widely acknowledged that historically Vygotsky's theory can be regarded as the first systematically designed theory of DA (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002). This theory investigates how social interactions influence human intellectual development and centralizes on the social nature of the learning process through the notion of the ZPD. Although as (Kozulin & Garb, 2002) express, Vygotsky himself did not utilize the term DA, he elaborated on "the whole range of possible interactive interventions to be used during ZPD assessment, such as asking leading questions, modeling, starting to solve the tasks and asking students to continue but he produced no standardized procedure for the ZPD assessment" (Kozulin & Garb, 2002; p. 113).

Some key socio cultural concepts such as the ZPD, mediation, and particularly development are dealt with in a Socio Cultural Theory-based DA which manifest a comprehensive theoretical and psychological basis of collaborative pedagogy and learning-leading-development. Actually, as Luria and Vygotsky (1993) maintain Vygotsky's theory concerns about many facets related to human development and proposes to approach them both as a lengthy biological evolution and historical development. Therefore, human development rooted in the environment which in turn is comprised of society and culture; i.e. the socio cultural environment shapes human development through life long human social interactions.

Likewise, Feuerstein, similar to Vygotsky's ZPD concept, designed his theory of DA around the theory of mediated learning experience (MLE) and structural cognitive modifiability. The basic assumptions of the MLE are as follows:

1. Human beings possess a unique capacity to modify their cognitive functioning and adapt to changing demands in the environment.
2. Cognitive modifiability is possible disregarding the barriers of age, etiology, and severity of condition.
3. Cognitive modifiability is possible through MLE processes rather than direct unmediated experience (Seok-Hoon, Kheng & Jensen, 2005).

In MLE theory, the quality of interaction between the individual and the environment determines the cognitive development of the individual which itself is shaped by two modalities of interaction: direct exposure of the organism to experiences propounded by stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model of Piaget and interaction of the organism with the environment through the human mediator (H), thus the S-H-O-H-R model. The mediator can be any significant other such as a parent, a teacher or a capable person who serves the role of explaining, interpreting, or extending the environment so that the learner builds up a meaningful internal model of the context or the world experienced (Seng, Pou & Oon Seng, 2003).

### **CONTRASTING DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT AND STATIC ASSESSMENT**

Dynamic assessment (DA) and Static assessment (SA) are distinguished by the way they perform assessment procedures. According to Sternberg and Grigorenko (2002) the main methodological differences between SA and DA are described as:

1. SA emphasizes the product of past development (already matured abilities), while DA focuses on future development (maturing abilities).
2. In SA examiners take a neutral and indifferent stance in order to minimize measurement error while in DA the examiner intervenes in the assessment process to offer help and support and also instruction.
3. In SA series of problems or tasks are given to examinees to solve or perform during which little or no feedback concerning the quality of the performance is provided; as it is believed to introduce a measurement error into the assessment while in DA mediated assistance as the special form of feedback is provided.

In summary, in a dynamic approach, the emphasis is on learners' emergent (dynamic) abilities; the assessment is integrated with instruction, and the learners are continuously mediated during the test procedure as an examiner in DA approach focuses more on "cognitive transformation than with performance efficiency" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004; p. 59). In DA, the examiner and the examinee share the same goal and manifest a functional system, a unit where all parts work together (Lantolf & Poehner, *ibid.*).

### **INTERVENTIONIST AND INTERACTIONIST DA**

According to Lantolf and Poehner (2004) the terms interventionist and interactionist are concerned with the two general kinds of mediation in DA procedures, admitting that M. Budoff and R. Feuerstein are regarded as the pioneers in the mentioned orientations respectively.

Some advocates of DA consider different forms of support given to learners as "intervention" (e.g., Lidz, 1991; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002); nevertheless, it is the term mediation entailing a wide range of support from standardized hints to dialogic interaction which receives a pivotal role in SCT.

Lantolf and Poehner (2004) maintain that the interventionist approach to DA is more formal and standardized dealing with psychometric properties of test procedures. To them, interventionist DA includes studies which stick to a pre-determined list of hints during assessment activities in order to produce a weighted score. Hence, interventionist DA utilizes standardized administration procedures as well as forms of assistance to make comparisons between and within groups rather than making predictions about performance on future tests. Interventionist DA is concerned with quantifying. Interventionist DA can be traced back to Vygotsky's early work on the use of Intelligence Quotient (IQ) testing in school settings which encompasses "quantitative interpretation of the ZPD as a difference score" (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005).

Currently, the interventionist DA is implemented in the two formats of an 'item-by-item' approach (or layer-cake format) during which mediation is based on a priori menu of hints and a pretest-treatment-posttest (or sandwich format) experimental approach (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005).

In contrast, in interactionist DA the priority is on the development of the learner through mediation offered in the interaction between the examiner and the examinee. In this view, the dialogic or cooperative interaction (Poehner 2005), deserves attention in which the examiner reflects according to the examinee's needs, and learners feel free to pose questions and receive immediate feedback. During interactionist DA sessions, the form of assistance, hints or prompts are not according to a prefabricated list or menu but the mediation is fluid and is adapted to the learner's ZPD which itself defined as "a means of gaining insight into the kinds of psychological processes that the child might be capable of in the next or proximal phase of development and a means of identifying the kinds of instruction, or assistance that will be required if the child is to realize these potentials" (Minick, 1987; p. 127).

In interactionist DA, the focus is on learner development; it's the mediator's responsibility to co-construct a ZPD with the learner which requires continuously fine-tuning mediation according to the learner's needs to enhance the

development of maturing functions. The unique features of flexibility and dialogic nature of interactionist orientation to DA make this approach desirable for institutions to whom learner development in ways other than test scores is of great importance.

The situations in which standardized assessments and percentile rankings of scores are needed, interventionist orientations towards DA rather than interactionist DA are most welcomed as they incorporate open-ended mediation into standardized assessments.

### **THE SANDWICH AND CAKE FORMAT**

According to Sternberg and Grigorenko (2002, p. 27), DA orientations can be recognized as sandwich and cake formats.

The sandwich format resembles traditional experimental research designs in the sense that it implements a pretest to set a preliminary measurement and a posttest to assess the efficiency of treatment; therefore, the administration of mediation process is through "sandwiching" it between pretest and posttest which themselves are implemented non-dynamically. In other words, the learners are given a set of pretest exercises, then instruction is offered based on their needs and feedbacks received from their performance in the pretest, and at last, they are given posttest activities. As the instruction is given between pretest and posttest procedures, it is called sandwiched instruction, and it can be presented both on individuals and in group settings. In the sandwich format, there is a comparison between the performance on the pretest and posttest as to see the extent to which development occurs.

In the cake or layer-cake format, whenever a problem arises, the examiner offers mediation or intervention during the assessment procedure; that is to say that, the examinees perform item by item presented testing exercises and should they face a problem in doing the activity correctly, they are offered instruction formed in a pre-established list of hints and prompts.

Since "the successive hints are presented like successive layers of icing on a cake [and] the number of hints varies across examinees, but not the content of them" (Sternberg & Grigorenko 2002, p.27), this DA orientation is called layer-cake format. It is essential to note that the tasks should have cumulative difficulty and feedback and support should be offered to an individual after the completion of each task to assist him/her identify and overcome his/her errors.

### **DIFFERENT MODELS OF DA**

Jitendra and Kameenui (1993) propound five models of DA which are described as follows:

1. The first model applies the test-train-test assessment procedure, which is according to Budoff's (1974) psychometric model of assessment. In this model, through obtaining a post-test score which identifies the desired level of individual's performance, they explained, yields instruction can be formed and adapted according to individual's cognitive ability.
2. The second model deals with Feuerstein's (1979) Learning Potential Assessment Device: Mediational Assessment, which expresses if learning is not mediated, cognitive deficiencies will arise. According to Feuerstein (1979), the advantage of this model lies in the fact that an examiner is free to frame or choose environmental experiences so that they may be appropriate learning settings for the learner.
3. The third model applies the Testing-the Limits Assessment approach; the basis of this model is on the fact that intellectual and personality factors lead to individual differences in processing information. The advantage of this model is the direct implementation of testing procedure or interventions into the test situation; besides, embedded modifications in the testing conditions which doesn't necessitate changes in the arrangement or content of traditional tests.
4. The fourth model applies Graduated Prompting Assessment Approach. Its advantage is via offering gradual prompting process and the ZPD in order to predict learner's readiness to learn or benefit from instruction which requires not only the minimum amount of assistance to perform a problem-solving task, but also assessing the student's learning.
5. The last model Continuum of Assessment Model—Mediated and Graduated Prompting entailing mediation assessment which in turn results in a concise instructional procedure and graduated prompting assessment. Through this DA model we can gain information about learning, facilitate the problems faced in training procedures and

high-level inference, and utilize its static measures along with graduated prompting procedures. Furthermore, learners with low-criterion performance can be offered mediation to achieve success and independence in doing a task.

It should be noted that Feuerstein's model as the interactionist model of DA, is the most theoretically robust model of DA up to now which is traced back to his Mediated Learning Experience theory. MLE approach can be characterized as individualization of instruction based on learners' cognitive levels, offering different types of mediation according to learners' needs, and finally integration of assessment and instruction to enhance learner development. As a result, Feuerstein's approach can be considered as a radical departure from conventional orientations to assessment and instruction, and evidently more open to criticisms stated by educational researchers than other DA approaches.

## **DA IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Currently, there is a prevailing support for the use of DA in second language pedagogy (Ableeva, 2007, 2008; Antón, 2003, 2009; Lantolf & Poehner, 2004; Poehner, 2005; Poehner & Lantolf, 2005; Summers, 2008).

L2 research admits that DA can be a procedure incorporating not only learners' matured abilities, but also learners' maturing functions and "foregrounds future development" (Lantolf & Poehner 2004, p. 54). Furthermore, in L2 setting, it is taken for granted that "assessment and instruction are inseparable components of the same dialectical activity..." and regarding DA "assessment and instruction become as tightly conjoined as two sides of the same coin – and there are no one-sided coins" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 274).

As mentioned earlier, DA approaches learning as the ability to perform or solve a problem can occur if it is mediated by a more skilled or knowledgeable other. DA seeks to develop learner's potentiality to move from interpersonal sphere to intrapersonal sphere through mediation.

Accordingly, mediation in L2 DA plays a pedagogical role as to recognize learning problems and try to solve them. Thus, mediation in DA plays a pivotal role, and DA's success literally depends on appropriateness and the quality of the offered mediation which should be in line with maturing abilities in the learner's ZPD. As Lantolf and Thorne (2006, p. 356) believe "mediation cannot be offered in hit or miss fashion but should be tuned to the learner's ZPD. It should account for individuals' actual level of development as well as it should be continuously recalibrated in order to accommodate changes in the learner's ZPD".

## **PRINCIPLES OF CLASSROOM-BASED L2 DA**

Poehner (2008) outlines some principles to be followed in applying DA in an L2 educational context as follows:

### ***1. Quality of Mediator-Learner Dialoguing***

It is important that mediators view their interactions with learners as the chance to intervene in and help development. In so doing, mediators, not only should understand the process of development, but also the way it can be improved desirably. It is the responsibility of the mediators to choose different kinds of mediation according to the needs of learners while allowing for learners' autonomy as far as possible. The learner's ZPD is a determining factor in selecting form of mediation. As a result, the nature of DA context necessitates that instructors in the dynamic nature of L2 settings prioritize 'reciprocity' defined as fluidity in offering any forms of mediation needed by learners and 'receptivity or intentionality' on the part of learners without being concerned about sticking to a set of pre-determined and standard principles and procedures.

### ***2. Coherence of DA Interactions***

While intentionality and reciprocity form two fundamental aspects of a DA procedure, the concept of transcendence - the task around which the mediator-learner interaction is constituted- forms a third factor to be considered.

DA aiming at integrating assessment and instruction to reach its objective is highly dependent on the notion of transcendence which in turn requires coherence from one interaction to the following one. That is to say that interactions between the learners and mediators can be formed differently, but through performing tasks of increasing difficulty.

### 3. Object of L2 DA Programs

The object of mediator–learner interactions in L2 DA programs and specifically L2 classrooms is of utmost importance, as it centers around the mediation of meaning in Feuersteinian model. Since development serves as the pivot in DA procedures, teachers and educators should prioritize establishing development-oriented collaboration which itself necessitates flexible, dialogic interactions with learners according to learners' needs in order to co-construct and maintain a ZPD with students in educational settings. Additionally, tasks and educational exercises should be challenging enough to enhance learners' current abilities and in Krashen's term they should be  $i+1$  to be optimal. Eventually, in material development and curricular programming learners' rote learning should be eradicated and replaced by learners' internalization of conceptual knowledge.

### CONCLUSION

As it has been explained previously, DA is a systematic enterprise rooted in a theory of mind and development which can be applied in L2 classrooms both formally and informally. DA's pivoting principle is offering mediation which itself should be performed systematically and well-tuned to learners' maturing abilities to co-construct ZPD and enhance development in the learners. DA seeks to enhance long-term rather than short-term development in the learners; in so doing it centers around offering constantly re-negotiated intervention not sufficed to a specific task but a permanent development in approaching tasks in general. Therefore, mediators should not only be willing to offer any form of mediation demanded by the context, but also be cognizant of the changing needs of the learners and offer cumulative complex tasks to challenge learners' present cognition and form ZPD. After all, in DA procedure, assessment and instruction are interlocked with each other which both aim at the same goal; that is, development.

It is essential to perform more research on different ways of integrating DA with educational settings in general and L2 contexts in particular in order to open new horizons in the field.

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**IMPACT OF DEMOTIVATING FACTORS ON THE READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT  
OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The present study aimed to investigate the impact of motivating and demotivating factors affecting Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' reading comprehension proficiency studying English at Khorasgan Islamic Azad (Isfahan, Iran) university. For this purpose, from the student population studying English translation at this university, a sample of one hundred senior students, both male and female, were randomly selected. To specify the motivating and demotivating factors influencing the reading comprehension of the participants in the sample, modified versions of two questionnaires designed by Guthrie and Wigfield (1997) and Warrington (2005) were utilized respectively. Based on the analysis of the responses provided by the respondents, two samples, 50 each, were identified and labeled as motivating (M) and demotivating (D) groups. Then a TOEFL reading comprehension test was administered. The findings revealed that the average reading comprehension profile of the M- group was meaningfully higher than that of the D- group. In fact, there was a noticeable positive correlation between the motivating /demotivating factors and learners' reading comprehension achievement. The findings suggest English teachers that they should have a good idea of the motivational beliefs that their students bring into the classroom. Knowledge about students' motivational beliefs will allow teachers to plan learning activities that make good use of students' favorable motivational beliefs and prompt them to reconsider unfavorable beliefs.

**KEYWORDS:** Motivating, Demotivating, Iranian EFL learners, Reading Comprehension

**INTRODUCTION**

It is strongly believed that motivation plays a critical role in academic learning in general and in the "sustained process of mastering an L2", in particular (Dornyei, 2005, p.616). Being crucial a critical variable in student learning, motivation provides learners with a driving force, by which they can overcome the hurdles of language learning. Thus far most of the motivation research has focused on well-adjusted students who are successful in school. However; successful students differ from their less-successful peers in many ways. As English teachers, we often find that in the language-learning classrooms, quite a few students are motivated and the rests seem to be unwilling to get involved in learning tasks. Accordingly, it can be stated that in addition to the factors that positively influence motivation, there are also certain demotivating factors that negatively affect the target goals.. These hindering influences exert a detrimental effect on students' progress. Dornyei (2005) defines demotivation as specific external forces that diminish the motivational basis of a behavioral intention or an ongoing action. He rightly states that demotivation is actually the flip side of motivation (Dornyei, 2001). Evidently, a demotivated learner is someone who initially has had motivation to fulfill a goal or to engage in an activity and has lost the motivation to do so. In the same vein, we can speak of 'demotives', which are the negative counterparts of 'motives'.

Indubitably, reading is an effortful activity that learners often can choose to do or not to do, in fact, it requires motivation. To put it differently, because reading often involves choice, motivation is crucial to reading engagement. Motivation theorists attempt to understand the choices that individuals make among different activities available to them and their effort and persistence at the activities they choose (see Pintrich & Schunk, 2002; Wigfield & Eccles,

2002a). Even readers with the strongest cognitive skills may not spend much time reading if they are not motivated to read. Not surprisingly in reading literature, much of the work relevant to readers' motivation has been framed in terms of attitudes toward reading.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

Overcoming the obstacles of learning is the first step to be taken in the process of learning. The barriers with which the students usually encounter are of different kinds including physical, social, cultural, economical and so on. In treating this problem, before any action to be taken, we have to recognize the source of barriers.

Reading comprehension serves as the major skill and main purpose of studying English in Iranian context, this is due to the fact that all of the teaching materials and textbooks in the field of EFL in Iran are written in English and reading comprehension is necessary to be developed. Likewise the relation of Iranian people to foreigners is through reading their books and articles.

Organization of the previous literature suggests an extension of the topic and raises a new research question not previously considered by other investigators in the field. Accordingly the present study intended to reveal some common barriers that hinder EFL learning among Iranian students, to identify those students who are demotivated and furthermore to investigate the influence of demotivating factors on reading comprehension of Iranian students.

### ***Objectives of the Study***

In Iran, the review of previous studies suggests that no study for this case has been conducted. Therefore, the present study aimed at determining the impact of demotivation on reading comprehension of the Iranian EFL students. Moreover, this study wanted to investigate the factors that serve as common barriers to learning from the students' eyes. Actually, this study wanted to shed more light on the flip side of motivation and look at EFL learning from another point of view. The present study also focused on reading comprehension of Iranian students and wants to find out whether the demotivating factors or barriers influence students performance in reading tests negatively or not. In other words this study aimed to find out whether there is a meaningful relationship between the amount of motivation and the performance of Iranian EFL learners in reading comprehension tests, exploring the factors that hinder foreign language learning is another purpose of this study.

### ***Significance of the Study***

Demotivation has detrimental impacts on students' foreign language learning outcomes. A language learning program consists of several components such as the learner, the teacher, the textbook and teaching materials and evaluation. Every one of these parts can be influenced both negatively and positively by the students' degree of motivation. If the people in charge including teachers and material developers discover the roots of motivation, they can water them and hence improve the quality of learning program. On the other hand, if they know what the barriers of English learning are they can cut the roots of demotivation and reveals enhance the amount of student' reception and motivation. Generally speaking the results of this study can bring about a positive change in the English learning and teaching programs also it attempts to overcome the barriers with which the learners face while learning reading comprehension. Moreover this study the shortcomings of the EFL teaching programs from student's point of view.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### ***Related Studies***

Saville-Troike (2006) claims that individual motivation is a factor that is used to explain why some L2 learners are more successful than others. The level of effort that learners expend at various stages in their L2 development depends on how motivated they are to learn. According to Ur (2005) a distinction has been made in the literature between integrative and instrumental motivation: the desire to identify with and integrate into the target-language culture, contrasted with the wish to learn the language for the purpose of study or career promotion as defined by Gardner and MacIntyre (1991). Another type of classification is intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation means that the student wants to complete the task because they are interested on their own (Guthrie & Solomon, 1997). By contrast, intrinsic motivation comes from the joy or pleasure derived through language learning itself. As Sanacore (1992) puts it, intrinsic motivation is necessary to good reading.

Researchers have identified a number of factors important to reading motivation including self-concept and value of reading, choice, time spent talking about books, types of text available, and the use of incentives. (Guthrie & Wigfield 2000). Marinak and Gambrell (2008) found that students with different sexes differ from one another in terms of self-confidence and their attitude about reading.

On the other hand, demotives are negative factors that may eventually lead to distraction and gradual loss of interest. As a case in point, Joseph Falouta, James Elwoodband Michael Hoodc (2009) studied the demotivating factors in learning English in Japan. In their study, demotivating factors were grouped into three categories: external conditions of the learning environment, internal conditions of the learner, and reactive behaviors to demotivating experiences. Similarly, Tran Thi Thu Trang and Richard B. Baldauf Jr. (2007) conducted a study on demotivation among Vietnamese students from a university of economics. Tran Thi Thu Tang found 14 categories of demotives and classified them into two major groups: internal attributions like students' attitude towards English and external attributions such as teacher-related factors.

In another study, Sulaiman Hasan H. Qashoa (2006) conducted a study on motivation among secondary schools in the eastern coast of UAE. The majority of participants in the study regarded some factors such as the difficulty of English as a school subject and some aspects of the teacher's personality and style as demotivating. Kikuchi (2007) also developed interview guides and questionnaires in order to find demotivating factors in Japanese high school English classrooms. Five factors were found to be demotivating: (a) individual teacher behavior in classroom, (b) grammar translation method used in instruction, (c) tests/university entrance exam related issues, (d) memorization nature of the class/vocabulary learning related issues, and (e) textbook/reference book related issues. In addition, investigating student motivation and demotivation Song (2005) concluded that learners with high motivation can also become demotivated and many students depend greatly on their teachers to be motivated and to become good L2 learners.

In another equally interesting study, Keblawi (2006) examined demotivation among Arab learners of English and found two broad categories of demotivating factors: (a.) demotivating factors related to the learning context (contextual demotivating factors or CDF) and (b.) demotivating factors related to the subject (subject demotivating factors or SDF).

Likewise, Jenni Muhonen (2004) conducted a study which was a bit different from that of the others' in that she focused on demotivation itself. As the result of her study, five demotivating factors were found including the teacher, the learning material, learner characteristics, school environment and learners' attitudes towards the English language. Factors that contributed to teacher included teaching method, and lack of competence.

A review of the existing literature on demotivation suggests further research on the field. As can be seen, although some of the previously mentioned studies explored the demotivating factors and tried to distinguish them indifferent contexts, actually none of them focused on the impact of demotivation on reading comprehension. Moreover no study was done in Iranian context regarding demotivation. Along with these studies, in the current research an attempt was made to investigate the term demotivation among Iranian students and also to see the influence of demotivation on reading comprehension. Therefore, the following questions were the foci in the current study:

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1-What are the demotivating factors affecting EFL learning among Iranian students?

2-What is the difference between the learning of reading comprehension skill of students who are motivated and those who are demotivated?

On the basis of the above research questions, the two following null hypotheses were formulated.

### ***Research null Hypotheses***

1-There are no demotivating factors among Iranian EFL learners.

2-Demotivating factors do not affect reading comprehension of Iranian EFL students.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

As mentioned earlier, the target of this study was Iranian EFL students so it was conducted on two hundred senior Iranian EFL university students, both male and female, studying English translation at Khorasgan Islamic Azad university (Isfahan, Iran) through the form of questionnaires and a reading test. This sample was consisted of both male and female students, due to the fact that education at university is in the form of co –education All these participants were pursuing their B.A. at Islamic Azad university Khorasgan, Isfahan branch which is one of the high level universities in Isfahn. Later during the study, and based on the participants' responses two samples, 50 each, were identified and labeled as motivated and demotivated groups. All the participants who had taken part in the present study were selected using simple random sampling

### *Instruments*

The current study employed two questionnaires and a TOEFL reading test to gather quantitative data from the subjects.

#### *Warrington's (2005) Questionnaire*

The first questionnaire aimed to identify the demotivating factors of English language learning from the student's point of view, actually it was a modified version of Warrington's (2005) questionnaire used in the Asia university to gather quantitative data on the same subject (a copy of the questionnaire being available in appendix A ). It was based on the principle of measuring the essential factors affecting learner's motivation, since this questionnaire was applied in Japanese context, some items were modified. The original version of this questionnaire included 15 items and the rest were designed by the researcher according to the situation existing in Iranian universities. Some of the items of this questionnaire needed to be changed. Having excluded some of the items of this questionnaire some others were included in the questionnaire. Some of the items of the new questionnaire were borrowed from the appraisal form which is employed to evaluate the university Professors .In order to for the new questionnaire to be more reliable, this was checked by three PhD holders in teaching English as a foreign language and some changes were applied.

#### *Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ)*

The second questionnaire was used to measure the amount of motivation for reading among the subjects. This questionnaire named MRQ (motivation for reading questionnaire) was originally developed by Guthrie and Wigfield (1997) to measure the student's motivation for reading (a copy of which is located in appendix B).

The main purpose of this questionnaire in the present study was to distinguish those students who are motivated from those who are demotivated .This questionnaire was a Likert type scale with four variables including 1- very different from me 2- a little different from me 3- a little like me and 4- very much like me. Like the previous questionnaire, this one was translated in to Persian as well and to ensure the correctness of the translated version, two translators and a supervisor instructor checked the questionnaire and proofread it. The selection of this material was due to the fact that the topic of this study demands information about the subject's attitudes and beliefs and questionnaires serve the best for such purposes. The MRQ employed to collect data about subjects motivation was a close –ended questionnaire, since as Macky and Gass (2005) state a closed item questionnaire is one for which the researcher determines the possible answers. Closed –item questionnaires typically involve a greater uniformity of measurement and therefore greater reliability. They also lead to answers that can be easily quantified and analyzed.

#### *Reading TOEFL Test*

In addition to the two previously mentioned questionnaires a test of reading which actually was the reading section of TOEFL test of the year 2000 was employed to measure the reading proficiency of students. This test was comprised of five texts each followed by 10 questions. The reason for choosing a part of TOEFL was that this test is considered to be reliable. The collected data were coded in to computer by means of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.

### *Procedures*

In the present study the quantitative method of data collection was used to gather quantitative data, to this end, two questionnaires and a reading test were employed. To ensure the accuracy of the gathered data the subjects were informed that all information will remain confidential and anonymous, At first the necessary explanations regarding the MRQ were presented and it was noted that the subjects should select one item for every statement, the statements were followed by a Likert type scale ranging from 1to 4 and the students were supposed to choose 1, 2, 3

or 4. Based on the results of this questionnaire the participants were divided into two groups, 50 each, and were labeled motivated and demotivated groups. The subjects then were given the other questionnaire, that of demotivating factors, at this stage they were asked to choose those items which best represent the reasons why learners face problem learning English. Having completed this stage, the reading test of TOEFL was administered.

### Data Analysis

This study was multipurpose. The first purpose of this study was to explore the demotivating factors and distinguishing them from the students' point of view. The other purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between the performance of students in reading comprehension test and their score in the motivation for reading questionnaire (MRQ). The results of the first questionnaire were tallied using frequency. The results of the second questionnaire, the MRQ, were calculated according to the points allocated to the ideas of students about reading. Afterwards, based on the scores that the participants gained in this questionnaire, they were classified into two groups: the motivated group with high motivation scores which included 61 students and the demotivated group with low motivation scores which included 39 students. Then the reading scores of every group were calculated and the mean and standard deviation of the two groups was tallied by the SPSS software, finally a t-test was run between the means and standard deviations gained from the two groups. The results are presented in detail in the next chapter.

## RESULTS AND FINDINGS

### Results

#### *The demotivating factors facing students from their own point of view*

As it was mentioned previously, the modified version of the questionnaire devised by Warrington (2005) was used to gather data on demotivating factors and to find out the factors that negatively affect students' motivation. The results of this questionnaire are summarized in table 1. available in appendix A.

*Table 1: The frequency, distribution and percentage of the demotivating factors facing students when practicing reading comprehension. (N=100)*

Item Number	N	P		Item NO	N	P		Item NO	N	P		Item NO	N	P
Item NO1	83	83%		ItemNO11	6	6%		ItemNO21	50	50%		ItemNO31	72	72%
Item NO2	85	85%		ItemNO12	10	10%		ItemNO22	20	20%		ItemNO32	10	10%
Item NO3	5	5%		ItemNO13	11	11%		ItemNO23	14	14%		ItemNO33	26	26%
Item NO4	30	30%		ItemNO14	63	63%		ItemNO24	16	16%		ItemNO34	20	20%
Item NO5	0	0%		ItemNO15	68	68%		ItemNO25	53	53%		ItemNO35	52	52%
Item NO6	40	40%		ItemNO16	47	47%		ItemNO26	5	5%		ItemNO36	39	39%
Item NO7	26	26%		ItemNO17	49	49%		ItemNO27	28	28%		ItemNO37	41	41%
Item NO8	27	27%		ItemNO18	68	68%		ItemNO28	24	24%		ItemNO38	29	29%
Item NO9	12	12%		ItemNO19	5	5%		ItemNO29	19	19%		ItemNO39	47	47%
Item NO10	0	0%		ItemNO20	15	15%		ItemNO30	45	45%				

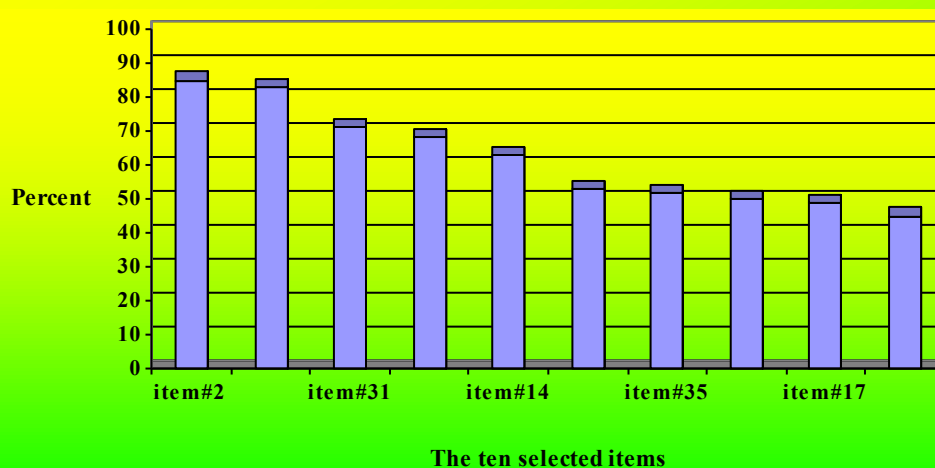
As can be seen some items enjoy higher percentages than others. The ten top items derived from the results are as follow:

1-Item no 2: Because the way English was taught in junior high school and high school wasn't proper. (85%)



- 2-Item no 1: Because I was taught only English grammar during previous years.(83%)  
 3-Item no 31: Because English is limited to textbooks. (72%)  
 4-Item no 15: Because there is a gap between high school textbooks and the books taught at university. (68%)  
 5-Item no 14: Because the oral skills are not focused. (63%)  
 6-Item no 25: Because the evaluation system is not valid. (53%)  
 7-Item no 35: Because instructors don't dedicate enough time to answer students' questions and engaging them in class discussion. (52%)  
 8-Item no 21: Because the modern technologies like internet, computer and etc. are not used in class. (50%)  
 9-Item no 17: Because the goal is passing the credit course rather than learning. (49%)  
 10-Item no 30: Because the teaching method is not creative. (45%)

**Table 2: the ten items selected by the participants and the percentages devoted to them**



The items mentioned above can be categorized in to separate classes including teacher- related factors, textbook-related factors and contextual- related factors. Regarding teachers, the results show that 52% of participants believe that the instructors do not allocate enough time to students' questions and also their engagement in class activities. 85% of the subjects claimed that the way English was taught in junior high school and high school was not proper. Here it is worth noting that in Iranian high school curriculum English is regarded as a two unit credit course and is compulsory to be passed by the students before graduation, therefore due to this fact most of the students in high school just study English to pass the course rather than learning it, (50%) in this study. Also during high school only grammar is focused and little focus goes on oral skills so 83% and 63% of the participants selected these two items as the barriers of learning respectively. 53% of the subjects believed that the evaluation system is not proper and valid that is sometimes the tests are not in accordance with the material taught in class. Also it was found out that the modern technologies were not used in English classes (50% of the subjects) and the teaching method was not creative (45% of the students) and these are among context- related factors. Some other factors which lead to demotivation according to participants were related to text books first of all 72% of the subjects stated that learning English was limited to textbooks and no extra program is provided in addition to textbooks, moreover, 68% of them said that there was a gap between high school textbooks and the ones used at university in terms of their contents.

#### ***The role of demotivating factors on reading comprehension***

The other part of the current study investigated the impact of demotivation on reading comprehension of Iranian EFL students this section was comprised of two stages, first the students who were demotivated were to be distinguished from those who were motivated , to this end the MRQ (the motivation for reading questionnaire ) was run and then the students were given the reading test to see if there was a significant difference between the performance of students of the two groups , namely the motivated group (n=61) and the demotivated group (n=39).

To classify subjects into two groups first the scores of MRQ of them were calculated then a cut point was defined to categorize them into two independent groups, since the complete score of MRQ was 200 the number 100 was selected as a cut point. Then the reading scores of the two groups were enlisted.

### ***Discussion***

Regarding the first question of the study, the Warrington's (2005) questionnaire was administered and the results gained were presented in result section of this study. According to this study the major demotivating factor which leads to undesired outcomes among Iranian EFL university students turns back to the way English is taught in Iranian high schools, which is chosen by 85% of the participants. Improper teaching seems to be an umbrella term which needs further interpretation. In Iranian high schools English is treated as a two credit course unit so the aim is something else rather than learning English. Undoubtedly such a situation results in the diminishment of students' motivation and acts as a barrier to language learning, which was distinguished to be the source of demotivation by Oxford in 1998. Moreover; the aforementioned context leads to the memorization of solid rules and a handful of vocabularies which was found out to be one of the areas of demotivation among Japanese high school students by Keita Kikuchi in 2007. Also Tran Thi Thu Trang (2007) classified the demotivating factors among Japanese students and came to the conclusion that environmental factors do contribute to the lost of motivation and hence demotivation.

The second most frequent item selected by the participants as demotivating was about the mere focus of English classes in Iran on grammar. In fact 83% of the participants believed their lack of motivation to be rooted from the over emphasizing on grammar and underestimating the other language skills. In some of the previous studies like that of Keita Kikuchi in 2007 this was considered as a case of demotivation too. The third factor identified by learners to be a barrier was the textbooks and the fact that in Iranian high schools English is taught only using the textbooks provided by the ministry of education. Actually 72% of the subjects believed this item to be a barrier to EFL learning, in fact some previous studies like Dorneyei (2001), Oxford (1998), Chambers (1998) and Ushioda (1998) distinguished textbooks as demotivating factor. In addition, 68% of the students claimed that there is an unreasonable gap between the text books taught at high schools and those taught at universities.

Another 63% of the subjects stated that since the oral skills, speaking and listening, are not focused on, they do not do their best and therefore it is another hindrance to learning. Out of 100 participants 53 of the (53%) complained about the evaluation system, this may be due to the fact that sometimes the materials presented at textbooks do not correspond to the questions asked in exams. In a study conducted by Qashoa (2004) also the evaluation system was believed to be a detrimental factor to students' motivation in UAE. 52% said that the instructors do not pay enough attention to the student's questions, the reason for this phenomenon seems to be that most of the time the instructors have several classes in a day so they have to set their time. Rare use of technology is considered another source of demotivation at Iranian universities. This is in line with the results of Sulaiman Hasan H. Qashoa's study in which they came to the conclusion that lack of application of modern technologies serves as a demotivating factor among secondary schools in the eastern coast of UAE. Another group of subjects, 49%, expressed that because the goal is mere passing the credit course and not learning the language they feel demotivated, this item was elaborated on in the previous part. Uncreative and dull teaching methods of teaching language were distinguished by 45% of the students to be a kind of hindrance.

Regarding the other purpose of the study which was exploring the role of demotivation on reading comprehension, running an independent t-test and comparing the means of the reading scores of the two groups lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The results of the t-test is presented in tables 3.. According to this results the amount of t-score is 10.964 which at .05 level of significance is higher than the t value in the table of critical values of t therefore the difference between two groups is significance. According to the study, the reasons why some motivated students become demotivated are multifaceted. But we found teachers played an important role in this process. Most students depend greatly on their teachers to motivate them. So teachers should attach more importance in this field and try to find out ways to maintain the high motivation and create situations to make students become more motivated.

Table 3: Group Statistics and Independent Sample t- Test

VAR00002		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
VAR00001	1	61	71.4918	12.66836	1.62202
	2	39	47.8462	5.65471	.90548

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
VAR00001	Equal variances assumed	23.336	.000	10.964	98	.000	23.64565	2.15671	19.36574	27.92556
	Equal variances not assumed			12.729	89.499	.000	23.64565	1.85764	19.95484	27.33646

## CONCLUSION

What we can glean from all the above is that demotivation is a salient phenomenon that should concern every classroom practitioner. It goes without saying that it is a complex issue and the present analysis has not done its justice. There are so many factors that affect student motivation, not the least of which is the role of the teacher.

The study in hand aimed at finding the common factors that are perceived demotivating by Iranian EFL learners. The results of the study suggest that as with the other few studies in the field, factors in the immediate learning context like the teacher, the learning group and textbooks could demotivate learners if they are perceived negatively. In particular, items such as negative teachers' traits and behaviours, improper methods of teaching English in class, lack of focusing on oral skills, teaching mere grammar at high schools, limitation of English to text books, the existing gap between high school and university textbooks, improper evaluation system and lack of using technology in English classes were the most reported contextual demotivating factors. With regard to the influence of demotivation on reading it was discovered that demotivation negatively affects students' performance in reading comprehension test. In other words, the less the amount of demotivation, the higher the reading scores. Through the data gathered the null hypothesis was rejected and it was found that there are some demotivating factors that affect EFL learning. Also the results of the t- test which was run between the means of the reading scores of two groups offered that those students whose MRQ were higher, scored higher in reading test, too.

This study like any other study has a number of limitations, some of which could influence the findings and restrict the generalizability of the results. It is not possible in the scope of the paper to go into all the possible demotivating factors that might disengage learners' interest. Here are some of the limitations of the research in hand.

1. The first limitation of this research seems to be the sample size. As it was pointed out in chapter three, the participants of this study included 100 university students. Due to this fact, a word of caution should be taken in to account in generalizing the results.
2. Regarding the consequences of demotivation on reading comprehension, it should be noted that for the results to be more generalizable, the general proficiency can be the center of focus. Differently stated this study was limited to reading comprehension and investigated the impact of demotivation on reading.
3. This study worked on both males and females. Taken the other studies in to account, it can be said that the influence of demotivation may be different for girls. So again the results should be generalized with caution.

### ***Implications of the study***

Having known the barriers of learning, the teachers can organize their activities in class so as to lead to better understanding of the lesson. As a case in this point if the teacher knows that he or she should dedicate enough time to the students' questions, even in person, better results will be gained. Or for instance if the material developers pay attention to the point that there is a great gap between the textbooks at high schools and at universities, they will certainly try to shorten this gap. In brief the instructors and material developers should do their best to motivate the students. In the following sections based on the results of this study some tips have been presented to motivate students. Although the topic of reading motivation is regarded as very important, there has been little research on the topic (Metsala, McCann & Dacey, 1997). It is very important to use motivation in order to help students feel better about their reading ability (Nicholson, 1999). As teachers, you should have a good idea of the motivational beliefs that your students bring into the classroom, because this will allow you to plan learning activities that make good use of their favorable motivational beliefs and prompt them to reconsider unfavourable beliefs. Students are very successful in hiding their thoughts and feelings, leading to misconceptions about their values, self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations.

Unfavorable beliefs impede the learning process because they direct the learners' attention away from the learning activity itself, focusing it instead on their low ability. Monique Boekaerts (2002) believes that your students' attention has to be drawn explicitly to the link between their actions and the outcome of their actions by asking questions such as: 'What did you do to get that solution? How do you know that the strategy you used is effective?'

She continues that students who have established unfavorable motivational beliefs are not interested in such process-oriented feedback. They only want to know whether their answer is correct, or whether they are on the right track. Try to be alert when your students request outcome-related feedback. Focus on what they have already mastered rather than on their shortcomings. Better still, point out the strengths of their solution plan. Gradually stimulate them to reflect on their own performance (self-assessment). Students are more interested in doing activities for which they think they have the necessary competence. Many students complete tasks that they do not value all that much simply because they expect some sort of reward (e.g. high marks, a pass, or social approval). Favorable motivational beliefs are attached to the activity itself. Students who are intrinsically motivated will report that they do not have to invest effort. When difficulties arise, these students will persist with the activity because they experience a feeling of self-determination. Unfortunately, not all students are intrinsically motivated and you also have to cater to those students who are less motivated to learn. It is important to realize that classroom climate and the way you interact with your students facilitates or impedes their motivation.

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**THE EFFECTS OF ASSIMILATION AND ELISION TEACHING ON LISTENING  
COMPREHENSION OF EFL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

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**ABSTRACT**

What is it that makes listening difficult for Iranian students ? This research thinks that there must be something beyond vocabulary size and grammar that interferes with L2 students' listening comprehension. This research thinks that listening skills of Iranian students as EFL learners are weak due to two main reasons: Their ears are not attuned to English language as a foreign language. for example, university entrance exams, exit exams, and other examinations do not include a listening component, and they lack knowledge of assimilation and elision as are exercised in native speech. Iranian learners of English learn words in citation form , but not in connected speech form. According to Celce-Murcia's categorizations (1996), the factors that make real speech unintelligible include suprasegmentals and connected speech. Based on this theory, This research, which is a quasi-experimental study, hypothesized that teaching of different aspects of connected speech , especially assimilation and elision enhances listening skills of the Iranian English language learners. To test this hypothesis an experimental group which consisted of 21 participants, and a control group consisted of 21 participants were selected. The treatment for the experimental group was concentrated on raising students' awareness of connected speech forms such as assimilation, elision. On the other hand, although most of the materials were the same, The training for the control group was different. The treatment for the control group was centered on using guided questions and comprehension checks to enhance students' listening comprehension. Both of the groups were given pretest before the start of training and were post tested at the end of the treatment to find the result of the training given to experimental group. The major findings of this present study were as follows: First, The assimilation and elision teaching significantly raised the experimental group students' awareness of connected speech forms. Hence, connected speech treatment might enhance students' connected speech knowledge. second, the facilitative effects of connected speech forms teaching on students' overall listening comprehension were salient because the experimental group did better in the dictation posttest. This study have implications for theoretical development and practical applications. In theoretical development, more research needs to be done with a larger sample of EFL learners. In terms of practical applications, The findings of this study can act as a model to assist both learners and teachers in English Language learning and teaching. it may allow teachers to obtain an awareness of connected speech forms and the problems they cause learners.

**KEYWORDS:** listening comprehension, listening difficulties, connected speech, assimilation, elision.

**INTRODUCTION**

According to Willis (1990) , around 70% of the English we speak and hear, read and write is made up of the 700 most common words in the language . If so, a high school student is supposed to understand at least 70 % of the speech uttered by native speakers. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Therefore, there must be something beyond vocabulary size and grammar that interferes with L2 students' listening comprehension. what is it that makes listening comprehension difficult ? why is it so ? Have we /you ever stopped to think about it ? However, there are some factors influencing students' listening comprehension



negatively. Listening is a process affected by the character of the listener, the speaker, the content of the message, and any visual support that accompanies the message (Brown & Yule, 1983).

Among many suggestions as to the causes of the difficulty in understanding spoken English, the researchers seem to agree on the idea that connected speech forms are the main cause of it. According to Celce –Murcia (1996), the factors that make real speech unintelligible include suprasegmentals and connected speech. However, English used in classroom is usually different from real speech produced by native and proficient speakers. classroom English is often spoken in a slower, simplified and overcorrected ways, according to Fan (2003). English spoken in authentic situations of social interaction, on the other hand, is more likely to be spoken more rapidly and in a connected way.

In spite of its importance, Connected speech is the area on which little research has been done and is not taught in any systematic manner in EFL programs in Iran. No teaching material has been published to show a comprehensive view of connected speech, so teaching connected speech is essential for listening comprehension as well as pronunciation. This study examined the effectiveness of assimilation and elision teaching, two aspects of connected speech, on improving students' listening ability.

The listening skill of the Iranian students as EFL learners is weak due to two main reasons: Their ears are not attuned to English language as a foreign language. Because university entrance exams, exit exams, and other examinations do not include a listening component, and the second reason is the students lack knowledge of assimilation and elision as are exercised in native speech. Iranian learners of English learn words in citation form, but not in connected speech form. They have learnt their English 'through eye' and have trouble interpreting the utterances of native speakers.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Unfortunately, there is not as much written about connected speech as there is about many other issues in applied linguistics, studies have been reported by (Ito, 2001; Rosa, 2002). "Sadly, actual research on connected speech is hard to find, Ito (2001), Rosa (2002)". Some researchers have offered modest efforts to explain a few facets of connected speech and suggested ways to teach them (e.g., Brown & Hilferty, 1989, 1995, 1998; Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2004; Dauer, 1993; Gilbert, 1984, 1993; Gimson, 1962, 1970, 1989, 2001; Grant 1993; Morley, 1987; Pennington, 1996; Sheeler & Markley, 1991).

One of the earliest studies about connected speech is Henrichsen's (1984) investigation into the role of connected speech in listening comprehension for ESL learners. The findings, which were further attested by Ito (2006), revealed that the presence or absence of connected speech did indeed affect listeners' perception. Generally, connected speech forms have received little attention in the ESL/EFL pedagogy literature. However, studies investigating the effectiveness of connected speech teaching showed mixed results. Some studies (Brown & Hilferty, 2006; Fan, 2003; Matsuzawa, 2006) found that connected speech teaching was effective in improving learners' perception of connected speech forms and therefore should be taught in the classroom. While other studies (Chang, 2007; Wang, 2004) failed to show learners' significant gains after receiving connected speech training. The inconsistent research findings required more empirical studies to clarify the effectiveness of connected speech teaching. Indeed, Connected speech is the area on which little research has been done and is not taught in any systematic manner in EFL programs in Iran, including high school English education. This lack of empirical information and inconsistent research findings formed the main motivation to conduct the present study.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study attempted to answer the following questions:

1- To what extent does a proper knowledge of assimilation facilitate the listening skills of Junior high school students?

2- To what extent does a proper knowledge of elision enhance the listening skills of Junior high school students?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***participants***

The participants of present study consisted of 42 ( out of 50 ) Junior high school students in Jiroft randomly were assigned to the experimental and control group ; half of them to experimental and the other to control group. These groups which served as samples were selected on the basis of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher as a teacher.

### ***Instruments***

Several different testing instruments were utilized in the process of the development of the present research.

#### ***Oxford English Language Placement Test (OELPT)***

Oxford English Language Placement Test used as homogenizing tool. This is an online free placement test including 50 items, and is copy right – free, (available at <http://www.Lang.ox.ac.uk/course/tst-english-placement.html>).

#### ***Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET) (pretest , posttest)***

The Cambridge Preliminary English Test, or PET for short, is a qualification in English as a Foreign Language awarded by Cambridge ESOL is one of five 'Main Suite' examinations offered by Cambridge ESOL. The level of is described as Pre-Intermediate and is at B1 on the Common European Framework of Reference. It incorporates listening, reading, writing, and speaking components. Reading and writing are taken together 90 minutes , listening 30 minutes, speaking- an interview 10 minutes. Listening includes four parts; Listening part 1 \_ pictures with multiple choice questions; Listening part 2- longer recordings and multiple choice questions ; Listening part 3: complete notes; Listening part 4: true/ false. with respect to the level to be administered, the pre- intermediate level was chosen because of its approximate match with the current proficiency of the participants in this study. The speaking, reading, and writing of the test, however, were discarded because of their irrelevancy to this study.

#### ***Connected speech forms Dictation Test (pretest , posttest)***

The learners had an incomplete written text in front of them. As they were listening to a spoken version of the text, They had to write the missing parts on the written text. In this study a dictation test consisting of sentences with connected speech forms was administered to measure listening comprehension and connected speech knowledge of two groups. Two different aspects of connected speech; assimilation and elision, were incorporated into sentences. Two subtests, as the pretest and posttest, were developed to test participant's perception of assimilation and elision, each subtest contained 10 test items, five items for each connected speech pattern. The target sentences containing assimilation and elision patterns in the subtests were different from the sentences being taught. To calculate the dictation test scores, only the target forms were considered. (Extracted from: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningEnglish/multimedia/pron/progs/prog2.shtml#elision3>)

### ***Procedure***

In the beginning of this research, two classes which were in grade three in high school (50 participants) were selected. Then, the Oxford English Language Placement Test (OELPT) was administered to determine the homogeneity of the participants. Data analysis showed that the 42 of participants (84.0%) were in the same level and 8 (16.0%) were placed in another level . So in order to homogenize the participants eight of participants were discarded. Then , they randomly assigned to the experimental and the control group. And then , they were administered the Cambridge Preliminary English pretest at the pre- intermediate level to see if these two groups were comparable in terms of their overall English proficiency and their listening comprehension. And also in order to examine the students' knowledge of assimilation and elision, these two groups took a dictation test on assimilated and elided forms to investigate if they had equal awareness of connected speech forms. The participants' scores on connected speech and the pre- intermediate PET listening test were analyzed, but no significant differences were found, indicating that their general listening abilities were similar.

After the pretest, The students received six weeks of treatment in the target forms and took the same test once again at the end in order to compare the range of improvement between two groups. Every week both groups were given two days a week and approximately 45 minutes per day for treatment by using a previously prepared materials. For revealing and describing the impact of assimilation and elision teaching, a post-test was administered at the last session. In order to analyze data obtained from the pre-test and post-test of both groups, The SPSS was used. The data collected in this current research were analyzed quantitatively by performing the -independent t-test technique.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

This research compared two groups of junior high school students. One engaged in assimilation and elision teaching and the other not. The aim of this research was to explore the effectiveness of assimilation and elision teaching in facilitating overall listening comprehension of students. In this present study, data were mainly collected from two sources. 1) PET pretest and posttest 2) Dictation pretest and posttest.

First, Oxford English Language Placement Test was administered to determine the homogeneity of participants. The mean and standard deviation of scores were calculated. Two groups compared through an independent samples t-test. The results showed that there was no significant difference between two groups. Then Cambridge Preliminary English Test (PET) pretest was administered to measure the level of listening comprehension knowledge of two groups. Then a connected speech forms dictation pretest was administered to measure the assimilation and elision knowledge of two groups.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Both groups' performances in the PET and dictation pretest***

In the beginning of this research, PET pretest and dictation pretest were administered for the researcher to understand both groups' current level of overall English proficiency and that of their connected speech forms, specially assimilation and elision awareness.

*Table 1: The independent t-test for comparison of the two groups' performance in the PET listening pretest*

	Control			Experimental			t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
PET Listening pretest	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	0.944	40	0.351
	21	8.24	1.221	21	7.8571	1.389			

*Table 2: The independent t-test for comparison of the two groups' performances in the dictation pretest*

	Control			Experimental			t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
connected speech forms dictation pretest	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	0.224	40	0.824
	21	5.67	1.39	21	5.57	1.36			

*Table 3: Paired t-test to compare the mean scores of Experimental group at pre-test and post-test connected speech forms dictation test*

Group Experimental	pretest			Post-test			Paired Differences		t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
connected speech forms dictation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	- 17.096	20	0.000
	21	5.57	1.36	21	9.81	.980	- 4.2381	1.136			

*Table 4: Paired t-test to compare the mean scores of control group at pre-test and post-test connected speech forms dictation test*

Group Control	pretest			Post-test			Paired Differences		t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
connected speech forms dictation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	-5.40	20	0.000
	21	5.67	1.390	21	6.52	1.537	-.857	.727			

*Table 5: Paired t-test for comparison of the experimental groups' performances in the PET listening pretest and posttest*

Experimental group	pretest			Post-test			Paired Differences		t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
PET Listening	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	-17.67	20	0.000
	21	7.86	1.39	21	13.24	0.99	-5.38	1.39			

*Table 6: Paired t-test for comparison of the control groups' performances in the PET listening pretest and posttest*

Group Control	pretest			Post-test			Paired Differences		t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
PET Listening	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation	-9.77	20	0.000
	21	8.24	1.22	21	10.62	1.023	-2.38	1.117			

The experimental group and the control group performed comparably in the PET listening and dictation pretests, which suggested these two groups were at about the same level of listening comprehension and of overall English proficiency. It was reasonable to assume that these two groups were at about the same proficiency level of English before treatment was conducted, because of total years of learning English and high-school English training, and also English listening skill is generally neglected in regular high school English courses. Students did not devote any time and effort to English listening outside of class, either.

### ***Both groups' performances in the PET and dictation posttest***

*Table 7: The independent t-test for comparison of the two groups' performances in the dictation posttest*

	Control			Experimental			t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
connected speech forms dictation posttest	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	-8.259	40	0.000
	21	6.52	1.537	21	9.81	.980			

*Table 8: The independent t-test for comparison of the two groups' performances in the PET listening posttest*

	Control			Experimental			t	df	Sig (2-tailed)
PET Listening posttest	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	-8.407	40	0.000
	21	10.6190	1.02353	21	13.2381	.99523			

It was hypothesized that if students have the knowledge of assimilation and elision patterns of spoken English and become more familiar with them, they will be more likely to identify more words that they already know and in turn improve their overall listening comprehension. After a detailed analysis of the result the research has the following findings:

Based on the results of data analysis, It is reasonable to conclude teaching of assimilation and elision improves listening comprehension of English Language learners. The participants of experimental group were more confident after the treatment phase. During the treatment phase the participants of experimental group were found more motivated and participative. Based on this conclusion, we have a reason to hypothesize that students who have been used to listening to clearly articulated sentences in English will encounter great difficulty when suddenly faced with spoken English by normal native speakers. In the end, the researcher felt that these lessons helped the students a great deal with their comprehension of natural native-speaker speech. Additionally, Their progress was evident during the listening lessons as it arises from their results of listening.

## CONCLUSION

We can now go back to the question we put forward at the beginning of this study: what is it that makes listening difficult for Iranian students ? Clearly, according to many researchers the use of the different aspects of connected speech in order to cut corners help native speakers to speak faster, and the fact that the simplified forms differ so much from their citation form makes the task of understanding harder for Iranian learners.

The researcher thinks that findings of this study have implications for theoretical development and practical applications. In theoretical development, more research needs to be done . In terms of practical applications, The findings of this study can act as a model to assist both learners and teachers in English Language learning and teaching. Firstly, it may allow teachers to obtain an awareness of connected speech forms and the problems they cause learners; One of our responsibilities as English teachers is to be aware of the existence of connected speech forms and the problems they cause learners. We should give our students plenty of practice in getting accustomed to recognizing them when they occur. The researcher hopes to see connected speech forms teaching incorporated into teaching materials and regular English courses. It is a great shame to notice that in teaching and learning English in our schools, listening and connected speech forms have not received the attention they deserve even though they are a significant characteristic of and a pervasive phenomenon in spoken English and might be a powerful tool that can help students achieve better understanding.

The researcher thinks The design of the present study is not without flaws. The effectiveness of teaching assimilation and elision forms in improving overall listening comprehension is still an open issue that needs further research and more empirical studies. It is recommended that future studies need to be conducted due to the limited number of studies in this field. Moreover, These results due to the limitations of this study cannot be generalized beyond this population. It would be appropriate to conduct this study on a much larger scale in order to make generalizations regarding gender and age orientation.

## *Limitations of the Study*

In any study ,There are some limitations which would definitely affect the outcome of the research. This study is not an exception. The major limitation was lack of appropriate materials to teach connected speech forms. The available materials lack of the common characteristics of real-life listening and does not give much help with learner problems such as those suggested. Unfortunately, There is no teacher resource that can claim to be comprehensive on the topic of connected speech. It can be summed up and fully expressed that the available textbooks and materials did not include any aspects of connected speech. On the other hand, classroom books do not contain natural speech and materials, for instance, in the materials used in our classes, these aspects of connected speech are given no place to help students improve their listening comprehension There is, Therefore, an urgent need for new books in this area. With these limitations taken into consideration, further investigation of the effect of connected speech forms on listening comprehension is desirable.

This research does not focus on every aspect of connected speech; rather The present study focuses mainly on the teaching of assimilation and elision of sounds, two of different aspects of connected speech, to improve listening skills of the learners. The second delimitation of this research is that it is limited to a small number of participants. Another delimitation of this research is that the gender of participants was limited to male students because male students were available to the researcher, and also short teaching period of teaching the variables. It is also restricted to the assimilation and elision of sounds in word boundaries .

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EFL LEARNERS' MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES AND THEIR  
PERFORMANCE ON INFORMATION-GAP WRITING TASK

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**Abstract**

Multiple Intelligence Theory (MIT) claims that there are at least eight different human intelligences (Gardner, 1983). The theory stressed that if individual differences are taken into account and classroom activities are diversified, language learners can improve their language skills. The present study was conducted to investigate the existence of any possible relationship between Iranian intermediate English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' Multiple Intelligences (MI) and their performance on information-gap type of writing task. The Preliminary English Test (PET) was employed to homogenize 60 participants regarding their proficiency in English. The final test-takers were 40 (17 males and 23 females). One of the other instruments used was Multiple Intelligence Developmental Assessment Scales (MIDAS) (Shearer, 1994). Another instrument used was information-gap writing task. Based on Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis, the results of the study indicate that there is a statistically significant and positive relationship between the participants' performance on information-gap writing task and linguistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences. The findings suggest English teachers to consider the role of MI and provide more effective activities in line with individual differences in the class.

**KEYWORDS:** Multiple Intelligence Theory (MIT), Information-gap writing task, Multiple Intelligence Developmental Scales (MIDAS)

**INTRODUCTION**

The second half of the twentieth century can be called the age of individualism, when individual values and differences were recognized and respected (Akbari & Hosseini, 2007). Individual differences now occupy an important position in any debate related to teaching/ learning and the professional literature is filled with terms and phrases which try to capture the elusive concepts that distinguish one person from another (Crozier, 1997; Fontana, 1988; Lefrancios, 1991).

In the past, it was believed that there is a unitary general intelligence, called "g" factor or "general intelligence" (Williams, Zimmerman, Zumbo, & Ross, 2003), which is a fixed, static entity at birth. Various and many attempts were made to revise the scale and many postwar performance scales were presented (for a detailed account see Gardner, 1983). This general intelligence was defined operationally as the ability to answer items on an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) Test (Williams et al., 2003). However, Gardner (1983), in his seminal work, attacked the preceding models on the ground that they overemphasized logic and language and disregarded other intelligence types. He defined intelligence as "the ability to find and solve problems, the ability to respond successfully to new situations and the capacity to learn from one's past experiences" (p.21). In 1983, his book, *Frames of Mind: the Theory of Multiple Intelligences* caused a major paradigm shift in the thinking about what constitutes intelligence. Later on, Gardner (1993, 1999) have not only provided further explanation and clarification of the MIT, but also proposed general guidance for application of the MIT to education and the wider world (Armstrong, 2000).

According to the theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI), there are at least eight different human intelligences. The first two are verbal-linguistic and mathematical-logical intelligences. The other five are musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal (Gardner, 1983). In 1999 Gardner added an eighth intelligence type to the list, naturalist intelligence.

***Multiple Intelligences***

It is a theory of intelligence, proposed by Gardner that characterizes human intelligence as having dimensions that must be acknowledged and developed in education (1983). Conceptions of intelligence that dominated earlier in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly through the influence of the Stanford Binet IQ test, were based on the idea that intelligence is a single, unchanged, inborn capacity (Gardner, 1983). Advocates of MI argue that there are other equally important intelligences, found in all people in different strengths and combination. MI, thus, belongs to the group of instructional philosophies that focus on the differences between learners and the need to recognize learner differences in teaching.

Eight different types of intelligences in this model (linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and natural intelligence) are explained in-brief below (Table 1).

Table 1: *Summary of Eight Component Intelligences of Gardner's Theory (Akbari & Hoseini, 2007, p. 145)*

Intelligence	Description
Verbal/linguistic	Effective use of language and good knowledge of words
Musical	Sensitive to melody and rhythm
Logical/mathematical	Effective use of numbers, ability to deduce conclusions, ability to see cause and effect
Spatial/visual	Sensitivity to color and design, sensitivity to graphic forms
Bodily/kinesthetic	Physical/bodily coordination
Interpersonal	The ability to understand others, their intention, moods
Intrapersonal	Knowledge of the self
Natural	To know and care about nature

Another variable which is the main concern of this study is the skill of writing. In fact, listening, speaking, reading and writing need equal attention if communicative skills now are required to be attained (Savignon, 1983). A simplistic view of writing would assume that written language is simply the graphic representation of spoken language (Brown, 2001). Writing is more complex than this; hence, writing pedagogy is important, as Brown (2001) states by claiming that writing is “as different from speaking as swimming is from walking” (p. 335). This is supported and developed by Hedge (2005), who states that writing is more than producing accurate and complete sentences and phrases. Hedge states that writing is about guiding students to produce whole pieces of communication, to link and develop information, idea, or arguments for a particular reader or a group of readers.

### ***Writing and MI Theory***

Gardner's theory can have implications as far as teaching and assessment in general, and writing in particular, are concerned. Writing is one of the most challenging skills for Second Language (L2) learners to master and the important roles that one can play begin to evolve when we look at how the brain sets out to experience the nature of reading and writing (Qualter, Gardner, Pope, Hutchinson, & Whiteley, 2012). Gardner's (1983) theory has not yet made an impact on the teaching of writing, though it has influenced some innovative research like that of Grow (1990), which offered some activities in the classroom that tap into the different intelligences.

In spite of the growing number of studies (Arikan & Saricaoglu, 2009; Razmjou, 2008) investigating the relationship between MI and aspects of language learning, particularly learning language skills, there are mixed results considering the studies which investigated the MI and writing skill (Ahmadian & Hosseini, 2012; Akbari & Hosseini, 2007; Marefat, 2007; Sadeghi & Farzizadeh, 2012).

As Rahimpour (2007) claims, the L2 learner's performance differs from task to task. So, L2 learners' production will be different when they perform different task types. There are different ways of classifying task types. Alternatively, they can be classified according to the kind of cognitive activity involved; that is, the Prabhu's cognitive classification (Information-gap, opinion-gap, and reasoning-gap types of task). Nunan (2006) presents Prabhu's information-gap type of task as tasks in which there is a mismatch between the information possessed by different learners in a pair or group-work task. In some cases, one student has all the information (a one-way task); in others, each student has his or her own information (a two-way task). One example is pair work in which each member of the pair has a part of total information (for example, an incomplete picture) and attempts to convey it verbally to the other (p. 54).

MI has been the subject of investigation in several studies. Ahmadian and Hosseini (2012) conducted a study to investigate the possible relationship between EFL learners' writing performance and their performance on multiple intelligences. The instruments used were the Multiple Intelligence Developmental Scales (MIDAS), an instrument designed by Shearer (1996), and the participants' average scores on two writing tasks, as an index of writing products. The correlation analysis of the results revealed a statistically significant relationship between participants' MI and their performance on writing. In contrast, Sadeghi and Farzizadeh (2012) carried out a study aimed at finding the relationship between multiple intelligences and the writing ability of EFL learners. The participants were given Armstrong's MI questionnaire which used a Likert Scale. The participants' writing samples were also obtained using an IELTS writing task. Results obtained through Multiple Regression indicated that the components of MI did not have a significant relationship with the writing ability of the participants.

Most of the studies generally examined the relationship between students' MI and one of the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, this study aims at specifically investigating the relationship between students' MI and their performance on a specific type of writing task, information gap writing task, due to its certain characteristics in terms of cognitive activity involved. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, no work like the present study was done before, especially in Iran EFL context. Accordingly, the primary purpose of the present study was to investigate the possible relationships between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' MI and their performance on information-gap type of writing task. The significance of this study lies in the fact that it brings the fields of psychology and pedagogy together by considering the differences between different individuals regarding their intelligences.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

To meet the objective of the study, the following research question was addressed:

Is there any relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' Multiple Intelligences and their performance on information-gap type of writing task?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The initial participants of this study were sixty EFL Iranian university students, in three classes, including 30 males and 30 females, majoring in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at Islamic Azad University, Dezfoul branch, Khuzestan province, Iran. They were selected randomly from those Bachelor of Arts (BA) students who had recently passed the course of basic writing and it was supposed that they had the ability to perform the different writing tasks of IELTS practices. Moreover, to ensure the homogeneity of the participants in terms of their language proficiency, the researcher administered a Preliminary English Test (PET, 2005) as a pretest. From among the learners who took part in the testing session, 40 learners whose scores fell one Standard Deviation (SD) above and one SD below the mean were selected as homogeneous participants. Thus, the final test-takers were 40 participants, 17 males and 23 females. They were between the ages of 19-29 years old; all were Persian First Language (L1) speakers.

One ethical issue to deal with in the research was the use of students' personal information. Before collecting data, the participants had been informed that the results of questionnaires or performance on the tests would be used later for research purposes. However, they had been guaranteed confidentiality of data and anonymity of each participant in any future published report. Thus, no one had participated in this research against his or her will.

### ***Instrumentation***

The following instruments were utilized in this study:

#### ***Preliminary English Test (PET)***

The first instrument which was used in this study was Preliminary English Test (PET, 2005), a second level Cambridge ESOL exam for the intermediate level learners. PET is an exam for people who can use every day written and spoken English at an intermediate level. It has been accounted as an internationally valid proficiency test

that was used as a pretest for two purposes: First, to measure the overall language ability of participants and second, in order to homogenize and select the main participants of this study.

#### *Multiple Intelligence Developmental Assessment Scales (MIDAS)*

A questionnaire based on multiple intelligences, Multiple Intelligence Developmental Assessment Scales (MIDAS), was administered in order to identify the participants' multiple intelligences profiles. It is a self-report instrument of intellectual disposition designed by Shearer (1994) to provide an objective or reasonable measure of the multiple intelligences as reported by the person or by a knowledgeable informant. Gardner (1999) himself also recommends using it in Multiple Intelligences (MI) studies since it is reliable and valid. The Persian translated version of MIDAS questionnaire after piloting by the researchers was used in this study. The instrument includes 119 Likert-type (from a to f, with e being the highest and f being "I do not know") questions, taking 35 minutes to complete. Every question contains a "Does not apply" or "I don't know" option so that the respondent is not forced to choose an option that does not match his/her intended response. The questions cover eight areas of abilities, interest, skills and activities. There is no right or wrong response, and respondents are asked to read each item and select what they perceive as the best answer at that point in time in their life. The result of MIDAS had been intended to provide a reliable estimate to every participant's intellectual disposition in the eight intelligence domains. One hundred and nineteen items in the MIDAS inquires about everyday abilities wherein the examinees demonstrate their cognitive involvements and intellectual judgments. It should be mentioned that MIDAS scores are not absolute and it may change during the individuals' life as he/she grows up, and all the intelligences could be enhanced through training and practice (Gardner, 1983).

A number of studies on the reliability and validity of MIDAS (Shearer, 1996, 2006) have indicated that the MIDAS scales can provide a reasonable estimate of one's MI strengths and limitations that correspond with external rating and criteria. According to Shearer (1994) MIDAS is a valid questionnaire to explore a person's multiple intelligences. In the present study, as Table 2 indicates, Alpha reliability of the profile scores turned out to be as follows:

*Table 2: Reliability Statistics: Chronbach's Alpha for MIDAS*

	Chronbach Alpha	N of Item
Musical	.75	14
Kinesthetic	.68	13
Mathematic	.70	17
Spatial	.65	15
Linguistic	.82	20
Interpersonal	.85	18
Intrapersonal	.75	9
Natural	.80	13

#### *Information-gap Writing Task*

The current study used a writing task chosen from IELTS Practice Tests Plus2 (Terry & Wilson, 2007, pp. 106). here was one information-gap type of writing task, whose inter-rater reliability using Pearson correlation was calculated to be .86 (see Table 3). Thus, based on the significant inter-rater reliability of two raters' scoring, no need was felt for more raters, and the average of their scores was used in the data analysis.

*Table 3: Inter-rater Reliability Coefficients of two Raters*

Writing Task Type	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)
Information-gap	.86**	.000

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

*Information-gap* task was designed as a two-way task which requires both interaction and written text and expect an outcome (Ellis, 2003, p. 88). Students were paired randomly; each was given an information-gap task, including two different pictures of development of a small fishing village and its surrounding area into a large European tourist

resort. One of them asked some questions from his/her partner according to his/her own picture and wrote the answers. They didn't have permission to see each other's pictures and were asked to summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparison where relevant. They were also asked to avoid describing each picture individually. His/her partner exactly followed this process, and he/she created a piece of writing, too. All the pairs did this task. This type of task required learners to write an essay of about around 150 words and time limit for this task was 40 minutes.

#### *Writing Scale*

In the present study, the assessment is based on Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Harfield, & Hughey's (1981) criteria. Jacobs et al. (1981) developed a scale which is widely used in the research literature. The guidelines provided by these authors clearly encourage the evaluation and assessment based on communicative writing. The guidelines provided by Jacobs et al. (1981, pp. 28-53) contains five criteria: Content has the highest score (30), and the lowest score goes with mechanics (5), organization and vocabulary have the same score (20), and language use (25), which totally make 100.

#### *Procedure*

The procedure applied in this study was, firstly, the selection of participants from undergraduate English language students of Islamic Azad University, Dezfoul Branch. To this end, a cohort of 60 students including 30 males and 30 females were selected randomly. The PET (2005), test was employed to homogenize learners regarding their proficiency in English. Having administered a standard PET test, the researcher reduced the participants to 40 (17 males and 23 females) out of 60. Accordingly, participants whose scores fell one Standard Deviation above and below the mean were grouped together as a more homogeneous group (see Table 4 for descriptive statistics related to this test). After one week interval, the MIDAS questionnaire was administered and answer sheets were entered into SPSS 20 and sent to the designer of MIDAS, Dr Branton Shearer in the US, for scoring (see Table 5 for descriptive statistics related to this questionnaire). Then, the participants' scores on MI were obtained in the form of numeric values ranging from 0 to 100 (as defined by Dr. Shearer himself) for each type of intelligence.

One week later, participants were asked to write the composition (Information-gap type of writing task) around 150 words. They were paired randomly, each was given an information-gap task and they didn't see each other's pictures. One of them asked some questions from his/her partner according to his/her own picture and wrote the answers. Then, according to these answers he/she was supposed to create a piece of writing, reporting the main features, and make comparison where relevant. They were also asked to avoid describing each picture individually. His/her partner exactly followed this process, and he/she created a piece of writing, too. All the pairs did this task. The time limit for this task was 40 minutes.

In order to minimize the effect of scoring procedures, the participants' writing tasks were scored based on Jacobs et al.'s (1981) writing scale. Besides, these writing tasks were scored by two raters for determining the inter-rater reliability. The participants' writing scores were determined by adding up the individual scores of participants from different parts of the scale.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Regarding the analysis of the data, this study made use of descriptive and inferential statistics based on the research questions. This section initially presents the descriptive statistics for MIDAS and writing task and then provides the results of the data analysis for research hypothesis, then, it discusses the findings of the analysis.

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of participants' scores on Multiple Intelligences questionnaire. The mean scores, minimums, maximums, and standard deviations of the participants' Multiple Intelligences are shown in the following Table.



Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Scores on MIDAS

Intelligences	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
interpersonal					
intrapersonal	40	22	82	51.95	13.55
linguistic	40	25	79	51.06	13.41
mathematical	40	17	70	46.75	11.06
spatial	40	21	84	46.33	11.81
naturalist	40	19	77	41.85	13.25
kinesthetic	40	2	75	41.17	14.06
musical	40	13	81	40.93	14.89
Valid N (listwise)	40	7	69	36.97	14.30
	40				

The mean score of the participants' performance on information-gap type of writing task was 80.46. Standard Deviation of this task was estimated to be 11.83, while its Variance was 139.99. Table 5 shows descriptive statistics regarding participants' scores on information-gap type of writing task.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Scores on Information-gap Writing Task

Information-gap		
N	Valid	40
	Missing	0
Mean		80.46
Std. Deviation		11.83
Variance		139.99
Minimum		60.00
Maximum		100
Sum		3218.50

*Results of the Data Analysis for Testing Null Hypothesis:* There is no relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' Multiple Intelligences and their performance on information-gap type of writing task.

In order to investigate the relationship between the participants' Multiple Intelligences and their performance on information-gap type of writing task, the researcher conducted the Pearson Product Moment Correlation test (Table 6).

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Matrix between the Students' MI and Information-gap Type of Writing Task's Scores

	Musi	Kine	Math	Spat	Ling	Inte	Intr	Natu	Info
Musi	1								
Kine	.349*	1							
Math	.362*	.425**	1						
Spat	.421**	.592**	.693**	1					
Ling	.488**	.421**	.645**	.515**	1				
Inte	.317*	.383*	.482**	.321*	.610**	1			
Intr	.114	.427**	.618**	.451**	.455**	.634**	1		
Natu	.375*	.378*	.646**	.592**	.609**	.340*	.352*	1	
Info	.208	.182	.113	.223	.327*	.343*	.317*	.283	1

Musi= musical, Kine= Kinesthetic, Math= Mathematical, Spat= Spatial, Ling= Linguistic, Inte= Interpersonal, Intr= Intrapersonal, Natu= Natural, Info= Information-gap

The results showed that all intelligences positively correlate with information-gap type of writing task's scores; however, only linguistic intelligence ( $r=.327$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), interpersonal intelligence ( $r=.343$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and intrapersonal intelligence ( $r=.317$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) make statistically significant correlation with participants' performance on this type of writing task (Table 6). Therefore, the null hypothesis, there is no relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' Multiple Intelligences and their performance on information-gap type of writing task, was rejected.

### **Discussion**

In order to investigate the relationship between participants' multiple intelligences and their performance on information-gap type of writing task, the results of the study, based on the Pearson Product Moment Correlation, indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between the participants' performance on information-gap type of writing task and linguistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences ( $p<0.05$ ). Thus, the null hypothesis, there is no significant relationship between Iranian intermediate EFL learners' Multiple Intelligences and their performance on information-gap type of writing task, was rejected.

Linguistic intelligence, as one of intelligence types proposed by Gardner (1983), refers to the mental ability to perceive and generate written and spoken language. In Gardner's (1993) scheme, the verbal-linguistic intelligence does not make a direct reference to L2 learning. However, there seems to be a very plausible link as people with high verbal-linguistic intelligence are those that tend to think in words (Nolen, 2003), and have the ability to use language effectively both orally and in writing (Christison & Kennedy, 1999), that is to say, those who have a high level of sensitivity to sounds or phonology, sentence structure or syntax, meaning or semantics and illocutionary force or pragmatics (Armstrong, 1999).

Within this cognitive model (MI), "language is not seen as limited to 'linguistic' perspective but encompasses all aspects of communication" (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 117). For example, in role-play where learners may need to express their feelings while being considered of the feeling of others, linguistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences are needed (Arnold & Fonseca, 2004). Participants' performance on information-gap type of writing task, in which each member has a part of total information and there is a mismatch between the information possessed by different learners in pair or group-work (Nunan, 2006, p. 214), would be an example of role-play that needs the interaction of linguistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences simultaneously, as result of this study indicates.

According to Gardner (1999), interpersonal intelligence includes the sensitivity to observe and understand other people's inner thoughts and outward performance. Moreover, it is the ability to get along with others well and effectively communicate with people, verbally and nonverbally. Intrapersonal intelligence refers to the ability to clearly understand the inner working of oneself, such as moods, ideas, desires, intensions, nature and motivations and then to use such knowledge for directing or planning one's life or future. Interpersonal intelligence is connected to the ability to harmonize with others, to understand their perspectives and opinions, but also convince others in order to achieve personal objectives. Dornyei and Murphy (2003) explain, "from Vygotskian constructivist point of view, that learning happens inter-mentally first, between minds in interaction, and only later becomes one's own learning, intra-mentally" (p. 86).

According to Gardner (1993), most tasks require the simultaneous use of several intelligences in order to be completed successfully. Interaction between linguistic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence in information-gap types of writing tasks according to the findings of the present study shows the fact that was proposed by Gardner about simultaneous effect of several intelligences in different types of task.

The findings of this study are in line with Ahmadian and Hosseini's (2012) findings, which used MIDAS scale to assess the learners' Multiple Intelligences, and Jacobs et al.'s (1981) scale to assess their writing. However, their writing performance was different from the writing performance in this study. Conversely, the findings of this study

do not confirm the results of Sadeghi and Farzizadeh (2012). They used Armstrong's MI questionnaire and the writing scores were obtained from an essay of IELTS writing task. Multiple regression analysis of the results of their study indicated that the components of MI did not have a significant relationship with the writing ability of the participants. On the other hand, Marefat (2007) utilized McKenzie (1999)'s MI Inventory to assess learners' Multiple Intelligences, and the learners' writing scores were obtained from three essays written for a writing course.

One of the possible explanations for the discrepancies among the results of different studies concerning the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' MI and their writing skill can be the type of MI scale and written proficiency scale which is used. Many researchers at different times, in different conditions used different instruments to conduct MI based studies in the field of Language Learning. Some results were in line and some were at odd with other researchers' works. In short, instruments being used, participants and their study background and probably their ages can affect the results of a study.

## CONCLUSIONS

Differences between individuals can be describes in innumerable ways which can accordingly categorize each person on the basis of his/her particularly prominent intelligence types. What this means in educational contexts is that different learning styles are accompanied with different intelligences in individuals (Yenice & Aktamis, 2010). What language learning concentrates on does not merely concern receiving instruction or using different information types effectively; it also engages teaching critical and analytical thinking skills when it comes to the practical use of the information (Albitz, 2007). The researchers hopes this study is to be continued with a larger number of samples and other learners from different L1 backgrounds to find out if similar results can be obtained. In this study, participants were intermediate level of English language learners and therefore the results might not be generalizable to the learners who belong to other levels of language proficiency. Thus, similar studies can be carried out with students of different levels of language proficiency like, beginners or advanced. With further research, the correlation between MI and performance on other different types of tasks can be verified. The findings of this study would be of great interest for most language instructors, who are interested in improving the writing performance of the students by giving them various kinds of classroom activities.

I would like to conclude by Gardner's comment warning us that the most important task in the new millennium is not just hone our various intelligences and use them properly, but figure out how intelligence and morality can work together to create a world in which a great variety of people will want to live (1999, as cited in Alten, 2001).

Certain limitations and delimitations are imposed on this study. The first limitation was related to the sample size; the participants were limited to 40 students, including 17 males and 32 females from Islamic Azad University, Dezful Branch, to be accessible more easily in a given time as soon as possible. Second, due to not having access to standard writing skill test, the reading and writing sections of PET language proficiency test was used for homogeneity purposes. One of the delimitations of this study was that it was narrowed down to one of the skills among the other language skills (i.e., writing). Furthermore, the participants of this study were all university students; thus, generalization to other levels and communities would not be appropriate without further research.

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THE EFFECT OF TEACHER'S DISCOURSE ON IRANIAN INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS'  
WRITING SKILL

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the effectiveness of teacher's discourse on Iranian intermediate learners writing skill. This paper sheds light on some important aspects of teacher-student interactions in writing skill. Thirty two EFL learners were cooperated and presenting their study activities was analyzed and teachers' voices were audio-recorded. Then, they were randomly divided into two groups, experimental and control groups. In both groups Primarily English Test were taken as pretest and posttest According to the result of the posttest which were calculated the results demonstrate that teacher's discourse had positive effects on intermediate learners writing skill. in addition the seven factors of writing skill such as the knowledge of relevance, organization, cohesion, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and spelling were measured in two groups at pretest and posttest.

**KEYWORDS:** Teacher's discourse, knowledge of relevance, organization, cohesion, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and spelling were measured in two groups at pretest and posttest.

**INTRODUCTION**

In recent years, the area of foreign language education has received a lot of attention in terms of factors influencing learning. During the past few years a lot of research has been done in order to analyses the relevance of classroom interaction when learners are acquiring a second language.

As noted by Ortega (2004: 8), the SL-bias of writing scholarship 'diminishes the capacity of L2 writing as a field to produce theoretically robust knowledge that can be useful in improving L2 writing across different settings'

Language existed long before writing, emerging probably simultaneously with sapience, abstract thought and the Genus Homo. In my opinion, the signature event that separated the emergence of palaeo humans from their anthropoid progenitors was not tool-making but a rudimentary oral communication that replaced the hoots and education.

Writing in the mother tongue is aching for many students, but when it comes to writing in the second language the students' difficulty and pain are deteriorated (Gilmore, 2009). Writing is a powerful way of thinking. While writing essays, students learn things about both themselves and life and can convey their thoughts and feelings to others. It can provide the opportunity to self-develop and has effects on the change of world. Writing is also a tool to be successful at school and to find a good job in the future (Bradley-Johnson & Lesiak, 1989). According to the National Educational Statistics Centre, people from every kind of profession have to communicate intricate thoughts and information in the form of lucid and concise writing. Writing is a tool by which people reveal their knowledge (Graham & Harris, 2005). Writing is defined as a behavior including various closely interconnected complex skills such as punctuation, hand writing, spelling, creativity, and self-expression (Shapiro, 1996) as well as specific writing components such as grammar, mechanics, production, order of writing, linguistics, and understanding. Given the complexity of writing, it is very difficult to determine which interrelated special skills are most important and which tasks are most difficult for students to accomplish (Bradley-Johnson & Lesiak, 1989).

Teaching writing English as second or foreign language (L2) writing is different from teaching other language skills in two ways. First, even as late as 1970s, L2 writing was not seen as a language skill to be taught to learners. As an alternative, it was used as a support skill in language learning to, for example, practice handwriting, write answers to



grammar and reading exercises, and write dictation. In fact, while graduate programmes in TESOL frequently present ED courses in other skill areas, almost no coursework was accessible in teaching L2 writing. Second, as the theory and practice of L2 composition teaching slowly expanded, it pursued the way of US native English speaker (NES) composition theory. Only lately has English L2 composition theory and pedagogy began to suggest English first language (L1) researchers and teacher perception and pedagogical practices (Silva et al. as cited in Carter & Nunan, 2001).

Writing skills are important to adult learners for employment, further education, participation as citizens, and personal fulfillment. First, writing is important in a wide range of occupations. Mikulecky (1998) found that significant percentages of workers in nearly all job categories, including employees without a college education, needed to write regularly as part of their job. Only a quarter to a third of workers reported that they never wrote memos or reports. Second, writing ability is important in order for learners to advance educationally.

Dvorak (1986) draws two important conclusions about writing in a foreign language: 1) “writing improvements are unrelated to grammar study,” and 2) “intensive correction of student writing, which has a negative effect on writing in terms of student attitudes and motivation, has little positive effect at all” (151-152).

Teaching writing skill at intermediate level is a complex process and the focus on the lexical area should occur at the beginning of this process (in a stage called guided paragraph writing; paragraphs can be analysed as compositions in miniature). The need to focus on students’ lexical competence by means of several varied examples and exercises is the result of frequent failure made in the choice of words, and its effect has to be making students aware that the choice of words is vital for any piece of writing and that there is at least theoretically a best word for every situation writing can be a significant source of personal satisfaction (Gillespie, 2001).

## REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

What is a writing system? Language may be spoken, signed or written. Each of these modes of production may be described in terms of systems at the level of syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse, the lexicon, phonology, etc. ‘Writing systems’ does not then refer to writing in the broad sense of anything that has to do with the written language; rather, writing systems are how people implement their knowledge of language through written symbols, in a way parallel to the disciplines of phonology and phonetics that deal with spoken implementation of language (Vivian Cook, Jyotsna Vaid & Benedetta Bassetti, 2009).

### *Theory Of Writing*

Writing skills are important to adult learners for employment, further education, participation as citizens, and personal fulfillment. First, writing is important in a wide range of occupations. Mikulecky (1998) found that significant percentages of workers in nearly all job categories, including employees without a college education, needed to write regularly as part of their job. Only a quarter to a third of workers reported that they never wrote memos or reports. Second, writing ability is important in order for learners to advance educationally. Adult learners in the United States, for example, can earn a high-school equivalency diploma by passing the GED (General Educational Development) examination, which assesses writing skills with a multiple-choice skills section and an essay. Students who continue on to postsecondary education will need writing skills in many of their classes. In addition, writing can be a means of engaging with public issues as citizens.

Increased participation in politics, volunteer efforts, and other public activities is an important goal of education in a democracy. Finally, writing can be a significant source of personal satisfaction (Gillespie, 2001). The Internet offers dramatically increased opportunities for ordinary citizens to use writing in the pursuit of both political and personal aims.

Teaching writing skill at advanced level is a complex process and the focus on the lexical area should occur at the beginning of this process (in a stage called guided paragraph writing; paragraphs can be analysed as compositions in miniature). The need to focus on students’ lexical competence by means of several varied examples and exercises is the result of frequent failure made in the choice of words, and its effect has to be making students aware that the choice of words is vital for any piece of writing and that there is at least theoretically a best word for every situation (MacArthur, 2007).

Writing, when it was used, was mainly for purposes of transcription. Even with the current shift towards a more communicative view of language, writing is still not emphasized in most foreign language classes. Dvorak (1986), claims that foreign language textbooks in the last twenty-five years have linked written composition to advanced grammar or to conversation—rather than focusing on compositional skills such as organization, clarity, and manipulating various functions (i.e., describing, informing, persuading). Dvorak also discusses the difference between written and spoken language, the relationship between writing in a first language and writing in a second language, how writing fits into Krashen's language acquisition/learning model, and writing as a developmental process (145-167).

An English as a foreign language (EFL) setting epitomizes the situated nature of writing. The writing of EFL students is affected not only by their first language (L1), but also by the educational context where they learn to write. This socially and culturally characterized context provides meta knowledge about writing (i.e. view of audience and goals of writing) as well as linguistic and textual knowledge, affecting the ways in which students process and produce writing.

Recognizing that L1 writing instruction/experience plays an important role in the development of students' writing in an EFL situation, for the last decade we have conducted a number of studies to examine possible effects of such experience. The conceptual, linguistic and rhetorical choices individual writers make when writing essays constitute part of the composing process, which reflects 'ideational, interpersonal and textual positions arising from the writer's experience in participating in genres and discourses' (Roca et al., 2002: 47).

According to Barnett (2000), both students and teachers are commonly frustrated over the number of errors and the lack of improvement in student writing. In this article, she looks at how teachers traditionally assign and react to student writing. She claims that students may become more involved in editing their own work if the teacher does less correcting. She suggests that teachers look at writing as a process, or a series of drafts, including prewriting, writing, and rewriting. Less attention to correction of grammatical errors, together with real attention to content, leads ultimately to better student compositions. Barnett claims that the advantages to both students and the teachers of process writing and writing for communication include greater quantity, higher student motivation, and more efficient use of grading time.

Brookes and Grundy's (1990) approach to teaching writing "combines communicative practice, an integrated approach and humanistic principles." For them, communicative language features six elements: 1) having something meaningful to say, 2) reaching an audience, 3) working in small groups, 4) working collaboratively, 5) developing register awareness, and 6) talking naturally. The authors define humanistic principles as promoting freedom to express one's self, recognizing the learner as a resource, ensuring the learner freedom from authority, valuing self-expression as intelligent, recognizing the centrality of personal discovery, and respecting individual learning styles. Brookes and Grundy's book developed out of teaching "English for Academic Purposes." As such, they have worked with more advanced language students. Exercises are long, typically taking thirty to fifty minutes, though many could be adapted to a much shorter time span. Almost all of the exercises are based on pair or group work, and outside evaluation is discouraged. Process writing is stressed—most exercises are based on the language of argumentation, comparison and contrast, etc., rather than on solving particular grammatical problems.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES**

To be more exact, the following questions have been proposed and attempts will be made to provide acceptable answers.

Q1: Does teacher's discourse quality have an impact on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' writing skill?

Q2: Does teacher's discourse quality have statistically different impacts on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' knowledge of relevance, organization, cohesion, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and spelling in Writing?

On the basis of the research questions above, the following null-hypotheses were formulated.

HO1: There is no statistically significant difference between the writing of Iranian EFL intermediate learners who are exposed to the teacher's discourse quality and that of those who aren't.

HO2: There is no statistically significant difference in the knowledge of relevance, organization, cohesion, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and spelling between the Iranian EFL intermediate learners who are exposed to the teacher's discourse quality and those who are not.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

Population can be defined as a group to whom the results of the study are generalized (Wallen, 2007). Based on the focus of the study, the participants of this research were the students of "Lobab" institute. The sample of this research was purposive sampling which was taken based on certain consideration, as Wallen (2007, p. 100) stated: Researchers assume they can use their knowledge of the population to judge whether or not a particular sample will be representative. (2007, p.10) At the first stage, 32 EFL learners participated in the study. They were all English learners at Lobab English Institute who had enrolled for intermediate English classes. According to the previous course that they had passed in this institute, the participants were at intermediate level, so the researcher didn't use any test to homogenize the learners, then, were randomly divided into two groups of 17 and 15, namely control group and experimental group. The result included two classes as the sample of the study. Among all 32 participants, there were all females learners, and all of them were from Iran, living in Tehran. The age range of the participants was between 16 and 22. Some of these participants were high school students and some of them were college students. The major of college students were not English. However, all of them had at least two years of English learning background.

### ***Instrument***

In this study, several instruments of evaluation of the participants' writing skill were used. These means will be explained in this section. There were also rating scales for each of these instruments which were further calculated by the software SPSS 17.00. The next instruments were two parallel tests, namely a pre-test and a post-test of PET, the purpose of which were to measure the probable improvement of the writing abilities of the learners of the study as a result of teacher's discourse in their writing.

#### ***Pre-test and post-test***

Both pre-test and post-test were pet exam. Pre-test and post-test were two parallel tests, namely a pre-test and a post-test, the purpose of which were to measure the probable improvement of the writing abilities of the learners of the study as a result of exercising teacher's discourse.

#### ***Pretest***

The pre-test was conducted to identify the skill of the students in writing before the treatment. It was given to both experimental and control groups at the first session before the treatment. The test was in the form of the written test (PET). The pre-test was given in the first session in order to find out the personal information and each learner's ability before the treatment were conducted. They must write it about their favorite movie in 20 minutes.

#### ***Posttest***

The post-test was principally similarly as the pre-test. It was used to measure the effectiveness of teacher's discourse in improving students' writing ability. It was given after the treatment was done. Meanwhile, the post-test was conducted at the end of the teaching learning technique process in order to find out the effect of the teacher's discourse on students writing, they must write it about their if they were teacher what did they do, in 20 minutes.

### ***Procedures and Data Analysis***

The teaching writing procedure for both experimental and control groups were carried out by using teacher's discourse or teacher's activities and interaction.

Fraenkle (2007) defined instrumentation as the whole process of preparing to collect data in a research. There were two kinds of instruments which were employed in this research. They were recording, writing test.

Although both experimental and control groups got the same procedures, each group were treated with different teaching methods in six sessions, each session was 60 minutes. The experimental group was taught by using the teacher's discourse and the control group was taught by using conventional technique.

The first, in the first session the pretest (writing part of PET) was given to both experimental and control groups, they took 20 minutes. The pre-test was conducted to identify the skill of the students in writing before the treatment.

The result of the test were collected and analyzed as the preliminary data about the students writing ability. Second, the experimental group got a treatment within 6 sessions. The experimental group received teacher's discourse technique. The control group didn't receive this treatment. Third, after the six sessions the posttest was given to both experimental and control groups to find out whether both groups make different results or not. The post-test was principally similar as the pre-test. It was used to measure the effectiveness of teacher's discourse in improving students' writing ability. When the treatment in experimental group was performed, they received post-test.

The score of the students' tests were used to know the effectiveness of the teacher's discourse to improve students writing ability. They were collected through writing test, pretest and posttest which were conducted to both experimental and control groups and also corrected the writing according to the PET test of writing. Two raters scored the tests. So, the inter-rater reliability happened in this research.

Scarvia et al (1975) stated that a test is valid if it measures what has to be measured. Since the study was conducted to measure the writing skill, the test was in the form of the written test (PET writing skill). The advisors were also asked to look at the content and format of the instrument and judge whether or not it is appropriate (Wallen, 2007). In the terms of reliability test, the interrater reliability was used in which rater are required to make judgments on the language produced by the students. Interrater reliability is essentially a variation of the equivalent forms type of reliability in that the scores are usually produced by two raters and a correlation coefficient is calculated between them (Brown J.D., 1988). The English teacher was asked to be a rater accompanying the researcher in the giving scores to the written test. The scores of the two raters then be calculated using correlation analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To determine precisely to what extent the teacher's discourse can result in development of writing proficiency, at first the Mean, Standard deviation and Standard Error of Measurement of the participants' scores on the Preliminary English Test (PET), Pre-test (PRT), and Post-test (POS) are shown.

### *Pretest*

The descriptive statistics of the scores of two raters in two groups are set forth in Table 1.

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Scores of Two Raters for Control and Experimental Groups in Pretest*

Pretest	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Variance
Control (R1)	17	4	11	15	13.35	1.498	2.243
Control (R2)	17	6	9	15	13.18	1.845	3.404
Experimental (R1)	15	5	11	16	13.93	1.751	3.067
Experimental (R2)	15	5	10	15	13.33	1.397	1.952

### *Descriptive Statistics for Control Group in Pretest*

Before the treatment, the researcher used a pretest to check the participants' writing performance before experiencing the treatment. Table 1 represents the descriptive statistics of participants in control group at pretest on writing performance and Table 2 represents the descriptive statistics of participants in control group at pretest on writing performance. A look at this table hands on that the number of students in control group is 17. The mean score is 13.265 with standard deviation of 1.5321.

**Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Participants in Control Group at Pretest on Writing performance**

Pretest	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Variance
Control Group	17	4.5	10.5	15.0	13.265	14.000	14.000	1.5321	2.347

**Descriptive Statistics for Experimental Group in Pretest**

The following Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of participants in experimental group at pretest on writing performance.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Participants in Experimental Group at Pretest on Writing performance**

Pretest	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Variance
Experimental Group	15	5.0	10.5	15.5	13.633	14.000	14.000	1.4201	2.017

**Table 4: Reliability Statistics of Writing Pretest (Piloting procedure)**

Test	Number of Participants	Pretest
Reliability Method	31	Inter-rater (R1-R2)
Reliability	28	$r = .81$

**Test of Normality Analyses of Pretest**

Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality was utilized to the normality of participants' writing at pretest. The result of this analysis is set forth in Table 5.

**Table 5: Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality of Participants' Writing Scores at Pretest**

Pretest	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Control Group	.894	15	.097
Experimental Group a	.935	15	.325

As it is shown Table 5, Sig. of participants' writing scores for control and experimental groups at pretest are .09 and .32 respectively, that are both higher than that of the selected significance i.e. .05. Therefore, we can state that two groups of scores are normally distributed. Accordingly, parametric independent-sample *t*-tests was run to compare the writing mean score of control and experimental group before the treatment. The justification for using independent *t*-test is that Mackey and Gass (2005) believe that "independent *t*-test can be used when one wants to determine if the means of two separate groups are significantly different from one another" (p. 272)

In order to compare the mean scores of participants in both control and experimental groups at pretest, first the Levene's Test was used to determine the equality of variances and to show that the data are homogeneous. Then an

independent *t*-test was applied to determine the equality of means. The computation of this statistical analysis is manifested in Table 5.

Table 6 demonstrates that the hypothesis of equal of variances is supported because Sig. between control and experimental groups on writing test was .42 that is more than the chosen significance level for this study, .05 ( $P > \alpha$ )

### Posttest

The descriptive statistics of the scores of two raters in two groups are set forth in Table 6.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Scores of Two Raters for Control and Experimental Groups in Posttest

Posttest	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Variance
Control (R1)	17	5	11	16	13.35	1.579	2.493
Control (R2)	17	7	10	17	14.12	1.799	3.235
Experimental (R1)	15	4	13	17	15.20	1.320	1.743
Experimental (R2)	15	4	13	17	15.60	1.242	1.543

### Descriptive Statistics for Control Group in Posttest

Table 7 indicates that the number of students in control group is 17. The mean score is 13.735 with standard deviation of 1.6309. Also, the range of scores which is the difference between maximum and minimum score is 6.0.

Table 7: Descriptive statistics of Participants' Scores in Control Group at Posttest on Writing Performance

Posttest	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Variance
Control Group	17	6.0	10.5	16.5	13.735	13.500	13.500	1.6309	2.660

### Descriptive Statistics for Experimental Group in Posttest

Table 8 presents the descriptive statistics of participants in Experimental group at posttest on writing performance.

Table 8: Descriptive statistics of Participant's' Scores in Experimental Group at Posttest on Writing Performance

Posttest	N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	Mode	SD	Variance
Experimental Group	15	4.0	13.0	17.0	15.400	15.500	14.5	1.1982	1.436



A look at this table shows that the number of students in experimental group is 15. The mean score is 13.0 with standard deviation of 1.436. Also, the range of scores which is the difference between maximum and minimum score is 4.

Table 9: Reliability Statistics of Writing Posttest (Piloting procedure)

Test	Number of Participants	Posttest
Reliability Method	31	Inter-rater (R1-R2)
Reliability	28	$r = .80$

#### Test of Normality Analyses of Posttest

The results of this analysis in Table 10 express that Sig. of participants' writing scores for control and experimental groups at posttest are .29 and .57 respectively, that are both larger than that of the selected significance i.e. .05. Therefore, it can be claimed that two groups of scores are normally distributed and parametric one-sample  $t$ -test was run to compare the writing and mean score of control and experimental groups after the treatment to test the hypotheses of this study.

Table 10: Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality of Participants' Writing Scores at Posttest

Posttest	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Experimental Group	.933	15	.298
Control Group	.953	15	.578

In order to compare the mean scores of writing pretest in both control and experimental groups, first the Levene's test is used to determine the equality of variances and to show that the data are homogeneous. Then the  $T$ -test is used to determine the equality of means.

As it is shown in table 10 the hypothesis of equal of variances is proved because the Sig. is .26 which is higher than  $\alpha = 0.05$

Table 11: Independent Samples Test to Compare the Writing Score of Control and Experimental Groups at Posttest

Writing Posttest	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. 2-tailed	Mean Diff.	SED	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	1.301	.263	-3.252	30	.003	-1.6647	.5120	-2.7103	-.6191

Table 11 demonstrates that Sig. ( $p$  value) which is .003 is less than .05 ( $P < \alpha$ ). Additionally, the  $t$ -observed which is 3.25 is greater than the  $t$ -critical at the 0.05 level of significance, 2.00. So these reflect significant difference between the mean writing score of control and experimental after treatment. Therefore, the first null hypothesis of

this study which states that “teachers’ discourse quality has no impact on Iranian intermediate EFL learners writing skill” is **rejected**. So we can claim that teachers’ discourse quality affects Iranian intermediate EFL learners writing skill. As it is clear in Figure 4.6, it graphically illustrates the comparison between mean writing score of control and experimental groups at posttest.

### *Investigation of Seven factors*

To analyze the seven factors of marking writing test, MANOVA was applied. The reason for using MANOVA is Mackey and Gass’ (2005) belief that: The MANOVA is the family of analysis of variance. It differs from an MANOVA in that it has more than one dependent variable. In order to appropriately use a multivariate analysis of variance, there has to be justification for believing that the dependent variables are related to one another” (p. 272).

*Table 12: Descriptive Statistics for Seven Factors of Writing at Pretest*

	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Relevance (Pretest)	Control	2.059	.4638	17
	Experimental	2.033	.4806	15
	Total	2.047	.4642	32
Organization (Pretest)	Control	1.794	.4351	17
	Experimental	1.933	.3200	15
	Total	1.859	.3859	32
Coherence (Pretest)	Control	1.912	.4755	17
	Experimental	1.833	.3086	15
	Total	1.875	.4016	32
Vocabulary (Pretest)	Control	1.824	.4309	17
	Experimental	1.900	.3873	15
	Total	1.859	.4063	32
Grammar (Pretest)	Control	1.882	.2811	17
	Experimental	1.900	.3873	15
	Total	1.891	.3296	32
Punctuation (Pretest)	Control	1.735	.4372	17
	Experimental	1.933	.2582	15
	Total	1.828	.3726	32
Spelling (pretest)	Control	2.059	.1661	17
	Experimental	2.100	.2070	15

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	Total	1.891	.3296	32
Punctuation (Pretest)	Control	1.735	.4372	17
	Experimental	1.933	.2582	15
	Total	1.828	.3726	32
Spelling (pretest)	Control	2.059	.1661	17
	Experimental	2.100	.2070	15
	Total	2.078	.1845	32

Table 13 : Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

	F	df1	df2	Sig.
Relevance	.186	1	30	.670
Organization	3.542	1	30	.080
Cohesion	.446	1	30	.509
Vocabulary	.560	1	30	.460
Grammar	.274	1	30	.604
Punctuation	10.718	1	30	.003
Spelling	1.593	1	30	.217

Levene's test was run to investigate the equality of variances among the dependent variables at pretest. The Sig. for six of them is more than .05 reflecting that these six factors have equal variances in control and experimental groups and therefore are homogeneous. However, the Sig. of punctuation in Leven's test showed values of .003 which reflects that this variable is not homogeneous in control and experimental groups. MANOVA in Table 14 was performed to investigate seven different factors in writing pretest. The dependent variables which were used are: relevance, organization, cohesion, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. The independent variable was group (control & experimental). There was not a statistically significant difference between mean score of control and experimental groups on the dependent variables, since  $F(7, 24) = .49, p = .83$ ; Wilks' Lambda = .87; partial eta squared (effect size) = .12 that is much low.

Table 14: MANOVA Results for Comparing Seven Factors of Writing between Control and Experimental at Pretest

Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.996	819.172	7.000	24.000	.000	.996
	Wilks' Lambda	.004	819.172	7.000	24.000	.000	.996
	Hotelling's Trace	238.925	819.172	7.000	24.000	.000	.996
	Roy's Largest Root	238.925	819.172	7.000	24.000	.000	.996
Group	Pillai's Trace	.125	.491	7.000	24.000	.832	.125
	Wilks' Lambda	.875	.491	7.000	24.000	.832	.125
	Hotelling's Trace	.143	.491	7.000	24.000	.832	.125
	Roy's Largest Root	.143	.491	7.000	24.000	.832	.125

Table 15 :Descriptive Statistics for Seven Factors of Writing at Posttest

	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Relevance	Control	2.206	.5321	17
	Experimental	2.300	.3684	15
	Total	2.250	.4579	32
Organization	Control	1.971	.4135	17
	Experimental	2.000	.3780	15
	Total	1.984	.3911	32
Cohesion	Control	1.912	.4414	17
	Experimental	2.100	.2070	15
	Total	2.000	.3592	32
Vocabulary	Control	1.971	.2144	17
	Experimental	2.467	.4806	15
	Total	2.203	.4374	32
Grammar	Control	1.941	.3001	17
	Experimental	2.100	.4309	15
	Total	2.016	.3699	32
Punctuation	Control	1.853	.3859	17
	Experimental	2.100	.2803	15
	Total	1.969	.3578	32
Spelling	Control	1.882	.3321	17
	Experimental	2.333	.4880	15
	Total	2.094	.4655	32

MANOVA in Table 16 was performed to investigate seven different factors in writing posttest. The dependent variables which were used are: relevance, organization, cohesion, vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, and spelling. The independent variable was group (control & experimental). There was a statistically significant difference between mean score of control and experimental groups on the dependent variables, since  $F(7, 24) = 3.41$ ,  $p = .01$ ; Wilks' Lambda = .50; partial eta squared = .49.

Table 16: MANOVA Results for Comparing Factors of Writing between Two Groups at Posttest

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.993	455.840 <sup>a</sup>	7.000	24.000	.000	.993	
	Wilks' Lambda	.007	455.840 <sup>a</sup>	7.000	24.000	.000	.993	
	Hotelling's Trace	132.953	455.840 <sup>a</sup>	7.000	24.000	.000	.993	
	Roy's Largest Root	132.953	455.840 <sup>a</sup>	7.000	24.000	.000	.993	
Group	Pillai's Trace	.499	3.417 <sup>a</sup>	7.000	24.000	.011	.499	
	Wilks' Lambda	.501	3.417 <sup>a</sup>	7.000	24.000	.011	.499	
	Hotelling's Trace	.996	3.417 <sup>a</sup>	7.000	24.000	.011	.499	
	Roy's Largest Root	.996	3.417 <sup>a</sup>	7.000	24.000	.011	.499	

Table 17: Post-hoc MANOVA Results for Comparing Seven Factors of Writing between Control and Experimental at Posttest

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Squared	Eta
Group	Relevance	.071	1	.071	.329	.570	.011	
	Organization	.007	1	.007	.044	.836	.001	
	Cohesion	.282	1	.282	2.278	.142	.048	
	Vocabulary	1.961	1	1.961	14.824	.001	.331	
	Grammar	.201	1	.201	1.492	.231	.037	
	Punctuation	.486	1	.486	4.190	.040	.123	
	Spelling	1.621	1	1.621	9.537	.004	.241	
Error	Relevance	6.429	30	.214				
	Organization	4.735	30	.158				
	Cohesion	3.718	30	.124				
	Vocabulary	3.969	30	.132				
	Grammar	4.041	30	.135				
	Punctuation	3.482	30	.116				
	Spelling	5.098	30	.170				

When the results for the dependent variables were considered separately via Tests of Between-Subjects Effects, the difference among all seven factors was not statistically significant. The relevance, organization, cohesion, and grammar were **not** significantly different between control and experimental groups, because the Sig. for them were .57, .83, .14, .23 respectively that are more than .05 ( $p > \alpha$ ). However, the three other factors i.e. vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling were significantly different between the two groups since the Sig. for these three factors were .001 with the effect size (partial eta squared) of .33, .04 with the effect size (partial eta squared) of .12, and .24 respectively that are less than .05 ( $p < \alpha$ ).

## CONCLUSION

According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997), discourse is a “social practice”. However, this is only one way of referring to discourse. In fact, Fairclough also refers to discourse as “the kind of language used within a specific field, such as political or scientific discourse”. He also uses the word “discourse” as a count noun (hence there are terms such as *a discourse* or *discourses*) which refers to “a way of speaking which gives meaning to experiences from a particular perspective” (Fairclough, 1993: 138; reprinted in Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002: 66-67). This last sense of discourse means that there are several different discourses which can be distinguished from one another,



such as “a feminist discourse”, “a neoliberal discourse”, or “an environmentalist discourse” (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2002: 67).

The study of discourse has developed in a variety of disciplines— sociolinguistics, anthropology, sociology, and social psychology. Thus discourse analysis takes different theoretical perspectives and analytic approaches: speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics, ethnography of communication, pragmatics, conversation analysis, and variation analysis (Schiffrin, 1994).

According to Gee (1999), DA should be viewed as more than linguistic study. It is also “a matter of taking, negotiating and contesting perspectives created in and through language within social activities” (Gee, 1999: 4), e.g. educational activities. It must be emphasized, however, that FL instructors can not use everything that discourse analysts put forth (McCarthy, 1991). They should bear in mind that “there are many different approaches to discourse and none of them is uniquely “right” (Gee, 1999:5). Many scholars suggest (e.g. Kramsch, 1985; Kramsch, 1993; McCarthy, 1991; Hatch, 1992; McCarthy & Carter, 1994; Kern, 2000; Hall, 2002) that every time teachers select a text for presenting in class, they should select an appropriate type of DA-based activities always keeping in mind that 1) “no method of literary analysis can pretend to be neutral or objective” (Burton, 1982:194) and that 2) DA activities should permit language learners to be active participants in the negotiation of meaning.

The term classroom discourse refers to the language that teachers and students use to communicate with each other in the classroom. Talking, or conversation, is the medium through which most teaching takes place, so the study of classroom discourse is the study of the process of face-to-face classroom teaching. Current views of how students learn, derived from sociocultural theory, challenge us to consider a broad range of factors that contribute to elective teaching and learning. Sociocultural theory, originated by the work of Vygotsky (1962,1978), maintains that cognitive change must be viewed as a social process with language playing a critical role in learning and development.

The earliest systematic study of classroom discourse was reported in 1910 and used stenographers to make a continuous record of teacher and student talk in high school classrooms. The first use of audiotape recorders in classrooms was reported in the 1930s, and during the 1960s there was a rapid growth in the number of studies based on analysis of transcripts of classroom discourse. In 1973, Barak Rosenshine and Norma Furst described seventy-six different published systems for analyzing classroom discourse.

It soon became clear from these early studies that the verbal interaction between teachers and students had an underlying structure that was much the same in all classrooms, and at all grade levels, in English-speaking countries. Essentially, a teacher asks a question, one or two students answer, the teacher comments on the students' answers (sometimes summarizing what has been said), and then asks a further question. This cyclic pattern repeats itself, with interesting variations, the study of discourse, in general, is broad, with wide-ranging contributions from linguists, psychologists, and educators. Such actions are referred to as the teacher's discourse moves. With the growing number of individuals learning English, researchers and teachers should take into account significant aspects of classroom discourse. Kumaravadivelu (2003) discussed that “our first and foremost duty as teachers is to maximize learning opportunities for our learners” (p. 44). throughout the course of a lesson (Cazaden, 2000).

The term teacher may refer to anyone having a recognized role of managing authority in the classroom, including teaching assistants but generally not students. Students may temporarily take on a "teaching "role, but teachers have a special status with the authority to manage classroom discourse in terms of content (topic, task) and structure (small group, whole class), as well as to set physical and temporal boundaries (available tools and time) (Douglas,2000).

The term teacher may refer to anyone having a recognized role of managing authority in the classroom, including teaching assistants but generally not students. Students may temporarily take on a "teaching "role, but teachers have a special status with the authority to manage classroom discourse in terms of content (topic, task) and structure (small group, whole class), as well as to set physical and temporal boundaries (available tools and time) (Douglas,2000). Teachers play a key role in promoting interactions among students and engaging them in the learning process, and cooperative learning is widely recognized as a pedagogical practice that can be employed in classrooms to stimulate students' interest in learning through their involvement with their peers. When children work cooperatively, they learn to give and receive information and develop new ideas and perspectives on how others think and communicate in socially appropriate ways. It is through interacting with others in reciprocal

dialogues that children learn to use language differently to explain new ideas and realities and, in so doing, to construct new ways of thinking and feeling (Mercer, 1996). Cooperative learning provides opportunities for children to actively interact with others, negotiate new understandings, and appropriate new and creative ways of thinking about topics under discussion (King, 1999).

Writing skills are important to adult learners for employment, further education, participation as citizens, and personal fulfillment. First, writing is important in a wide range of occupations. Mikulecky (1998) found that significant percentages of workers in nearly all job categories, including employees without a college education, needed to write regularly as part of their job. Only a quarter to a third of workers reported that they never wrote memos or reports. Second, writing ability is important in order for learners to advance educationally. Adult learners in the United States, for example, can earn a high-school equivalency diploma by passing the GED (General Educational Development) examination, which assesses writing skills with a multiple-choice skills section and an essay. Students who continue on to postsecondary education will need writing skills in many of their classes. In addition, writing can be a means of engaging with public issues as citizens. Increased participation in politics, volunteer efforts, and other public activities is an important goal of education in a democracy. Finally, writing can be a significant

source of personal satisfaction (Gillespie, 2001). The Internet offers dramatically increased opportunities for ordinary citizens to use writing in the pursuit of both political and personal aims. This study suggests that the teacher's discourse can be fruitful for writing in the classroom, thus, it is assumed that whilst interactions between learners are adequate for improving "interactive competence" (see He & Young 1998: 6–8), interactions with a teacher enhance learners' experience of more complex discourse. Therefore, classroom interaction probably provides a productive basis for enhancing discourse competence. This finding is consistent with the study by Varonis and Gass (1985) on the negotiation of meaning in a dyadic context: learners more frequently negotiate meaning – by way of less elaborate discourse – when their partner is a non-native speaker than when he or she is a native speaker. The aim of this study was to introduce a new way to improve the writing skills of L2 learners. Therefore, they tried to use teacher's discourse in their writing in order to be able to make a better impression on their listeners.

After the learners started to use teacher's discourse, they seemed to have improved in their writing skills. The results of the post-test also verify this claim and show how the participants in experimental group performed better in comparison with their performance on the pre-test. This result also confirms the claim by Rymes (2008) who believes that recording, viewing, reviewing, and analyzing classroom discourse can help improve the teacher-student relations and achievements. Classroom discourse analysis, as viewed by Rymes, is "a specially designed set of tools for exploring talk and learning in classrooms" (p.347).

It was also shown here that the teacher discourse improving learner discourse might have its own limits for some learners. Probably, the self-confidence learners have of their communicative proficiency also plays a role in their performance. In any case, this kind of learner continues to produce short discourse so their discourse acquisition remains at risk. To find out whether explicit discourse learning would improve their performance and to understand the real cause of their reluctant performance, further investigation of the second language classroom is needed.

As a productive skill, writing is a very important process that helps to evaluate learner's proficiency in the target language. It should be one of the basic curriculum designs of second or foreign language teaching, in addition to other skills.

In order to compare the writing gains of the experimental and control groups, a t-test was employed. By doing so, the null hypothesis of the study was rejected because the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in average writing gains. It can be concluded that the teacher's discourse in teaching writing has a significant effect on developing students' writing ability. The students who received the independent variable (teacher's discourse) writ better than the control group. The scores and results compared between two groups through pretest and posttest proved the significant role that teacher's discourse played in enhancing the writing skill of learners. The result of the study indicates that teacher's discourse technique is valuable in teaching writing skill and very useful in classes. Teacher's discourse has great effects on either children or adults in the learning process . Teachers present their lesson by their performance, body language, verbal or nonverbal language. This means that teacher acts

like an actor and tries to communicate or interact with students in simple way for the better understanding of the students. It is worth mentioning that teachers' discourse can help beginners or kids who cannot read or write.

### ***Limitation/ Delimitation of the Study***

This study is going to be conducted on Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners.

In the interpretation of the result of this study, the following points should be kept in mind:

#### ***Limitation***

1. It was impossible to have the participants in the same age.
2. Some of the participants cooperated imperfectly.
3. The researcher could not get the permission of the institute to have the activities recorded.
4. Because of the high expenses of the study, none of the organizations took the responsibilities.

#### ***Delimitation***

1. The participants are assigned by randomization.
2. Only females are selected by the researchers.
3. The validity of the present study depends on the honesty of responses of the participants to the questions under study.

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## POSTGRADUATE LEARNERS AND CROSSLINGUISTIC INFLUENCE OF L1 (ARABIC) IN ACQUIRING LINGUISTIC ITEMS OF L2 (ENGLISH)

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### ABSTRACT

This paper investigates one of the most common issues namely the crosslinguistic influence of the L1 in learning L2 linguistic items in general, and specifically investigates eight main categories were supposed to be found in the current study. These categories are: using *TO* referring to L1, dropping the auxiliary *To Be*, adding auxiliary *To Be*, misuse of parts of speech, Arabic translation, misuse of prepositions, misuse of definite and indefinite articles, and finally, dropping the third person singular *S*. A detailed analysis was made of the eight proposed categories in 150 written texts produced by Arab Learners of English ALEs. Quantitative analysis show the crosslinguistic influence of L1 (Arabic) in acquiring the linguistic items of L2 (English) in general and in the eight proposed categories in particular. The findings of the study reveal that the majority of the learners seemed to follow the eight categories proposed in the current study in the acquisition of second language. However, these mistakes/errors could be treated following the Innovated Writing Process IWP presented in Mourssi (2012d, 2013d).

**KEYWORDS:** Interlanguage, SLA, Crosslinguistic influence, overgeneralization, simple past.

### INTRODUCTION

Using *TO* referring to L1, dropping the auxiliary *To Be*, adding auxiliary *To Be*, misuse of parts of speech, Arabic translation, misuse of prepositions, misuse of definite and indefinite articles, and finally, dropping the third person singular *S* are eight categories which seem to be the most common ones produced by learners in the acquisition of L2 linguistic items in the ALEs post graduate context. Odlin (1989, p. 6), and Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991, p. 5) defined that “the study of transfer, or crosslinguistic influence, is peculiar among language acquisition and the phenomenon of language use”. Similarly, Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008, p. 4) mentioned that crosslinguistic influence refers to the influence of one language on another in an individual mind. Mourssi (2013c) mentioned that Jarvis and Pavlenko (2008) also illuminated several areas of meaning and crosslinguistic influence which had not been carefully looked at before. They presented interesting findings and an analysis of the relationship between language transfer and SLA. Mourssi (2013c) commented that based on Odlin’s (1989) claims, and Jarvis and Pavlenko’s (2008) findings, and Mourssi’s (2013c) findings, the current study will investigate the impact of L1 on the acquisition of L2 linguistic items in the context of ALEs as postgraduate learners. This paper is divided into five main sections: section one is the introduction, section two is the literature review, section three describes the methods used in the current study, section four presents the analysis and the discussion, and finally, the conclusion is discussed in section five. The following is section two which presents the literature review.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Mourssi (2013c) mentioned that one of the assumptions of the study is that the concept of Interlanguage has had an important effect on the SLA field. He outlined the definition of Interlanguage since interlanguage is studied by many researchers who identify this system differently. Then Mourssi (2013c) explored how Interlanguage might vary between the native language and the second language, referring to the role of transfer in interlanguage.

#### *The Interlanguage Model*

Following Selinker’s (1969) ground-breaking paper, most SLA researchers nowadays recognize that second/foreign language learners go through a series of steps when learning a language. This is called *Interlanguage*. A study of interlanguage may shed light on how Arab learners of English improve their internal grammar. Mourssi (2013c)

mentioned that first of all we have to consider that interlanguage competences cannot be examined directly. Instead, information about the nature of interlanguage competence can only be derived indirectly; this might happen through an examination of interlanguage performance data which come in the form of writing sentences, grammatical forms and spontaneous speech, as Lakshmanan and Selinker (2001, p. 393) pointed out. That is why the researcher preferred to examine this phenomenon using written texts.

Mourssi (2013c) indicated that the interlanguage hypothesis is defined as the hypothesis that the language learners have a grammatical system that is different from both the first language and the target language but is nevertheless a natural language. That is, interlanguage is believed to be constrained by the same principles as all languages. Ellis (1997) defined interlanguage as a term referring to the variable progression through which a system of abstract linguistic rules is developed. Richard-Amato (2003, p. 37) commented that this process reflects the systematic development of the syntax, semantics, and pragmatics of the second language and is very similar to the process followed by first language learners. Throughout, hypothesis testing occurs usually at the subconscious level and predictable errors are made along the way, regardless of what first language the students speak. Gass and Selinker (2008) commented that L1 transfer has elements in universal language acquisition in general. According to Ellis (1997, p. 33), learners' knowledge about the grammar rules changes and develops. Such knowledge adds and deletes new rules to their mental lexicon over time. Generally, when learners start to learn the language, they begin to learn the simple rules first then they gradually move to the more complex ones. For example, they start first to learn the use of a verb like "write" in the present simple then they move to learn the other forms such as wrote, writing,...and so on.

Mourssi (2013c) pointed out that according to Crystal (2008, p. 239), "Interlanguage reflects the learner's evolving system of rules, resulting from a variety of processes, including the influence of the first language ('transfer'), contrastive interference from the target language, and the overgeneralization of newly encountered rules." Mourssi (2013c) added that some studies (Pienemann, 1984, 1998; Williams and Evans, 1998; Spada and Lightbown, 1999) based on developmental sequences indicated that instruction may have facilitative effects on L2 acquisition but its effectiveness may be constrained by the learners' readiness for development, which may be further mediated by L1 transfer or other L1-based factors. He also added that according to Cook (2001, p. 14), elements in the first language help learners with the second language if both share common elements but hinder them when they differ. On the other hand, it still cannot be considered that the first language is the main culprit or the sole cause for all the errors in learning a second language. Some linguists have classified errors into: inter-lingual errors related to L1 and intra-lingual errors related to L2 (Richards 1974, p. 173), and in-between errors which may originate in L1 and/or in L2 as well (Mourssi, 2012c).

Mourssi (2013c) mentioned that Lakshmanan and Selinker (2001, p. 394) are convinced that important advances were achieved in relation to L2 developmental sequences based on spontaneous speech samples, gathered longitudinally in the 1970s. However, the use of longitudinal data appears to have declined in popularity in the 1980s. They added, the situation changed again in the 1990s when SLA researchers began to use longitudinal spontaneous data to get true facts about the language learners' mental representations of the L2. It is worth mentioning that the current study lasted for only four months and can thus give only a partial view of the interlanguage stages ALEs go through in the acquisition of L2 linguistic items.

According to literature review related to interlanguage studies, a method comparing two languages that focuses more heavily on L2 concerns is likely to have a disastrous effect on investigation. Hence, as Adjemian (1976) has stressed, the importance of investigating interlanguage competence should be done without bias to either the native language or the target language systems. On the contrary, Lakshmanan and Selinker (2001, p. 397) stressed, an effective comparison of the development of individual interlanguage grammar may be difficult to accomplish. They gave two main reasons: one reason is that the results cannot be generalized to all L2 learners. Another reason is that the part that is visible to us (their spoken or written work) is often a locus of performance error. And, although learners have already acquired the target-like form, there is still a strong tendency that they will slip back to the former but non-target-like ways, (Mourssi, 2013j). In the following, I will present variation in interlanguage.

### ***Variation***



Mourssi (2013c) mentioned that learners have to cope with considerable variability in the target language. Two words might be used alternatively in order to show one particular function of a language. The following example indicates the way that the learner might use to exchange between “not” and “no”.

*The sun not shine  
No reference.*

Gass and Selinker (2008, p. 259-260) stated that in this case, the two negating words are used alternatively without a clear difference in meaning between them. As a result, non-systematic disparity was adopted to refer to these two forms. When the learners become more proficient in the language which they are exposed to, they start to predict their suitable ways of non-systematic usage.

Mourssi (2013c) mentioned that according to Fasold and Preston (2007) the fundamental element which underlies the appearance of target-like usage is variation. For example, the learner might say under one condition "I don't" as a target-like variant and “Me no” as a non-target-like variant in another condition. Linguists have interpreted this observable fact according to two dimensions. One group said that variability is related to what they call “performance errors” as they followed a Chomskyan perspective to SLA. They believed that it did not have anything to do with systematic questions. Other linguists related the variability to sociolinguistic or psycholinguistic factors. They said that variability is an innate characteristic of the learner's language. In this case the learner relies on the relation between the social and contextual variables in the selection process of using one linguistic variant rather than the other one, (Mourssi, 2013c).

Mourssi (2013) referred that Ellis (1984) monitored an 11- year old Portuguese learner who learned English as a second language. In that case study, Ellis focused on the learner's use of the forms “no and don't” and found out that the learner tended to use “no” more frequently than "don't" at the beginning of his study. When the learner became more familiar with English, he reduced the use of “no” and the use of “don't” became more frequent. Moreover, Gass and Selinker (2008) mentioned that there are two different types of variations which are free variation and systematic variation. It is mentioned that when learners spend more time in planning, their use of the target language will extend and improve. Learners will be able to perform better in a writing task where they have enough time to plan than in a speaking context where they do not have adequate time to do so, (Tarone, Bigelow and Hansen, 2009). In addition, affective factors have a clear effect on systematic variation. For example, learners produce more target-like forms when they feel comfortable. Such production is decreased when they encounter a stressful situation like having a formal exam. Therefore, social factors play an important role in systematic variation. In the following, we will shed some light on the role of crosslinguistic of L1 on L2 interlanguage.

#### ***The Role of crosslinguistic of L1 on L1 in Interlanguage***

Crosslinguistic of L1 on L2 refers to what is known as “Transfer”. Mourssi (2013c) indicated that is one of the most important elements which affect interlanguage forms. Investigating it can lead to a better understanding of the source/origin and the development of interlanguage. Researchers were doubtful about the issue of transfer, but some of them have said that it is related to language acquisition and should be discussed. Lado (1957) believed that people rely on their first language when they learn the target language. On the other hand, other researchers Dulay and Burt (1974, p. 24) said that transfer has nothing to do with interlanguage. In the following the Context of Arab Learners of English and Acquiring L2 Grammar will be presented.

#### ***The Context of Arab Learners of English and Acquiring L2 Grammar***

First, it is worth mentioning that Arabic does not follow English grammatical structure. Mansouri (2005, p. 118) referred to the difficulties in Arabic acquisition and its specific typology. This perception that verbal morphology may be complex gives the ALEs an impression about English grammar and motivates them to learn English grammar in a thoroughgoing way. In the following, the importance of grammar in learning the L1 and its impact on learning the L2 will be presented.

#### ***The Importance of Grammar in Learning L1 and its Impact on Learning L2***

Mourssi (2013c) noted that prescriptive Arabic grammarians think that grammar is the only element which shows how language is used. He added that they also view the traditional grammar of any language as a set of rules, and the major concept in learning language is to learn its grammar first. According to them, memorization is considered as the most common and appropriate learning strategy of learning, which is reflected in the way they learn L2. They think that memorization helps learners to achieve the tasks required in learning the target language better than any

other strategy, (Mourssi, 2012d). It is also mentioned that affects the methods of teaching followed by teachers of English for Arab learners who try to achieve the objectives of the target task in a proper and a suitable way which matches learners' attitudes. Similarly, it affects the way Arab learners of English acquire a second language in general and second language grammar in particular. This view is also reflected in the SLA research done based on samples taken from Arabic speakers of English.

Mourssi (2013c) referred to that learning English (as an L1 or L2), grammar can be viewed in different ways. Similarly, Hymes (1972) stated, English speakers need to know the rules of grammar with the rules of language use in order to communicate in a language. Dickins and Woods (1988, p. 630) also believed that the role of grammar is to convey and interpret meanings. On the other hand, Fuller and Gundel (1987, p. 70) suggested that grammatical rules (patterns that are studied by syntacticians and morphologists) were basically designed to help people get their meaning across clearly and accurately. Furthermore, a number of linguists claim that grammar is essential for appropriate communication. Lock (1996, p. 267) posited that language is a resource for communication and claims that grammar lies at the heart of communication and is not an optional add-on to communication. Similarly, Leech and Svartvik (1982, p. 4) viewed grammar as the focal part of language which relates to phonology and to semantics as well. Harmer (1991, p. 23) believed that knowledge of grammar is essential for competent users of a language. Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) asserted that grammar is one of three interconnected dimensions of language which include: grammar, semantics and pragmatics. Ismail (2010, p. 143) demonstrated that Arab learners of English had positive views about the use of the CCCC grammar model, which is presented in four stages: Confrontation, Clarification, Conformation, and Consolidation. The author also highlighted certain students' beliefs about the importance and the positive influence of explicit grammar teaching for learning the conventions of sentences and utterances.

In the following section, methods used in the current study will be presented.

## **THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

The current study seeks to answer the following question:

What is the evidence of L1 (Arabic) influence in the acquisition of L2 (English) linguistic items? This is to provide empirical evidence in relation to eight main categories. These categories are: using *TO* referring to L1, dropping the auxiliary *To Be*, adding auxiliary *To Be*, misuse of parts of speech, Arabic translation, misuse of prepositions, misuse of definite and indefinite articles, and finally, dropping the third person singular *S*, to test hypotheses emerging from language transfer and thus contribute to the advancement of theory on Second Language Acquisition.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This section discusses the subjects of the study, the research question and the methods used in the analysis of the written texts.

### ***The subjects of the study***

Four groups represent the subjects of the study. These groups were taught by the first researcher himself while the second researcher categorized the non-target-like forms. The target location was in Higher College of Technology HCT in the Sultanate of Oman. Each group consisted of 30 Arab Learners of English (ALEs), with ages ranging between 18 and 20, pre-intermediate to intermediate level in English. The subjects were all Arabic speakers and had been learning English as a foreign language for 10 years attending four to five sessions per week on average. They were all enrolled in a full year as foundation course in English language. The samples were taken from their writing classes randomly. The number of the samples is 120 written scripts.

### ***Methods assigned to the research question***

For the research question presented above, quantitative analyses were followed for all the simple past tense forms produced by the samples in 150 written texts. The authors think that in order to explore interlanguage phenomena and the influence of L1 in acquiring linguistic items of L2, a full writing text was collected from each sample in all four groups. It is thought that *writing* is one way to get evidence of the state of a student's internalised grammar system.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the written texts produced by the ALEs in five groups of writing classes, appears to indicate that Arabic Language has influence in the acquisition of second language linguistic items. What interesting finding in the current study is that inter-linguistic influence of L2 in acquiring L2 linguistic items, namely Adding Auxiliary To Be, and Dropping Auxiliary To Be, and Using *to* referring to L1, where learners sometimes and sometimes not overgeneralize L2 structure on forming another linguistic item. The following eight categories are expected to be found in the ALEs' context in acquiring English language linguistic items:

1. Using *to* referring to L1
2. Dropping auxiliary To Be
3. Adding auxiliary To Be
4. Misuse of parts of speech
5. Arabic translation
6. Wrong use of preposition (missing / extra preposition)
7. Missing or miss use of definite and indefinite article
8. Missing third person singular (s)

By comparing these suggested categories mentioned above with other researches' findings, it is noticed the similarities between the coding of Interlanguage stages of these studies and my own coding of Interlanguage stages in the current study, and it is noticed the differences occur might be due to the nature of Arabic language grammar and its influence in SLA.

It might be argued that two proposed explanations for the crosslinguistic which represents the influence of Arabic Language in acquiring the second language linguistic items are as follows: firstly, it may be L1 transfer where learners try to apply some rules from L1 on their performance in L2; secondly, it may be due to learners' lack of awareness as well as lack of knowledge (Mourssi, 2013c).

The above interpretations led the researcher to ensure the influence of L1 in acquiring L2, and the inter-linguistic influence of the same language in the context the ALEs as foreign language learners in postgraduate context. In the following is the sequence of the categories according to the percentage of the non-target like forms which represent each category.

Table 1: The sequence of the categories according to the percentage of the non-target like forms

<i>Item</i>	<i>Cross linguistics Category</i>	<i>Non-target like forms</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Misuse of parts of speech	26	39%
2	Missing third person singular (s)	19	12.6%
3	Dropping auxiliary To <i>Be</i>	16	10.6%
4	Adding auxiliary To <i>Be</i>	15	10%
5	Missing or miss use of definite and indefinite article	14	9.3%
6	Wrong use of preposition (missing / extra preposition)	8	5.3%
7	Using <i>to</i> referring to L1	6	4%
8	Arabic translation	4	2.6%

### ***Category One: Misuse of parts of speech***

It might be the case that the forms that were found in the written samples due to the differences between L1 and L2. This category represents 39% of the total percentage of the non-target like forms in 150 written samples. It is the highest category among the proposed eight categories in the current study. The examples found in the samples are shown in Appendix A.

### ***Category Two: Missing third person singular (s)***

Third person singular (s) represents the most obvious difference between L1 and L2 since it is not used or found in L1 at all. This category comes at the second rank after misuse of parts of speech. It might also because Arabic

Language has singular, dual, plural, and each has male and female. It is thought that it happens due to misunderstanding the function of (s), some of the ALEs think that the (s) is only used for forming plural, and not in singular present tense. The percentage of the non-target like forms of this category is 12.6%. The examples found in the samples are shown in Appendix A.

***Category Three: Dropping auxiliary To Be***

Dropping auxiliary to **Be** is one of the strategies which this study suggests. One explanation of this proposed strategy is the particular forms produced by ALEs due to the differences between L1 and L2. Mourssi (2013c) concluded that this strategy seems to suggest using the verb *to Be* + stem, agent, simple past, past participle or gerund in the acquisition of the simple past in particular. In the current study, although the learners are postgraduate students but they commit the same non-target like forms related to using to **Be**. In this category, the second language learners drop the auxiliary to **Be**. The percentage of this category is 10.6%. The examples found in the samples are shown in Appendix A.

***Category Four: Adding auxiliary To Be***

As it is mentioned in category three above, some ALEs drop to **Be**, it is noticed that some others add to **Be** to the sentences produced in L2. It might be because of the same reason mentioned which is the differences between L1 and L2. The percentage of this category is 10 %. The examples found in the samples are shown in Appendix A.

***Category Five: Missing or miss use of definite and indefinite article***

In comparing L1 and L2, it is noticed that in L1 ALEs learn (AL) which equals (the) in L2, while (a, and an) are not found in L1. It is an interesting point that ALEs can recognize using definite articles (the), but it is a kind of difficulty to use the indefinite articles (a, an). The percentage of this category is 9.3%. The examples found in the samples are shown in Appendix A.

***Category Six: Wrong use of preposition (missing / extra preposition)***

Prepositions represent one of the difficulties that face ALEs, due to the huge difference in using the target preposition in L2. It is worth mentioning that prepositions also represent a problem in learning L1. The percentage of this category is 5.3%. The examples found in the samples are shown in Appendix A. It can be assumed that lack of knowledge might be one of the reasons behind these non-target-like forms produced by the samples although they are postgraduate ALEs.

***Category Seven: Using to referring to L1***

Mourssi (2013c) indicated that undergraduate ALEs use to referring to L1 since they do not have enough input to recognize that there is no equal to **to** in L2. That is why they commit such a non-target-like forms, but it might not be the case in the postgraduate ALEs context who have exposed to the linguistic items of L2 for more than 12 years, in addition to a full year as a foundation course for L2. The percentage of this category is 4 %. The examples found in the samples are shown in Appendix A.

***Category Eight: Arabic translation***

It is one of the learning strategies that weak ALEs prefer to follow having in mind that it might be accepted forms and can be target-like forms. It is noticed that this category has the least percentage in the eight supposed categories in the current study. The percentage of this category is 2.6%. The examples found in the samples are shown in Appendix A.

**CONCLUSION**

The findings of the study reveal that the majority of the learners seemed to follow the eight categories proposed in the current study in the acquisition of second language. These categories which can best accounted for in the acquisition of the second language linguistic items in the context of the ALEs. The learners in all groups produced many target-like forms from the beginning of the experiment, but they produced some non-target like forms which led the researcher to investigate the crosslinguistic influence of L1 in acquiring L2.

Another conclusion can be drawn from the discussion here is that the more Arabic L1 English language learners receive comprehensible input, the greater their proficiency. Mourssi (2013c) indicated also that it is a question of

time spent in interaction between the teacher and the students. Therefore, it takes ALEs time to absorb the linguistic items of English in their internalized grammatical system.

### ***Limitation of the study***

The researchers could not cover all the non-target-like forms found in the written samples, due to the time and space limitations; it requires much time more than expected to cover the rest of the non-target-like forms

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**Appendix (A) Classifications of non-target-like forms**

<p><b>Category One</b> <b>Misuse of parts of speech</b></p> <p>The high is 22 cm. adj- n. It is 5 cm hight n. – adj. It is 22 cm hight The water hand pump is higher for get water. They was not can use it without any of it Its high is 22 cm. It don't have to bought the water. Since the discovered of water... England is famosar than japan . Many people had used before. Also the water will come outside of it. I am go to describe the piston. I hope you going to enjoy while you reading. When we fish eat dinner. In this essay, I will the ways that smokers should do to stop smoking. It very easy to do anyone because not very To avoid the machine from broken.. It long is 18. At the past, people used but now people do not use - Object Some people find difficult to stop smoking - object There are many people follow it – object. There are some ways they should follow there are some ways shouldn't follow – subject. There are ways shouldn't do – subject. There are two steps can make you stop.. – missing pronoun and subject.</p>	<p><b>Category Two</b> <b>Missing third person singular (s)</b></p> <p>Examples found:</p> <p>It handle the water pump. It also come with different shapes. It move to give pressure. It help to pull water... This part connect with ground. It is the main part because it hold... It is the part which make the machine... Smoking cause many diseases. It damage the body and health.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Category Three</b> <b>Dropping auxiliary To Be</b></p> <p>Example found</p> <p>Because some people smoke when angry. They know the family not happy. It used for get water from... The stem made out of iron. The water hand pump item used to drink for anyone... Water hand pump is a product which used to draw water. Its function is to access the water that pumped from the steam. Because it made of iron and stone. Devices that used at past. Its location between pumping level and steam. It made of iron and stone.</p>
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<p>Is easy the water hand pump to use it – repetition of preform. In Oman, there are many of people like to smoke – relative pronoun missing.</p>	<p>It made of iron. It bad thing. Before it stopping. And the piston inside it. This why it see that it important.</p>
<p><b>Category four</b> <b>Adding auxiliary To Be</b> Examples found: It is used is pumped the water. It is look important for the village. It is help to pumping. It is may used to... It is contact with the pumping. And it is not need a lot of money. The water hand pump also it is give the devices... Water pump is use the body forces. Which is transfer the more of pumping level... Last things should be do it is don't try to smoke again. A smoke make your health is bad. When you are smoke you will lose. They are have problems. If you are smoke more than once... Then, read a lot of information it can be helps.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Category Seven</b> <b>Using to referring to L1</b> Examples found: Many people like to using... If the smoker should to stop to smoking. Smoker should to avoid his bad friends. After that he should to avoid to his bad friends. Another measure is to avoid to go for bad people. You must to draw new dreams.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Category Eight</b> <b>Arabic translation</b> Examples found: When you feel tired from work it. The last step your body effects by smoking and putting you in hospital always make you spend your money to solve it. Which people use to bring the water switch. It is high of 18 inch. We must cut all the money for stop buy cigarettes.</p>	<p><b>Category Five</b> <b>Missing or miss use of definite and indefinite article</b> Examples found: It is bad thing. The stone give hand pump natural look. Pumping level is important part. It is traditional way. It is last part Smoke is a first reason. It is best meaning of for smoking. Smoking is a first reason ... It is best meaning for smoking. Smoking is very important for a body. The best thing is smoker should never think. It is a best meaning for smoking. Smoking is dangerous problem. A smoke make your health is bad.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Category Six</b> <b>Wrong use of preposition (missing / extra preposition)</b> Examples found: At the past, people used.... Water hand consists different parts. There are many of young people To stop the smoking for the smokers people there are many of steps should follow it. There are many of smokers know that smoking is not good for him. You will ignore yourself from smoking. Avoid thinking of smoking and think for your health. It consists into small parts.</p>

INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF DIFFERENT NUMBER OF CHOICES ON THE PERFORMANCE  
OF IRANIAN EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN READING COMPREHENSION

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**ABSTRACT**

Multiple choice item tests have long been the issue of consideration because of their higher reliability. One area of debate is the optimum number of options in a multiple-choice item; as such, the present study ascertained the issue in English as a Foreign Language context. The other factor analyzed in the study was the effect of level of students' language proficiency on the optimal number of options. In order to do the research 70 participants were chosen from Najaf Abad university, in Isfahan Province, in Iran, students majoring in English language teaching. A cloze test was used to compute students' proficiency level, and three formats of three-, four, and five-option-item tests of reading comprehension were utilized. The results from the study suggest that the four-option-format would be yet worthy of consideration. As the reliability of the four-option items was high and it could discriminate among the different levels of students within the same group better than the other two test formats, teachers can benefit from four-option items when testing reading comprehension of the EFL students.

**KEYWORDS:** Choices, multiple, item, optimal, number.

**INTRODUCTION**

Multiple choice item tests have long been the issue of consideration because of their higher reliability, economical administration, automaticity of scoring, and scoring objectivity. Consequently, a lot of studies have been done regarding the best type of multiple-choice format. One area of debate is the optimum number of options in a multiple-choice item, and this controversy has lasted more than 80 years (Rodriguez, 2005). The construction of multiple choice items, especially of the options, is drudgery for item writers (Haladyna & Downing, 1993, 2002; Lord, 1977; Trevisan, Sax, & Michael, 1991). Since Ruch and Stoddard (1925) argued that three-option items do not have detrimental effects on test outcomes, compared with four- or five-option items, many empirical studies, e.g., Haladyna, Downing, and Rodriguez (2002), Rodriguez (2005), have been conducted that investigate the optimal number of functional options a multiple-choice item should have (as cited in Lee, 2011).

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

As mentioned above, the construction of options in multiple choice items takes a lot of time and effort. Consequently, the optimal number of options for multiple choice items has been the issue of debate.

To the knowledge of the researcher, among the studies done on the issue, most of them claimed that three options were better than those of four- or five-option items (e.g. Costin, 1970; Straton & Catts, 1980). Costin (1970), reported that reliability, mean and item discrimination of three-option items were higher than those of four and five-option items. Straton and Catts (1980) in their study which compared two-, three-, and four- option-item tests in a fixed number of options, claimed that the Standard Error of Measurement and reliability of three-option-items were better than the two-, and three-option-items.

There are also some other studies which reported the high reliability and item discrimination for the three-option items (e.g. Trevisan, Sax & Micheal, 1991; Crehean et al. ,1993; Cizek & O'Day, 1994; Buurno & Drikzwager, 1995; Rogers & Harley, 1999; Rodrigues, 2005; Shizuka, Takeuchi, Yashima, & Yoshizawa, 2006; Lee, 2011).

In spite of all of the above mentioned studies, there are a few studies done on the issue reported that there are no differences between different number of options (e.g. Owen & Froman, 1987). Among the recent studies done on the issue, Lee (2011) investigated the difference among three different formats of tests in listening comprehension. Lee (2011), came to the point that three-option item test was worthy of consideration. As a result, the present study

measured the same issue to investigate the differential effects of multiple-choice items with three, four, and five options in English language reading test.

### OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study aimed at ascertaining the optimal number of options in multiple-choice-item tests in EFL context. The other factor which seems crucial to analyze is the effect of level of students' language proficiency on the optimal number of option. In other words, the study sought to find answers for the following questions.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Are there significant differences among three-, four-, and five-option multiple-choice item formats in English reading tests?
2. With regard to the level of students, are there significant differences among the scores of high, mid, and low groups of students who answer the three-option multiple-choice item tests in English reading tests?
3. With regard to the level of students, are there significant differences among the scores of high, mid, and low groups of students who answer the four-option multiple-choice item tests in English reading tests?
4. With regard to the level of students, are there significant differences among the scores of high, mid, and low groups of students who answer the five-option multiple-choice item tests in English reading tests?
5. Are there significant differences among the high group of three-, four-, and five- option item tests?
6. Are there significant differences among the mid group of three-, four-, and five- option item tests?
7. Are there significant differences among the low group of three-, four-, and five- option item tests?

### METHODOLOGY

#### *Participants*

According to their availability, 100 participants were chosen from among Najaf Abad university sophomore and junior students majoring in English language teaching. After the data collection, since there were some absentees, unusual responses and missing cases, the number of the participants reduced to 70. The Participants' age ranged from 18 to 22, they were students.

#### *Instruments*

Two instruments were used for the study; a cloze test was selected from the Examination for the Certificate of Proficiency in English book (Briggs, et al., 1997) to compute students' proficiency level. The cloze test consisted of 40 multiple choice items which include overall language skills except for listening comprehension. Another instrument for the present study was a TOEFL test of reading comprehension which were selected from the Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test book (2003). The reading comprehension test consisted of overall 30 multiple choice items. In order to have the three formats of three-, four, and five-option-items, the original four-option reading test was changed into three-option test by discarding the least plausible option and five-option test was made by adding a plausible distracter to the original reading comprehension test. Then, the tests were reread and revised by two experts and the reliability of the tests was measured through alpha Cronbach formulae.

#### *Procedures*

In order to collect data from the participants, 2 sessions were needed. To make three homogeneous groups, a cloze test was used. The required time for the cloze test was about 40 minutes. The participants were divided into three homogeneous groups according to their cloze scores. Each group was given one different multiple choice item form. For example, group one was given four-option-item test, and group two was given three-option-item test and group three a five-option-item format. In order to answer the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh research questions, each group was again divided into three groups of high, mid and low according to their cloze test scores. The first 27% of the scores in each group was labeled as low group, the last 27% of the ordered scores was labeled as high group and the remained scores in the middle were called mid group. In order to decrease the issue of blind guessing, the participants were told they would lose 1 point for every 3 incorrect answers.

#### *Data analysis*

The cloze and reading comprehension tests were scored and run into the SPSS. Then, the reliability of the reading comprehension tests were computed using alpha Cronbach formulae. In order to answer the first research question, a one-way ANOVA and a Scheffe test, were used to find whether there were any significant differences among the

scores of multiple choice item-tests with three-, four-, and five-options. In order to answer the second, third, and fourth, research questions, again a one-way ANOVA and a Scheffe test were used to see whether there were any significant differences within each groups, regarding their levels of proficiency. To answer questions five, six, and seven, a one-way ANOVA was employed to find out the differences among groups with the same level.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The reliability of the three comprehension tests was computed (three-option-item test, .51; four-option-item test, .75; five-option-item test, .67). The results revealed that the reliability of the four-option item test is higher than the reliability of the other two tests (.75). Comparing the other two tests, the Cronbach alpha computation showed that the reliability of the five-option item test (.67) was higher than the three-option item test (.51).

In the following section the results of the study will be discussed according to research questions:

### *Are there significant differences among three-, four-, and five-option multiple-choice item formats in English reading test?*

The mean of the three tests were computed and compared with each other through one-way ANOVA. The results showed that the difference among the three-, four- and five- option item tests is highly significant at 0.00 levels. The comparison among the means of three tests revealed the highest mean for three-option item test (15.91), then the four-option item test score mean, 13.36, was higher than the five-option item test, 11.18. It can be concluded from the mean difference that the higher the number of options the harder the test. Table 1 summarized the results of the computation of the means of three-, four-, and five-option-item tests in general. The results from Scheffe test revealed that the difference between three- and four-option item tests is considerably significant at 0.000 levels. There also exists very little significant difference between three- and four-option item tests at 0.05 levels. The data analysis showed no significant differences between four- and five- option-item tests. Table 2 summarized the Scheffe test results.

Table 1: Mean computation of three-, four-, five-  
option-item tests

Form	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
3 options	23	15.91	3.370
4 options	25	13.36	3.999
5 options	22	11.18	3.202
Total	70	13.51	3.995

Table 2: One way ANOVA Scheffe test for three-, four-, and five- option item tests

(I) Form	(J) Form	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
4 options	3 options	-2.553	1.028	.052
	5 options	2.178	1.041	.120
3 options	4 options	2.553	1.028	.052
	5 options	4.731*	1.061	.000
5 options	4 options	-2.178	1.041	.120
	3 options	-4.731*	1.061	.000

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

### *With regard to the level of students, are there significant differences among the scores of high, mid, and low groups of students who answer the three-option multiple-choice item test in English reading test?*

The data analysis from one way ANOVA revealed that the difference among the three groups of high, low and mid is not significant. In other word, there are no differences among three groups of high, low and mid who answered the three-option

item test. It may be claimed that the three-option item test cannot make discrimination among different levels of students within the same group. Table 3 summarized the results of the one way ANOVA within the group of three-option item test.

Table 3: One way ANOVA within the group of three-option item test

	Sig.
Between Groups	.131
Within Groups	
Total	

***With regard to the level of students, are there significant differences among the scores of high, mid, and low groups of students who answer the four-option multiple-choice item test in English reading test?***

The data analysis from one way ANOVA revealed that the difference among the three groups of high, low and mid who answered the four-option item is significant at .01 levels. In other word, there exist differences among three groups of high, low and mid groups who answered the four-option item test. From the post-Hoch tests of Scheffe, it can be claimed that there are significant difference between high and low groups at 0.03 levels, and there are also significant difference between mid and high groups at 0.03 levels. There is no difference between mid and low group in four-option item test. In other words, the four-option item test can discriminate among the different levels of students within the same group better than the three-option item test. Table 4 summarized the results of the one way ANOVA, Scheffe tests, within the group of four-option item test.

Table 4: one way ANOVA, Sachedfe tests, within groups of four- option item test

(I) GROUP	(J) GROUP	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
LOW	MID	-.701	1.671	.916
	HIGH	-5.286*	1.847	.031
MID	LOW	.701	1.671	.916
	HIGH	-4.584*	1.671	.039
HIGH	LOW	5.286*	1.847	.031
	MID	4.584*	1.671	.039

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

***With regard to the level of students, are there significant differences among the scores of high, mid, and low groups of students who answer the five-option multiple-choice item test in English reading test?***

The data analysis from one way ANOVA revealed that the difference among the three groups of high, low and mid who answered the five-option item is not significant at .56 levels. In other word, there are not differences among three groups of high, low and mid groups who answered the five-option item test. To put it in another way, five-option item test cannot discriminate among different levels of students within the same group. Table 5 summarized the results of the one way ANOVA for the group of five-option item test.

Table 5: One way ANOVA within the group of three-option item test

	Sig.
Between Groups	.564
Within Groups	
Total	

***Are there significant differences among the high groups of three-, four-, and five- option item tests?***

The result from one way ANOVA indicated that there are no significant differences among the high level of the three groups. Table 6 indicated the results of one way ANOVA comparing the high level of different groups with each other.

Table 6: One-way ANOVA, Scheffe tests the high level of different groups

(I) GROUP GROUP J)	Mean Difference (I- J)	Std. Error	Sig.
High3option High4option High5option	1.310 6.333	1.823 1.892	1.000 .214
High4option High3option High5option	-1.310 5.024	1.823 1.823	1.000 .483
High5option High3option High4option	-6.333 -5.024	1.892 1.823	.214 .483

*Are there significant differences among the mid groups of three-, four-, and five- option item test?*

The results from one way ANOVA indicated that there are no significant differences among the mid level of the three groups.

Table 7 indicated the results of one way ANOVA, Scheffe tests, comparing the mid level of different groups with each other.

Table 7: One way ANOVA, Scheffe tests, the mid level of different groups

(I) GROUP GROUP J)	Mean Difference (I- J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Mid3option Mid4option Mid5option	2.455 4.227	1.397 1.432	.924 .382
Mid4option Mid3option Mid5option	-2.455 1.773	1.397 1.432	.924 .991
Mid5option Mid3option Mid4option	-4.227 -1.773	1.432 1.432	.382 .991

*Are there significant differences among the low groups of three-, four-, and five- option item test?*

The results from one way ANOVA indicated that there are no significant differences among the low level of the three groups.

Table 8 indicated the results of one way ANOVA, Scheffe tests, comparing the low level of different groups with each other.



Table8: One way ANOVA, Scheffe tests, the low level of different group

(I) GROUP GROUP	J)	Mean Difference (I- J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Low Low4option Low5option	3option	4.262	1.823	.704
	Low4option	4.667	1.892	.638
	Low5option			
Low4option 3option Low5option	Low	-4.262 .405	1.823 1.823	.704 1.000
	Low4option			
	Low5option			
Low5option 3option Low4option	Low	-4.667 -.405	1.892 1.823	.638 1.000
	Low4option			
	Low5option			

Though the previous studies were in favor of three-option items, the present study revealed that the four-option item is worthy of consideration because of high reliability and item discrimination. As a result, the present study reached a new set of conclusions in contrast with the literature (e.g. Buurno & Drikzwager, 1995; Lee, 2011; Rogers & Harley, 1999; Rodrigues, 2005; Shizuka et al., 2006).

## CONCLUSION

This study suggests that the four-option-format would be yet worthy of consideration. The results from the study support the claim. With regards to three different formats of tests, the comparison of the means showed the highest mean for three-option item test, 15.91, and the lowest for five-option item format, 11.18. In other words the more the number of options, the harder the test will be. Comparing the reliability of tests, four-option item test enjoys the highest reliability (0.75). The results of one-way ANOVA and Scheffe test indicated that there is no significant difference between four- and five-option item tests and very little difference exists between 3 and 4 option item tests. As a result, it can be concluded that 4 option item test is better than the other two test formats, because it enjoys an optimal amount of reliability and the level of difficulty is sufficient.

With regard to the second, third, and fourth research questions, only four-option item test can discriminate among the three levels of high, low and mid. In the other two test formats, there was no significant difference among different levels of students. In order to answer the fifth, sixth and seventh research questions, tables 6, 7 and 8 revealed that there were no differences among the same level of participants in different groups. All in all, the finding of the present study is against the findings of the studies in the related literature (e.g. Rodrigues, 2005; Shizuka, Takeuchi, Yashima, & Yoshizawa, 2006; Lee, 2011).

## Pedagogical Implications

If four options are provided for each item, the quality of multiple-choice tests will be considerably improved. As the reliability of the four-option items was high and it could discriminate among different levels of students within the same group better than the other two test formats, teachers can benefit from four-option items when testing reading comprehension of the EFL students. Moreover, testing language abilities, teachers should consider reliability and item discrimination of the tests as well.

## Limitations and Implications for further studies

The effects of the testwiseness factor and also the possible previous exposure of the participants to the four-option-item test were ignored here. Hence, they can be the topic of further research. The effect of the number of items, which was not investigated in the present study, would be another topic of interests for further studies.

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## FOSTERING EFL LEARNERS' SPEAKING AND LISTENING SKILLS VIA ORAL ACTIVITIES OF READING SHORT STORIES

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### ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of language studies, second language acquisition (SLA) researchers have been searching for effective ways of improving learners' language skills. This study aimed to investigate the effects of reading short stories on English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' speaking and listening skills. So, Two groups of experimental (n=20) and control (n=20) were chosen out of 172 sophomores at teacher training center, Birjand, Iran for this experimental research. Interview was the determined instrument for gathering the scores of pretest. The control group followed its routine procedure in English classes. However, the task of reading simplified literary texts (short stories) was applied for the experimental group members during their English classes as assignment. For example, they were supposed to read the stories and summarize them in front of the mirror at their home and in front of the class in next session and answer their classmates' questions. This experiment occurred in 9 sessions of classes. Then, all students in both groups answered the questions of the interviewer. The statistical analysis related to t-test was done on gathered raw scores. Data from this study demonstrate a significant role for reading simplified short stories in improving the speaking and listening skills of participants in the experimental group. The findings of this study may help the learners to enhance their independent English language learning and improve their oral skills by reading short stories. All steps of this study will also be beneficial for EFL teachers who are searching ways of improving speaking and listening of their students.

**KEY WORDS:** speaking skill, listening skill, literary texts, short story, oral activity

### INTRODUCTION

The integration, interaction, and collaboration of literature and language teaching has been the interest subject of many foreign language teaching researchers, especially in the 20th century. Using literature as a means for the teaching of a second or foreign language has proved very beneficial to the EFL and ESL students' learning experience.

Indeed, the short story as a multi-dimensional literary genre can be profitably utilized in the acquiring different language skills. The short story's distinctive features, i.e., its brevity, modernity, and variety make it appealing and interesting to language learners. When the short story is selected based on the learners' level of English proficiency, it can offer them adequate intellectual, emotional, and linguistic involvement and enrich their learning experience.

Besides, researchers are searching for effective ways of improving language skills of foreign learners. As the ultimate purpose of learning a foreign language is communication, we searched for new techniques that help learners to improve their oral skills, listening and speaking. Based on related literature, reading short stories are effective in written skills like reading and writing. But, there was a need to examine the effects of reading short stories on speaking and listening skills. So, the literature coming below, will mention the scholars' and researchers' ideas in books and articles related to our work.

## **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

### ***Researches on the role of short stories in TEFL***

Scher (1996, cited in Muyskens, 2003) believes that for the learners of beginning and intermediate levels, teachers can utilize literary texts for “language practice, reading comprehension, and possible aesthetic appreciation”. On the other hand, advanced learners can use literary texts for “practice in reading and discussing creative work, development of knowledge of world literature, and the introduction of literary concepts, genres, and terminologies—e. g. recognition of speech figures, meaning levels, and other stylistic features”. Short stories let teachers to teach the four skills to all levels of language proficiency simultaneously. Murdoch (2002) states that “short stories can, if selected and exploited appropriately, provide quality text content which will greatly enhance ELT courses for learners at intermediate levels of proficiency” (p. 21). He also mentions why stories should be used to support English Language Teaching by discussing activities which teachers can perform such as reading, writing, speaking, listening, and acting out dialogues.

In addition, short stories can be utilized to develop learners' listening and speaking. Also, learners who read literary texts showed development in vocabulary and reading. Oster (1999) believes that:

“What learners read provides them the chance to come up with their own insights, helping them to speak the language in a more imaginative way. They become more creative since they are faced with their own point of view, that/those of the main character(s) of the story and those of their peers. This thoughtful process leads to critical thinking. Focusing on point of view in literature enlarges students' vision and fosters critical thinking by dramatizing the various ways. Therefore, when students read, they interact with the text. By interacting with the text, they interpret what they read. By interpreting what they read, they can work toward speaking English more creatively.” (pp. 34-35)

Besides, Anderson (1967) stated the similar idea that learners practice the listening skills at the same time when they listen to their classmates retell the stories. Furthermore, reading short stories can be an input to practice other language skills. Firstly, short stories can be an input to oral skills practice. After finishing reading, learners can be asked to narrate the story in their own words, to give chronological sequences of happenings in the story, to paraphrase or to state a summary of the story. Besides, students can do the role play, act out some of the story parts, or dramatize the characters in the story.

Besides, a very important issue that plays a substantial role for motivating the students is the variety of short stories or giving more “choices” to read. Regarding this issue, Goodman (1972) states that:

Readers should be encouraged to select material on the basis of their own criteria of interest and ease. Readers should be helped to feel confident that if the material isn't making sense they may reject it. (p. 117)

Likewise, Hutchinson & Waters (2005) also claimed that “variety is the spice of learning and it is essential in keeping the mind alert for learning”. Besides, learners like to read texts not too long with a straightforward storyline (Gower, 2005).

It is worth mentioning that short stories can be used to improve many sub-skills in reading. In addition to requesting for the main theme of the story, instructors can ask learners to “predict” the story they are going to cover since “prediction” is considered as a major factor in reading skill. Learners must be persuaded to predict what is going to occur by reading the title, the first paragraph and to induce what the story will be about. Then, learners should be able to defend their imaginations with proofs from the text (Goodman, 2007).

Erkaya (2005) believes that:

When using short stories, teachers can teach higher order thinking because short stories promote the use of all the four skills namely the listening, speaking, reading and writing and short stories are embedded with motivational benefits. When using short stories, the students will learn all the four skills at the same time. All these skills are needed for language learning and it is important for them to learn the skills. (p. 83)

According to Sivasubramaniam (2006), those of us who learned a foreign language through an exposure to its literature will always be intended to speak in support of its superiority and efficacy in foreign language teaching. This is to clarify that we have a deeper realization of literature's positive impact on our emotional and mental features.

### ***Researches on speaking and listening skills***

Although once labeled a passive skill, listening is very much an active process of selecting and interpreting obtained information from auditory and visual clues (Richards, 1983; Rubin, 1995).

There are many activities to select for improving listening skills. Lund (1990) has categorized them according to 9 answers that can be considered as comprehension checks:

- “1. Doing: the listener responds physically such as in TPR;
2. Choosing: the listener selects from alternatives such as pictures, objects, texts, or actions;
3. Transferring: the listener transforms the message such as drawing a route on map, or filling in a chart;
4. Answering: the listener answers about the text;
5. Condensing: the listener takes notes or makes an outline;
6. Extending: the listener goes beyond the text by continuing the story or solving a problem;
7. Duplicating: the listener simply repeats or translates the message;
8. Modeling: the listener performs a similar task, e.g., gives instructions to a coworker after listening to a model or;
9. Conversing: the listener is an active participant in a face-to-face conversation.” (pp. 122-123)

Out of the classroom, listening skill is utilized twice as often as speaking, which in turn is used twice as much as reading and writing (Rivers, 1981). In the classroom, listening and speaking are the most often used skills (Brown, 1994). They are known as critical issues because of their function in an English language context, both by instructors and by students. These oral skills are also reasonable instructional starting points when students have poor literacy level (in the target language or their mother tongue) or limited formal instruction.

Brown (1994) and Burns and Joyce (1997) point out that:

“Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their collective experiences, the physical environment, and the purposes for speaking. It is often spontaneous, open-ended, and evolving. However, speech is not always unpredictable.” (p. 54)

Also, Carter & McCarthy (1995) and Cohen (1996) believe that:

“Speaking requires that learners not only know how to produce specific points of language such as grammar, pronunciation, or vocabulary (linguistic competence), but also that they understand when, why, and in what ways to produce language (sociolinguistic competence). Finally, speech has its own skills, structures, and conventions different from written language. A good speaker synthesizes this array of skills and knowledge to succeed in a given speech act.” (p. 23)

Brown (1994) says that “speakers must be able to anticipate and then produce the expected patterns of specific discourse situations. They must also manage discrete elements such as turn-taking, rephrasing, providing feedback, or redirecting skills and knowledge that instruction might address include the following:

- producing the sounds, stress patterns, rhythmic structures, and intonations of the language;
- using grammar structures accurately;
- assessing characteristics of the target audience, including shared knowledge or shared points of reference, status and power relations of participants, interest levels, or differences in perspectives;
- selecting vocabulary that is understandable and appropriate for the audience, the topic being discussed, and the setting in which the speech act occurs;
- applying strategies to enhance comprehensibility, such as emphasizing key words, rephrasing, or checking for listener comprehension;
- using gestures or body language; and
- paying attention to the success of the interaction and adjusting components of speech such as vocabulary, rate of speech, and complexity of grammar structures to maximize listener comprehension and involvement.” (pp. 110-112)

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

To achieve the goals of the present study, the following research questions were posed:

Q1. Does reading short stories have any significant effect on EFL learners' speaking skills?

Q2. Does reading short stories have any significant effect on EFL learners' listening skill?

To come up with reasonable results on the basis of the aforementioned research question, the following null hypotheses were proposed:

HO1. Reading short stories has no significant effect on EFL learners' speaking skills.

HO1. Reading short stories has no significant effect on EFL learners' listening skills.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The participants in this study were sophomores at teacher training center, Birjand, Iran. Two groups of experimental (n=20) and control (n=20) were chosen randomly out of 172 sophomores. Half of each group was male and half was female. They belonged to different fields of studies. Their language proficiency level was almost high intermediate. They were able to read short stories easily; but, their ability in oral skills (listening and speaking) was not acceptable.

### *Instrumentation*

A valid and reliable interview was the determined instrument for gathering the scores of pretest and posttest. Two university lecturers were asked to check the validity of the interview. Also, piloting process was done to check its reliability. This interview was done to measure the learners' ability in speaking and listening skills (oral skills) based on a predetermined checklist. The sources of its form were available global listening and speaking tests, and its content was based on the covered short stories.

In addition, we can name the short stories with intermediate and high intermediate levels taken from internet as the instruments of this study. They were between two to eight pages. The students have the freedom in choosing the short stories according to their interests among the determined ones.

### *Procedure*

First, the participants of this study were chosen randomly among the students of Birjand Teacher Training Center (TTC). Second, various short stories were taken from the net. Students of experimental group were able to choose some of them based on their interests. Before the study, a pretest (the mentioned interview) was implemented among all participants in both groups. While doing the research, the control group followed its routine procedure in English classes. However, the task of reading simplified literary texts (short stories) was applied for the experimental group members during their English classes as assignment. For example, they were supposed to read the stories and summarize them in front of the mirror at their homes and in front of the class in next session and answer their classmates' questions. This experiment occurred in 9 sessions of classes. Then, all students in both groups answered the questions of the interviewer.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Having collected the results of interviews in the pretest, the researchers analyzed the data for speaking skill employing independent t-test. The purpose of this analysis was to estimate the participants' speaking ability before the study began. Table 1 shows the results for this analysis.

*Table 1: results of t-test analysis for speaking skill (pretest)*

Groups	N	M	SD	t	df	P
Exp.	20	14.46	2.21	.546	40	.586
Cont.	20	12.68	2.06			



As the results of Table 3 show, there is no statistically significant difference [ $t(40) = .546$ ,  $p = .586$ ] between experimental ( $M = 14.46$ ,  $SD = 2.21$ ) and control ( $M = 12.68$ ,  $SD = 2.06$ ) groups with regard to speaking ability which confirms the homogeneity of the participants at the outset of the study.

To investigate the effect of study treatment, the participants' speaking ability was assessed in posttests via t-test analysis. Table 2 shows the results for this analysis.

*Table 2: results of t-test analysis for speaking skill (posttest)*

Groups	N	M	SD	t	df	P
Exp.	20	18.87	5.36	0.86	40	.00
Cont.	20	15.02	5.11			

As the results of Table 2 show, there is a statistically significant difference [ $t(40) = 0.86$ ,  $p = .00$ ] between experimental ( $M = 18.87$ ,  $SD = 5.36$ ) and control ( $M = 15.02$ ,  $SD = 5.11$ ) group with . This difference indicates that the participants in experimental group outperformed those in control group revealing the effect of reading short stories. Therefore, the first null hypothesis that reading short stories has no significant effect on EFL learners' speaking skill is rejected.

To measure the effect of reading short stories on the participants' listening skill, the researchers analyzed the data employing independent t-test. Tables 3 and 4 show the results for these analyses.

*Table 3: results of t-test analysis for listening skill (pretest)*

Groups	N	M	SD	t	df	P
Exp.	20	14.37	2.28	.778	40	.435
Cont.	20	13.14	2.12			

As the results of Table 3 show, there is no statistically significant difference [ $t(40) = .778$ ,  $p = .435$ ] between experimental ( $M = 14.37$ ,  $SD = 2.28$ ) and control ( $M = 13.14$ ,  $SD = 2.12$ ) groups with regard to listening ability which confirms the homogeneity of the participants at the outset of the study.

To investigate the effect of study treatment, the participants' listening ability was assessed in posttests via t-test analysis. Table 4 shows the results for this analysis.

*Table 4: results of t-test analysis for listening skill (posttest)*

Groups	N	M	SD	t	Df	P
Exp.	20	17.96	4.76	0.89	40	.00
Cont.	20	15.07	4.62			

As the results of Table 3 show, there is a statistically significant difference [ $t(40) = 0.89$ ,  $p = .00$ ] between experimental ( $M = 17.96$ ,  $SD = 4.76$ ) and control ( $M = 15.07$ ,  $SD = 4.62$ ) group with . This difference indicates that the participants in experimental group outperformed those in control group revealing the effect of reading short stories. Therefore, the second null hypothesis that reading short stories has no significant effect on EFL learners' listening skill is also rejected.

### **Discussion**

According to the results of this study, we can use oral activities of reading short stories to improve EFL learners' speaking and listening skills. The findings of this study confirms what Oster (1999) believed. He stated that short stories can be utilized to develop learners' listening and speaking.

Also, Anderson (1967) mentioned the similar idea to what was found in this study that learners practice the listening skills at the same time when they listen to their classmates retell the stories. Reading short stories can be an input to practice other language skills. First, short stories can be an input to oral skills practice. After finishing reading, learners can be asked to narrate the story in their own words, to give chronological sequences of happenings in the story, to paraphrase or to state a summary of the story. Besides, students can do the role play, act out some of the story parts, or dramatize the characters in the story.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

As the findings of this study demonstrate, the technique of reading simplified short stories can enhance the learners' speaking skill. The results also proved that being exposed to suitable literary texts has significant effect on EFL learners' listening skill. It showed that learners' speaking and listening ability (oral skills) in a second or foreign language can depend on their amount of exposure to written authentic or simplified literary texts like short stories. Meanwhile, the results of the present study indicated that the participants' syntactic knowledge and vocabulary size can also be improved by this technique because the researchers considered several factors and criteria in scoring the interviews that grammar and vocabulary were mentioned there.

In addition, the results indicated that to achieve a better performance in oral skills like listening and speaking, written exercises as well as oral exercises can be effective in improving oral skills. It can be even more interesting to use their written skills for improving their oral skills.

Besides, the findings of this study may have some hints for English language teachers, educators and also the learners. It can be beneficial for teachers who are searching for effective ways of improving speaking and listening skills. They can apply this technique to teach, practice, and enhance the speaking and listening abilities of their learners. It is also helpful for learners who are seeking for cheap and available techniques of improving oral skills. It is cheap because there is no need to new technologies such as mobile, computer, data projection, etc. It requires just a small book or some papers. It is also available everywhere and easy to carry and use.

## ***Limitations of the study***

This study also had some limitations. First, the participants were not at the same level of reading ability. This could affect their performance in the oral interview. Second, we cannot say that the improvement of learners' oral skills in experimental group is solely because of the oral activities of reading short stories presented and implemented in this study. It might have happened because of other reasons in a few cases.

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## ABSTRACT

Nowadays, with the advent of new technologies of information and communication, the world has turned into a global village so that all societies are compelled to tune up their changes with the demands of the information society. In parallel with such changes, the educational systems are experiencing significant changes both in their paradigms and methodologies. Respectively, due to the important role of English language teaching (ELT) in Iran, considerable attention has to be paid by policy makers and language planners with regard to the inefficiency of the present paradigm. In so doing, they need to set their priorities in the departure to a paradigm shift through taking the positive, practical, and novel ideas of a new paradigm and reforming and improving the structural framework of our present education system, meanwhile maintaining a dialogic relationship among all agents of change such as ELT professionals, teachers and practitioners.

**KEYWORDS:** Educational System, English language teaching, Information Society, Paradigm

## INTRODUCTION

Today the world has been reorganized by the rapid and sustained change in information and communication, media, and transport technologies. As a result, no society can adopt an education system which is static as rote learning of facts tend to be redundant due to everyone's access to the all-pervasive information and learning. Thus, knowledge-creation skills rather than educational certificates become supremely important for work performance.

It is an undeniable fact that teaching is a dynamic process calling for a systematic theoretical and practical preparation, both of which are under the influence of the educational paradigm set by the education system. Consequently, taking a critical look into the present dominant educational paradigm in the field of ELT and the related shortcomings in Iran seems to be essential in order to establish priorities and standards in the departure for a paradigm shift in line with the latest developments in the information society.

## THE PRESENT ELT SYSTEM IN IRAN AND ITS SHORTCOMINGS

Looking into the current status of Iran's ELT context more closely, we would certainly find out that at present, English is the only widely taught foreign language in Iran. English teaching is happening across three sectors: the state-funded education system, private schools and private language institutes.

In the state-funded education system, English as a compulsory school subject on the curriculum is taught from junior high school. Educational policies concerning the school systems, the curriculum standards, the compilation of textbooks, the examination system and so on fall primarily under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education. These policies attach little value to listening and speaking skills (Jahangard, 2007). Accordingly, these skills are not tested in the university entrance examination, as well as in the high school final exams.

On the other hand, teachers' teaching methodology and output of teaching process is under the direct influence of these national high-stakes tests. Thus the assessment scheme used by teachers may not go beyond the goals of the national testing system. Moreover, in Iran's system of education, teachers' success is evaluated based on the number of students who could get passing scores in their classes. As an English teacher who has taught for 16 years, I have gained the experience to know how sensitive Iranian context is to educational achievements which are almost always seen in the scores obtained by the students; there is a great pressure from parents, students and school authorities on teachers. As a result, a teacher can hardly deviate what has already been determined by the central policymaker.

I think it is quite evident that the state-funded education system does not contribute to achieving even the minimal levels of proficiency in foreign language acquisition. As an English teacher, many times I have had English classrooms which were large and based on age rather than true learning levels. In other words, individual differences

are not taken into account. Schools have to follow a standardized program and it is quite possible that this prescribed methodology does not suit a number of learners with different learning styles. The textbook used for teaching English is uniform for students from all walks of life around the country. Also, as a learner in state-funded education system, I can remember how disappointed I was when English classes didn't provide me with what I expected and needed the most. In general, I believe that the primary focus of the present educational system is to make students pass tests and exams. The product of such a system is a student who is not able to develop and demonstrate a reasonable level of proficiency. This prescribed system is not efficient at least in terms of English teaching.

In recent years, private schools in Iran (kindergartens, preschools, primary schools, junior high schools and high schools) have included extra-curricular English in their programs in order to find a higher prestige in the market as well as attracting attention of more parents. One major reason of growing interest of Iranian parents to send their children to these schools despite of their relatively high expenses is that their needs and expectations are not met in state-funded education.

Private English teaching sector has been growing considerably in Iran and new language institutes are opening in large and small cities at a rapid pace. This is because many parents and students cannot find the official school programs so effective and many Iranian students seek English learning opportunities beyond formal educational system. Definitely, this, in turn, makes learners and their parents spend a lot of money, much more energy and more time.

In today's Iran society, language testing is big business with IELTS, TOEFL TOLIMO etc. These kinds of tests are highly prized for entry to PhD programs, the best-paid jobs and for emigration. It seems evident that public demand for a different ELT at least in state-funded education system in Iran is enormous.

Progress is also being made in applied linguistics and ELT research in Iran. Many national and international conferences on ELT are held every year while academics are exploring a wide range of ELT issues. But it seems that the wealth of academic research is failing to translate into practical improvements in schools and classrooms.

Taken together, English seems to have gained a high status in today's Iranian society, approving itself as an undeniable necessity. According to Talebinezhad and Aliakbari (2003) English has penetrated Iranian society smoothly. English proficiency has been considered a key priority for progress in different areas such as science, technology, finance and business and Davari (2011) also maintains that English is the most commonly taught foreign language in this society especially in private sectors. New technology and the adoption of the internet have made Iranian society become part of the globalizing and globalized world and this demands high proficiency in English language as an international language.

It goes without saying that because of the national educational policies and the inefficiencies of Iranian educational system in providing an effective foreign language learning which have been hereinbefore mentioned, this system has proved to fail to produce proficient users of English. On the other hand, the pivotal role of English for progress in science and other areas of knowledge and the need to communicate with others for economic, social, and perhaps most importantly, cultural issues attach more importance to English a commonly known language. Hence, it seems that the rise of English language in Iran is closely tied with globalization. The changing status of English is clearly revealed by the fact that there is now an ever-growing public demand for learning English in private institutes where their expectations can be satisfied. Talebinezhad and Sadeghi Beniss (2005) state that the deficiency of public schools and universities in fulfilling students' ever growing desire to learn English communicatively has resulted in a wide spread and still increasing private sector of English teaching in Iran. In this regard, Riazi (2005) also maintains that there are formal private schools offering English language at different levels in their curriculum in Iran's today society as well as a lot of private and semi-private English language institutes and centers that offer courses at different levels and for different purposes.

The emergence of English as a global language, according to Nunan (2003), is going to have a strong influence on language planning and policy making in every society and definitely the Iranian society is not an exception. Considering the status and key role of English in the globalizing world, its impacts on culture, our language and identity, etc., and its challenges and opportunities, the policy makers and language planners should give this issue a careful thought before setting their priorities and making decisions on it.

### **PARADIGM SHIFT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES**

Although, it seems that the context of ELT in Iran is ready for change, changing our educational system is difficult and this is not totally due to the abstract notion of 'resistance to change'. Borrowing Kumaravadivelu's (2005) terms, it can be said that there are two major inhibitors on the way of change, namely pedagogical barrier and ideological barrier. The pedagogical barrier is concerned with the common set of beliefs and perspectives and models of teacher education referring to a series of pre-selected and a priori body of knowledge passed from the teacher educator to the novice teacher, and the ideological barrier deals with the mentality of the teacher regarding what constitutes valid knowledge.

Naturally, change is often against existing interests and prevailing institutional arrangements such as generating highly-credited certifications, reputations and social capital for being members of special groups like social elites. Another inhibitor of change includes widely common institutional agreements such as setting specified materials, textbooks, and chapters as the course requirements which make it really hard for teachers to shift from lecturing method to group work, problem-based, and computer-based methods. Insufficient resources for teacher training are another major obstacle slowing and complicating the change of educational practices. Although there are some workshops held to raise teachers' awareness and information about specific issues, few- if any of them- apply a hands-on approach and a modeling one to practically present the issues. Consequently, the poor teachers are left with experiencing and testing new materials or methods on their own taking a considerable amount of time. The problem here traces back to inefficiency of training courses even worsened by lack of support regarding the new working methods on the part of the organizational and institutional context.

Parallel with the demands of the knowledge society, it is of paramount importance to find meticulously the sources of inertia in our educational system. A revolution in this institution should first start from changing the philosophy of education which necessitates changes in our concepts and practices of learning. Therefore, we have to deal with the inefficiency of our existing education system by pursuing a paradigm shift which is consistent with our own local circumstances and needs, meanwhile bearing in mind that according to the nature of educational institution, expecting an instantaneous change would seem illogical as reform of this institution is inextricably bound with the issue of time.

As it has been aforementioned, some of the problems inherent with our present educational paradigm can be listed as follows:

- Scrutinizing in the field, we can discover that our present paradigm mistakes a means for an end. It adopts the means or 'instruction' under a fallacy as the education's end or goal rather than setting learning as the most important priority through whatever means working best. The present Instruction Paradigm adopts a positivist-oriented perspective in which transmission of knowledge and product-oriented theories form the boundary of education, while the Learning Paradigm centers around a socially constructivist-oriented perspective, and process-oriented theories of learning in which student learning and success set the criteria for setting the boundary of education.
- Under the present paradigm, our schools are judged by being compared with each other. Inputs and process measures- factors like selectivity for admitting students, number of students in classes, and number of teachers holding Ph.D.,...- establish the cornerstones for quality.
- The performance of the teachers is evaluated in teaching terms, not learning terms; namely the number of passers/failures; failing to observe whether learning has occurred or not.
- Learning is viewed atomistically in the Instruction Paradigm. Teacher is the only source of knowledge delivery perhaps due to knowing which chunks of knowledge are most important, -banking model of instruction- while students are passive objects regurgitating information on tests. Students can be given certificates when they have received specified amount of instruction.
- The classroom atmosphere becomes competitive and individualistic under the Instruction Paradigm, representing a view that life is a sort of win-lose game rather than being cooperative, collaborative, and supportive. Here, success is regarded as an individual attainment rather than teamwork and group achievement.
- Under the Instruction Paradigm, the quality would be sacrificed for the sake of increasing the productivity, as the cost per hour of instruction per student defines productivity. This could in turn endanger the quality of teaching and learning by any increase in the student-to-faculty ratio.
- Despite the fact that students study English for seven years before being admitted to universities, they are incapable of having the required competencies such as communicative one. Additionally, both teachers and students find English classes boring and ineffective.



- One of the main sources of inertia refers to the present textbooks failing to meet both students' and teachers' needs by accentuating the grammatical function of language rather than its communicative role.
- Learners' creativity, innovation, and critical thinking skills are sacrificed by the traditional course-based lecturing model in which there is little attention paid to the learners' roles and learning process.
- The tight administrative framework as well the textbooks don't give the teachers the required elbowroom to exercise their own creative and novel decisions.
- Working under intensive hours imposed by the curriculum has made some teachers too busy to exert their full capacity and energy in applying their 'sense of plausibility' in classroom conditions.
- The tests backwash effect or the teaching to the test approach dictated by some entrance examinations have made teachers to spend time and effort in preparing students for such tests and hence lose their autonomy.
- Since learning is not integrated with the actual use of products or objects, it can't be transferred to out-of-classroom and real-life situations.
- Under the present paradigm, teacher's role, voice and mentality are not taken into account much by policy makers and syllabus designers.

When the dominant paradigm in the education system loses its capacity and efficiency to solve the main predicaments and present a bright optimistic view of the future, it is time for changing this kind of paradigm, though it is rather difficult. The main reason that made Instruction Paradigm so powerful in our country is its invisibility, as its pitfalls and deficiencies are assumed to be inherent with any system of education in the world and so no one questions its legitimacy.

Institutional and organizational change always impose some sort of risks on the agents of change as the revolutionary nature of social change brings about conflicts. Therefore, there is an urgent need to highlight organizational culture, learning capacity as well as management techniques avoiding unnecessary crisis to back up the change agents, lower the amount of possible risks, and form realistic perspectives about the future. Such perspectives can provide the means for assessing the future needs and requirements, weighing the emerging opportunities and obstacles and finally improving the capacities and potentialities to facilitate the process of change, and all of these are possible when learning, innovation, and knowledge production lay at the heart of the education system.

## CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, due to the status and role of English in globalization, its major influence on our native language, culture and identity, it seems essential that policy makers and language planners pay the due attention in setting their priorities in the departure to a paradigm shift by trying to take the positive, practical, and novel ideas of a new paradigm and reforming and improving the structural framework of our present education system, meanwhile maintaining a dialogic relationship among all agents of change such as ELT professionals, teachers and practitioners. Attending to the goals and priorities of English learning in our society and paying attention to the needs analysis of the learners, language policy makers and language planners should take the necessary steps in this arena. Iranian state-funded education system has to undergo a number of fundamental changes regarding the English teaching policy at all levels of education; One important aspect which has long been neglected. It goes without saying that these changes aim at promoting effective English teaching both in public and private schools in the country and fulfilling the learners' needs and expectations.

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## THE EXPRESSION OF REFUSALS IN THE UTTERANCE OF WEST JAVA SUNDANESE SOCIETY

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### ABSTRACT

This research aims at describing the forms of refusals expression and its realization in the utterance of Sundanese. Qualitative method uses by collecting data from spoken utterance of Sukabumi Sundanese Society. Based on research, found two forms of refusal expression namely; direct refusals and indirect refusals. Direct refusals is marked by lingual marker of “*teu tiasa*” (cann’t) then, a reason to strengthen the refusal. Indirect refusals act by verbal and non-verbally. The verbal refusal realization is expression by words and non-verbal act by silence then followed by an action. Indirect refusals can be in one, two, or three refusals realization. Refusing by giving the reason expresses for one refusal realization. Refusing by avoiding direct refusal and giving reason, refusing by apologizing and giving reason, and refusing by offering an alternative and giving reason express by two refusals realization. Indirect refusal with three refusals realization are refusing by giving reaction, reason, and avoid direct refusal then, refusing by delaying, confirming, and reason.

**KEYWORDS:** *expression of refusal, refusal realization, Sundanese.*

### INTRODUCTION

Sundanese is a local language of language group in Java Island and is clasified into languages of western archipelago and one of the large local languages in the area of Indonesian republic. The total of speaker is more than twenty five millions and spoken by mostly of Sundanese society, West Java. It is also in dialect, Sundanese language has variety dialect from social dialect, geographic, and temporal dialect such as, Banten Sundanese dialect, Bogor, Cianjur, Purwakarta, Bandung, Tasikmalaya, Ciamis, Cirebon, Kuningan, and Sumedang. The different dialects are in the intonation, vocabulary, meaning, and the used of words in sentence (Suryani NS, 2011).

Sundanese is a mother tounge for most of people in West Java and spoken widely in daily social interaction of Sundanese society. Basically Sundanese society social interaction bases on the attitude of “*silih asih, silih asah, and silih asuh*”. It means that every individual must love each other, teach each other, and care each other to create the atmospere that colored by intimacy, peacefulness, and familiarity.

In speech activity, Sundanese society always tries to pay attention to its politeness in speaking. For example; in Sundanese culture, especially if someone expresses his/her refusal and not to offend interlocutor will be expressed by various strategies or reasons that can be accepted by interlocutor. The expression often hears in Sundanese with the words of “*hade goreng ge ku basa*”. It reflects that Sundanese often express the refusal with various strategies. It means that interlocutor not to dispoint to what speaker’s answer on a certain request. In fact, when someone expresses the refusal, the speech act that uttered is face treatening act of interlocutor. Therefore, it is possible that a refusal expresses in variety form of speech acts such as; giving reaction, delay with reason or confirmation.

Refusal, according to Kartomiharjo (1993, in Nadar, 2009:98) is to state by verbal or non-verbal sign not to accept or not to agree to an invitation, offering or requesting. Refusal in Bahasa Indonesia is done by the used of refusing word “*tidak*” (no) or its synonym, refusal by using reason, condition, suggestion, comment or option, thanking utterance, and refusing

by the used comment.

Aziz (in Afiyani, 2012:54) says that the refusal speech act is viewed as an utterance on reaction from interlocutor to the variety of command from speaker whether just a command, request, invitation, or forbidding. Furthermore, he states that refusal is an action to show someone's inability or unwillingness to do what people want, whether expresses honestly or not. The point is the refusal uttered when someone refuses something from speaker. In the outline, refusal according to Aziz (2003:247) can divide into two kinds of refusals; there are direct refusal and indirect refusal and direct acceptance and indirect acceptances.

Rubin (1983:12-13 in Nadar, 2009:104) writes at least there are eight ways to express refusal in English, namely; 1. Silence, not to give any reaction, in various cultures, silence is the expression of refusal to offering, invitation, or requesting. 2. Offering an alternative, in various situation is to avoid speaker unhappy that expresses request or certain offer, interlocutor often uses suggestion as an alternative. 3. Delay, delay to request often uses to express refusal. 4. Accuse others, accuse others or the third person often uses to express the refusal. 5. Avoid direct refusal, the speaker expresses the refusal by indirect answer that as a try to avoid a direct reaction. 6. Not to give a specific reaction such as the expression of "God willing" is to respond an invitation. 7. Reason, in the expression "it's a good idea but...."; 8. State that an invitation or offer is not quite good, as in the expression of "it's not suitable".

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The previous research that relates to refusal have been conducted by Nani Sunarni (2008) who studies the refusal speech act in Japanese, which focuses to refusal speech act in requesting based on gender and age. Her discussions are in refusal speech acts form in the Japanese dialogue text, cohesion marker and coherency in Japanese dialogue refusal text, non-linguistics factor in the Japanese refusal speech act based on gender and age, and realization of various refusal speech acts in Japanese.

Another research is Jah Jahdiah's research (2010) who studies politeness realization of refusal speech acts in Banjar. The research describes politeness realization of refusal speech acts in imperatif and declaratif sentence, politeness strategy that uses in refusal speech act, and the function of face saving in social interaction.

Furthermore, Siti Afni Afiyani (2012) studies student politeness strategy in the utterance of refusal in communicating with teacher. Her research focuses to refusal utterance realization that does by student to the teacher when communicating in class, refusal strategy that does by student when communicating in class, and the background factor of refusal strategy used by student.

In this research that observes the language use of Sundanese society in spoken language of daily conversation that contains the expression of refusals and the forms of refusal. Researchers study as many as utterances in dialogue text transcription of spoken language and decides some dialogues that have refusal expression and its forms. Then, it focuses on analyzing refusal, especially the forms of refusal expression in the utterance of Sundanese society and the refusals realization in the utterance of Sundanese society.

## METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative method to understand the phenomena especially the element of refusal expression in the utterance of Sundanese society. The research involves ontology activity. The collected data is such as words, sentence, or description about something, which has meaning more than the number or frequency (Sutopo, 2002).

The research is descriptive by seeing the language fact that spoken in Sundanese society of Baros and Surade subdistrict Sukabumi, West Java. It describes factually about the unique utterance in language use especially in Sundanese refusals expression (Sudaryanto, 1992).

Data collection in the research uses *metode simak* and *metode cakap* with its techniques. *Metode simak* and its techniques are, namely: *sadap*, *libat cakap*, *simak bebas libat cakap*, *rekam*, and *catat*. *Metode cakap* with its technique conducts by the technique of *pancing*, *cakap semuka*, *tansemuka*, *rekam*, and *catat*. The process of data collection started from April to May 2013. Data analysis uses *metode padan* type five that interlocutor is as determinant. Therefore, the step of data analysis has pragmatic characteristic (Sudaryanto, 1993).

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

### *Direct Refusal*

It is direct refusal on requesting by interlocutor because the interlocutor directly expresses inability to comply with speaker's demand and is followed a reason. Giving reason after direct refusal by interlocutor actually is to strengthen the refusal that shows the interlocutor's inability to comply with speaker's demand definitely. The word use of *teu tiasa* (cann't) that uttered by interlocutor in refusing is a parameter that interlocutor's answer on a speaker's request is the expression in direct refusal. It can see in the conversation between speaker and interlocutor below.

Speaker : Pami ayeuna-ayeuna kitu pami bapa hoyong dianteur ka Surade.

If you can, take me to Surade nowadays.

Interlocutor : Bade naon ka Surade bapa?

What is your intention to Surade Sir?

Speaker : Aya peryogi.

I have a business.

Interlocutor : *Teu tiasa bapa da nuju praktek dugi ka kaping 20 Juni.*

*I cann't Sir I am having apprenticeship until June 20.*

*Tah tos praktek eta teh teras itu PKMD.*

*When it's finished, then I'll have PKMD.*

Speaker : Iraha atuh nya pami engkin uih deui ka itu?

When will you come home?

Interlocutor : Bade kamana bapa?

Where are you going Sir?

Speaker : Maksud bapa teh, hoyong jalan-jalan bapa teh.

I want to have sight seeing.

Interlocutor : Waduh hebat.

Wow that's great.

Muhun pa, tuh Karom gera pa, daek keun dianter kamana mendi ge.

Sir, that's Karom I think, he's willing to take you around the country.

Context:

On Sunday morning, the speaker comes to interlocutor's place and expresses the request to take speaker to Surade as interlocutor's hometown. Interlocutor is directly refuses speaker's request by expressing the inability because of having busy apprentices in hospital.

### *Indirect Refusal*

The realization of indirect refusal does by giving reaction to respond a request. Then, it states a reason and tries to avoid direct refusal. The interlocutor gives the respond on a request by indirect refusal aims to avoid from direct reaction. In this case, interlocutor expresses the refusal with three refusals realization. The point is to try not to refuse directly speaker's request. It shows in the conversation as follow:

Speaker : Bapa hoyong ieu kitu, hoyong dianter ka Surade.

I want you to take me to Surade.

Interlocutor : *Oh, . . . Dianter mah berarti kana.*

*Oh, ... If I take you, I'll take*

*Nyaeta nuju riweh ayeuna teh.*

*I mean, I'm getting busy now.*

Speaker : Nuju riweh nya?

You're busy?

Interlocutor : *Duka tah pami aya waktu luang mah.*

*I don't know If I have a spare time.*

Sabaraha dinten deuih hoyong dianterna?

How many days you want me to take you there?

Speaker : Tapi wios sih pami ieu naon teh, pami libur iraha Sule?

It's ok. When you have a day off, Sule?

Interlocutor : Oh, . . . teu acan libur.

Oh. . . it doesn't have a day off yet.  
Speaker : Teu acan libur nya?  
You don't have a day off yet?  
Interlocutor : Soalna kan ahir, ayuena sabulan deui teh bade praktek di Bunut sareng di  
It's the end, I'll have apprenticeship a month at Bunut and  
Panti Weda, terus sabulan deui teh PKMD, terus teu acan aya liburna  
Panti Weda, then I am going to have a month PKMD and there's no day off  
dugi ka akhir.  
till the end.  
Total teu acan aya libur tos sataun langkung teu acan aya libur.  
So, I have no day off yet and it's been a year more no day off yet.

Context:

On Saturday, it is about half past one at noon. The interlocutor comes to the class and asks the speaker's call. The speaker expresses a request to take to Surade and the interlocutor refuses by giving reaction with a reason and tries to avoid direct refusal.

The realization of indirect refusal can also do by a delay, confirmation, and reason. Delay to a request uses to express refusal on indirect request. Confirmation gives to strengthen refusal on a request. It does by interlocutor in order to satisfy on a delay. The point is not to refuse directly on speaker's request. The giving reason then utters, aims to avoid direct refusal that do by interlocutor in order not to offend the speaker. In this case, the refusal realization does with three refusals realization. There are a delay, confirmation, and reason. This, as can be seen in the conversation between speaker and interlocutor as follow:

Speaker : Hoyong diieu, hoyong dianter ka itu ka Surade.  
I want, want you to take me to Surade.  
Interlocutor : Surade? Suradena di mana deuih pa?  
Surade? Where is exactly Sir?  
Speaker : Pami ieu mah teu acan ieu sih, maksudna lamun ieu naon.  
I'm not so sure, I mean, If I  
Upami kitu, tapi teu acan teurang, eh, . daerah mana ieu teh aya sabaraha  
If I, but I don't know yet, eh, . . . which countyside, will be some  
desa tapi duka di desa mana.  
villages but I don't know which will be the village.  
Tapi saleresna mah teu minggon-minggon ayeuna sih.  
But actually, it's not in this recent week.  
Interlocutor : *Kin pami liburlah, pami.*  
*If it's a day off, if*  
Speaker : Pan aya kaping 25 nya libur teh?  
There is a date of 25, a day off?  
Interlocutor : *Upami, atos terang deui mah dugi ka kaping dua puluhan.*  
*If you have known till the date of twenty's.*  
Speaker : Dua puluhan.  
Twenty's.  
Interlocutor : Muhun.  
Ya.  
Speaker : Minggon payun?  
Next week?  
Teras?  
Then?  
Interlocutor : *Saterasna deuih teh bade PKMD.*  
*Then, I'll have PKMD.*  
Speaker : PKMD dugi ka?  
PKMD till?  
Interlocutor : Dugi ka, namung duka ka, Jampang Tengah dua minggu.  
Tiil, I don't know whether to Jampang Tengah for two weeks.



Speaker : Dua minggu?

Two weeks?

Interlocutor : Muhun.

Ya.

: *Pami ayeuna mah cigana mah pa, pami abdi sareng sadayana mereun*

*Now Sir, it seems that I'm with all students may be*

*tingkat tilu mah dugi ka kaping dua puluh ka itu mah moal tiasa aruih.*

*in third grade till the date of twenty more, cann't go home.*

Context:

On Saturday afternoon, it is about four pm speaker comes to interlocutor's place. The speaker asks interlocutor to take to Surade. Interlocutor refuses by giving delay, confirmation, and giving its refusal's reason.

Indirect refusal can realize by offering an alternative of choice and reason. Offering an alternative of choice gives to avoid the unhappy interlocutor who expresses the request. In this case, the speaker gives an alternative of choice with a given reason to strengthen the refusal. As it shows in the conversation as follow:

Speaker : Mi, Super.

Mam, Super.

Interlocutor : *Aya oge Nasional, Jang.*

*It is Nasional, Jang.*

Speaker : Jarum Super teu aya nya?

There's no Jarum Super?

Interlocutor : *GG Mild geuning.*

*There's GG Mild.*

*Acan balanja deui ieu teh.*

*I haven't purchased it yet.*

Speaker : Coklat we mi sareng kopina.

Coklat and coffee, Mam.

Interlocutor : Naha Coklat Jang?

Why is Coklat Jang?

Kopina kopi naon?

Coffee, What's coffee?

Speaker : Wios Mi teu aya Super mah.

It's ok Mam If there is no Super.

Mocacino.

Mocacino.

Kana plastik nya.

Use plastic.

Ieu hiji mi, jadi pas nya genep rebu.

I've this one Mam, so it's enough six thousand.

Context:

On Saturday morning at nine am, speaker comes to interlocutor's coffee shop to buy cigarette. The speaker asks Jarum Super to interlocutor but interlocutor refuses the speaker's request by giving an alternative of cigarette with a given reason.

Silence then follow by an action is a try to refuse indirectly. Silence not to give reaction on what interlocutor's request then turn face is an effort to emphasize the refusal. In this case, the refusal realization expresses by non-verbally. It is just silence then follows with an action as the confirmation on a refusal. It shows in the conversation as follow:

Speaker : Ku naon eta tarang?

What's wrong with your forehead?

Interlocutor 1 : Ku naon etah?

Why is it so?

Interlocutor 2 : Eta nabrak motor.

Speaker : Tadina mah bapa teh hoyong dianter ka nu kamari sonten tea.  
It was, I want to be taken to the place that we visited yesterday.

Interlocutor : *Punten we bapa, abdi teu tiasa nganter ka mana-mana.*  
*I apologize I cann't take you around.*  
*Da abdi ge seeur urusan pami di dieu mah.*  
*I've a lot of business if I'm here.*  
*Pan Umi tos sepuh, pami aya nanaon teh ka abdi.*  
*My mom has been well in year if there is something she'll ask me.*

Speaker : Oh, wios atuh.  
Oh, it's all right.  
Kin we bapa nyalira ka ditu.  
I'll go there alone.

- Interlocutor : Nya da, tadi ge jam salapan teh bade ka luar aya peryogi.  
Actually I would go out at nine I had a business.  
Motorna dianggo si Aa.  
The motor cycle was rode by my brother.  
Siang we tos si Aa ti sakola.  
How if in the afternoon, when my brother is home.
- Speaker : Oh, . enya, nya si Aa ngawulang di sakola pami enjing mah.  
Oh, . ya, your brother teaches at school in the morning.
- Interlocutor : Da abdi mah di dieu jarang ka luar Pa.  
I often go out if I'm at home Sir.  
Di bumi we, janten teu patos ieu sareng nu sanes teh.  
Just stay home, so I'm not too familiar with other.

Context:

On Saturday morning at ten, speaker expresses his wish to accompany him to some places by interlocutor. Interlocutor refuses by apologizing because interlocutor cannot accompany the speaker with its refusal reason.

Refusing by avoiding direct refusal where interlocutor expresses the refusal by indirect answer then it follows by refusal reason. It does by interlocutor in order to make happy speaker with interlocutor's answer, as in the conversation below:

- Speaker : Bu, sareng tuangna.  
Mam, let's have it together.
- Interlocutor 1 : *Sok we sareng si ujang, entos Ibu mah tadi.*  
*You have it with my son, I've already had.*
- Interlocutor 2 : Muhun Pa, sareng abdi.  
Yes Sir, with me.
- Interlocutor 1 : Punten Bapa, teu aya nanaon geuning di dieu mah.  
I'm sorry Sir, I cann't serve you anything.  
Maklum di kampung.  
It's in the country.
- Speaker : Hatur nuhun ibu sakieu ge.  
Thank you very much Mam.  
Ngarepotkeun we abdi ka dieu teh.  
It's a trouble for you when I'm here.
- Interlocutor 1 : Ah, henteu.  
Ah, No.  
Ngarepotkeun naon.  
What's trouble.

Context:

On Friday night at nine, speaker invites and asks the first interlocutor to have dinner together with him. The first interlocutor refuses by giving reason that the first interlocutor has had dinner and asks her son to accompany speaker to have dinner.

Refusing by giving reason is indirect refusal that gives to avoid refusal by interlocutor in order not to make speaker offend and unhappy because the request cann't comply by interlocutor. It can see in the conversation as follow:

- Speaker : Tah ieu ningan, mang Idim.  
That's Mr. Idim.  
Dambel di mana ayeuna?  
Where are you working now?
- Interlocutor 1 : Di dinya mereun, mang Idim di Pasir keneh.  
It's still he's still working in Pasir.
- Speaker : Oh, di Pasir keneh.  
Oh, still in Pasir.  
Mang Idim?  
Mr. Idim?

- Hoyong itu tadina mah.  
It was, I want.  
Sumur hoyong ditutup.  
A well wants to close.
- Interlocutor 2 : Oh, ditutup tea.  
Oh, it's closed.
- Speaker : Enya.
- Ya.
- Interlocutor 2 : *Da perlu aya waktu mereun ka abdi mah.*  
*For me it needs time.*
- Interlocutor 1 : Sumur di mana?  
Where is it?
- Interlocutor 2 : Sumur di jero tea ning.  
It's inside the house.  
Atawa ipisan deui kitu.  
Or make it thinner.  
Da teu nanaon bisa.  
It's ok, it can be.  
Jadi ku urang teh, ku sorangan teh bisa diangkat.  
So if it takes away by us, it can take away.  
Pan itu mah ageng.  
It's big, isn't.  
Jadi di ieu deui Jang.  
So, it makes Jang.  
Nyieun deui we.  
Make another one.

Context:

On Sunday afternoon, speaker comes to see and asks interlocutor to close the well. Interlocutor refuses by giving reason that interlocutor needs time because interlocutor is having a work.

CONCLUSION

The research is an effort to describe the forms of refusal and refusal realization in the utterance of Sundanese society. The findings describe that there are two forms of refusal expression namely: direct refusals and indirect refusals. Direct refusals is marked by lingual marker of "teu tiasa" (cann't) then, a reason to strengthen the refusal. Indirect refusals act by verbal and non-verbally. The verbal refusal realization is expression by words and non-verbal act by silence then followed by an action. Indirect refusals can be in one, two, or three refusals realization. It shows that Sundanese society is not indirectly refuses on certain request in order not to offend so that refusal expresses in some realizations. It can say that refusal realization reflects Sundanese sociaety as a society who always concern to politeness in speech activity especially in expressing refusal.

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THE STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SYLLABIC STRUCTURE AND THE  
PRODUCTIVITY RATE OF DERIVATIONAL VERB AFFIXATION IN PERSIAN

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**ABSTRACT**

Derivation is a process in which by adding a derivational affix a new word is produced. This process has been in the center of linguists' attention for ages and more referred to as an inflectional or morphosyntactic process. When studying the process of derivation, examining the productivity rate of a derivational affix (number of words produced by that affix) is of a great importance. This paper is based on the hypothesis that the syllabic structure and morphological factors affect the productivity rate of an affix. The relationship between the syllabic structure and the production rate of derivational verb suffixes is also examined. Among the total twenty derivational verb suffixes which exist in Persian language, seven are of the highest productivity rate, all of which begin with a vowel. It is concluded that the existence of a vowel at the initial position of the syllabic construction of an affix is the factor involved with the productivity of that affix in Persian language. Nevertheless, the morphological rules are also involved with the selection of these suffixes. A study of the nucleus of syllables in these suffixes also indicate that the two back vowels /a/ and /e/ are the most frequent in the nucleus position of these derivational suffixes; in other words, the syllabic structure and the phoneme layout of a suffix acts crucially in the productivity rate of these suffixes. Based on The results and statistics achieved, there is a close relationship between the syllabic structure of an affix and its productivity rate.

**KEYWORDS:** Syllabic Structure, Productivity, Derivational Suffixes, Persian.

**INTRODUCTION**

Examining different aspects of related process to morphophonemic level and the study of phoneme layout restrictions on productivity rate of affixes in Persian language are subjects that have been less in the focus and in most researches done in this field just some general cases are nearly satisfied.

Familiarity with the function of derivational verb affixes in Persian language can bring some tangible results that the most obvious one is the review of the process of creating new words based on affixation.

In this paper 487 verbs in total and 1746 verb derivations made by them based on the collected list by Tabatabaee (1997) are studied. The derived words are produced by the process of adding derivational verb affixes (20 affixes in total) to present stem and past stem of simple verbs in Persian language.

**BACKGROUND STUDY**

Derivation is considered as one of the frequent word formation processes in different languages such as Persian by means of which many words are created and added to the lexicon of a language. In this process adding derivational affixes such as prefix or suffix to the lexical or syntactic base leads to the creation of a new word. In Persian language many researches regarding the functionality of derivation and its difference with other word formation processes such as compounding have been done. Lazar (1971) points out the restrictions of verb formation by adding prefixes in Persian language and evaluates these restrictions as one of the features of Iranian languages family. He also mention show a verb is made from nouns or adjectives in Persian language and considers the verb /zæbtid/ (recorded) which is made from the Arabic word /zæbt/ (to record) as a sample of the Persian language



facility in word formation from noun and adjective. Sadeghi has also studied the structure of "fake infinitives" as what Lazar mentioned by the example of /zæbtidæn/ (Gerund for the verb "to record") and the possible reasons for the restriction of some simple verbs in Persian language. Kalbasi (1992) has also studied derivational word structure in Persian language and has considered its differences with word formation via compounding process. Keshani (1992), Shaghaghi (2007) and others have examined different aspects of derivation process. In most researches done the distinction between derivation and inflection has been described as: by adding derivational affixes to a stem a new word semantically or different in terms of grammatical categories is produced; in other words derivation makes a new word but inflection produces different forms of a word. Abbasi (2005, 2006) has paid attention to the productivity, morphological and syntactic word formation restrictions in Persian language especially in derivation process.

In this paper in addition to a brief study of the productivity concept in the function of derivational affixes, the existence of a possible relationship between the syllabic structures of verb suffixes in Persian language with their productivity rate has been examined.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1-Is there any meaningful relationship between the syllabic structure and the productivity rate of derivational verb affixes in Persian language?
- 2-Which syllabic structures among affixes have the most and least productivity rate?
- 3-Which vowels form the nucleus of the syllables belonging to more productive affixes?

### METHODOLOGY

The concept of production is raised in different phonological, morphological and syntactic levels. It seems that most researches done on Persian language have ignored the effect of phonetic and morphological factors on the productivity rate of derivational affixes.

In this paper the productivity of derivational verb affixes in Persian language has been phonologically examined and the productivity rate of an affix is determined based on the number of words derived from it in the standard and daily Persian language. The role of frequency in determining productivity has been in the center of attention of many linguists and some such as Aronoff (1983) and Bauer (2001), believe that productivity is the same as the frequency of using a rule. In this paper, it is also mentioned that the productivity criteria of derivational verb affixes in Persian language is the number of derivations produced by them.

#### *Procedure*

The data used in this research are taken from the book *Persian Simple Verbs and Word Formation* by Tabatabaee as it has been used as a valid source in this field in several researches. (In this paper 487 verbs in total and 1746 verb derivations made by them based on the collected list by Tabatabaee (1997) are studied). Having reviewed valid sources and glossaries, Tabatabaee in this book divides the Persian simple verbs into two categories as technical and non-technical. In this classification, Non-technical words include verbs that at least one of their forms (such as derivational or inflectional) is known to at least educated Persian speakers and technical verbs include verbs and their derivations that are not in the category of popular words and are just used in Specialized books. Non-technical verbs are collected from four references such as the *Persian dictionary by Moen*, *The dictionary of contemporary Persian*, *the Persian contrastive alphabetical dictionary and simple verb list* and the technical words are also from *physics words*, *chemistry words* and *dictionary of geology*. (Tabatabaee, 1997: 51-52)

In total 487 simple verbs in Persian are determined by Tabatabaee out of which 420 verbs are popular (non-technical) and 67 are technical verbs. These 487 simple verbs by the contribution of 20 derivational affixes that are divided into two categories of affixes added to present stem (15 affixes) and affixes added to past stem (5 affixes) produce Persian language verb derivations. In the case of verbs and their derivations, he posits two conditions:

First, they must be merely produced as a result of only one morphological process on present or past stem; in other words just the first derivations of these two stems must be stated and secondly the derivation produced must be an independent word (Tabatabaee: 53).

Total verb derivations produced from present stem are 762 words and the number of verb derivations produced from past stem is 984 words. In total there are 1746 verb derivations in Persian language that are used as the data needed for this research.

*Table 1: Derivational verb affixes in Persian and the number of derivations produced by them*

		-ænde	‘Agent noun noun Adjective	369
		-eʃ	Gerundive nouns	177
		-an	Stable/non stable adjective	69
		-h	Noun (with agentive, participle and infinitive and tool meanings)	66
		-a	Stable adjective	51
		-ø	Noun with infinitive meaning	17
		-gar	Agent noun Adjective	4
	present stem+	-ak	Noun-object Name of disease	4
		-ane	Noun, Adjective	4
		-ænd	Noun, Adjective	3
		-u:		3
		-nak	Adjective	3
		-u:n	Noun, adjective	3
		-æk	Noun-object	1
Root		-man	Noun	4
		-tʃe	Noun	1
			<b>Total: 762</b>	
		-n	Infinitive	487
		-h	Adjective, Participle	473
	Past stem+	-ø	Noun (with infinitive meaning)	48
		-ar	Noun(with infinitive, agentive or participle meaning)	15
		-gar	Adjective Agent noun	6
		-man	Noun	3
			<b>Total: 987</b>	

In the following, firstly the derivational verb suffixes in Persian language segregated based on the way they are added to present and past stem with the number of words derived from them are given, then the syllabic structures of affixes in relation with their productivity rate are studied. The next section of this article studies the nucleus of the

aforementioned affixes and their relation with their productivity rate. Finally, the conclusion and a summary of the data and the analysis done are represented.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Data of the research; the derivational verb suffixes in Persian language*

Derivational affixes in Persian are suffixes.

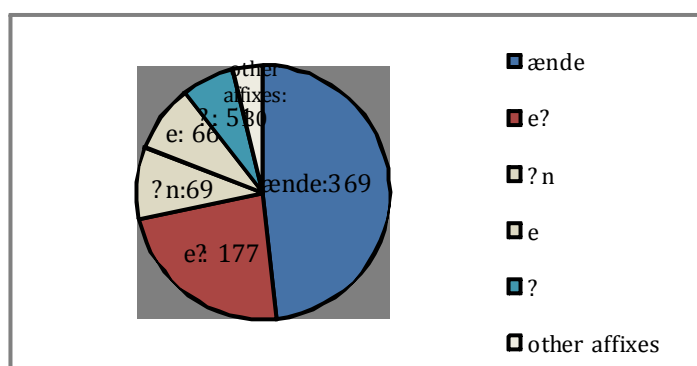
Derivational suffixes can be divided into two major categories:

1. Affixes added to present stem(15 suffixes)
2. Affixes added to past stem(5 suffixes)

Tables 1 and 2 show the derivational suffix, the number of its derivations and also the grammatical category of the produced derivations.

Table2: Affixes added to present stem

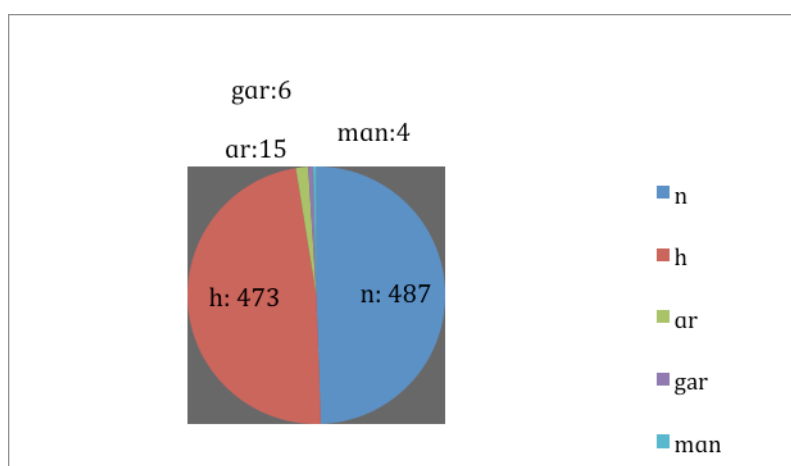
Row	suffix	Number of derivatives	Syllable structure	Grammatical category of derivations	Sample
1	/-ænde/	369	-vc-cv	Agent noun ‘ Tool noun ‘Adjective	/dævænde/, /amu:zænde/, /girænde/
2	/-eʃ/	177	-vc	Gerundive nouns	/ræveʃ/, /amizeʃ/
3	/-an/	69	-vc	Stable/non stable adjective	/lærzan/, /hærasan/
4	/-e/	66	-v	Noun (with agentive, participle or infinitive meaning) Tool names	/ræsane/, /tærqə/, /gerjə/, /male/
5	/-a/	51	-v	Stable adjective	/ku:ʃa/, /bina/
6	/-gar/	4	cvc	‘Agent noun Adjective	/pærhizgar/, /ʔamu:zgar/
7	/-ak/	4	-vc	Noun-object Name of disease	/pu:ʃak/, /su:zak/
8	/-ane/	4	-v-cv	Noun, adjective	/rævane/, /paʒu:hane/
9	/-ænd/	3	-vcc	Noun, adjective	/rævænd/, /xɔrænd/
10	/- u: /	3	-v	Agent noun	/zaʔu:/
11	/-nak/	3	cvc	Adjective	/su:znak/, /ʔændiʃnak/, /tabnak/
12	/-u:n/	3	-vc	Noun, adjective	/gærdu:n/, /ʔæzmu:n/
13	/-æk/	1	-vc	Noun-object	/pu:ʃæk/
14	/-man/	4	cvc	noun	/zajəman/, /risman/, /sazman/
15	/-tʃe/	1	cv	noun	/təpantʃe/



Graph1: the productivity rate of each affix added to the present stem

Table3: Affixes added to the past stem

Row	Suffix	Number of derivatives	Phonetic	Syllable structure	Grammatical category of derivations	Sample
1	-n	487	/-an/	-vc	Infinitive	
2	h	473	/-e/	-v	Participle, Adjective	
3	-ar	15	/-ar/	-vc	Noun (with infinitive, agentive or participle meaning)	
4	-gar	6	/- gar/	Cvc	Agent noun, Adjective	
5	-man	4	/- man/	cvc	Noun	



Graph 2: the productivity rate of each of the most frequent affixes added to past stem

### Study of the data

By studying the data given in tables 1 and 2 the following result is achieved:

- The number of added affixes to present stem is 15 which produce 762 derivations in total.
- The number of added affixes to past stem is 5 from which 984 words are derived in total.
- Although the number of words derived from past stem is 222 cases more than present stem, it is worth saying that infinitive maker suffix (-n) plays a great role in here by producing 487 derivations whereas by ignoring that (due to debates on infinitives to be of verb or noun nature) just 479 words are derived by past stem affixation.
- In each of the two tables above one third of the affixes are sensibly far more productive than the others; that is to say among 762 derived words produced by present stem, 732 words (96 percent) are productions of the first five affixes in table one. The same is also true in table two and out of 984 derivations produced by past stem 960 derivations (97 percent) are productions of the first two affixes.
- The syllabic structures of these 7 affixes (e, æn, a, e, an, eʃ, ænde) that are very productive all begin with a vowel.
- Among 20 verb suffixes in Persian language just 4 of them begin with a consonant (-gar, -nak, -man, -tʃe) that the 2 suffixes "-gar" and "-man" are both added to present and past stems.
- Among 1747 derived words with a verb root in Persian language, the total number of derivations produced by these 4 suffixes beginning with a consonant is only 21 (1/2 percent); in other words 8.98 percent of these derivations with a verb root choose the affixes that begin with a vowel.
- The only consonants known as the syllable onset of the verb affixes in Persian language are tʃ, m, n, g. However, the suffix tʃ only makes one derivation as /tæpantʃe/ which can be ignored in which case only the

3 consonants (m, n, g) can be considered as possible consonants for taking the position of the syllable onset of verb suffixes in Persian language.

#### ***Study of derivational affixes with a view to syllable nucleus***

Table 3 shows how Persian language vowels are distributed in the position of syllable nucleus in derivational verb suffixes. As this table shows, the back and low vowel *a* exists in 11 affixes of the total 20 which is of the highest frequency in this regard. However, in the case of productivity only 163 words are made in which this vowel is in the position of their nucleus. The vowel *u:* is also used in only 2 affixes and has produced 6 words.

*Table 4: The distribution of vowels in the nucleus of the syllable in derivational verb suffixes*

Vowel	Type of vowel	Number of affixes	Number of derivative
Æ	Front	4	860
E	Front	4	717
I	Front	0	0
a	Back	11	163
O	Back	0	0
u:	Back	2	6

By studying the data given in table 3 the results are as follow:

- The back vowels æ, e, i exist in the nucleus of 8 affixes regarding frequency and in total produce 5771 derivations that are equivalent to 90 percent of the total number of derivations produced by the process of derivational verb affixation in Persian.
- Among mid vowels of Persian language, the mid vowel e with the frequency of 4 affixes, produces 717 derivations that in this regard is not considered as the most productive syllable nucleus after the vowel æ.
- The vowels i,o, are not found in any affixes attached to present and past stems.
- The open vowels class of Persian language is considerably more productive than closed vowels in this regard.

#### **CONCLUSION**

In this paper, having examined the process of productivity known more as a morphosyntactic concept in linguistics science, it elaborated on some related issues based on morphology and the morphophonemic effects. Now After reviewing the evidence extracted from the data presented, the results are to be summarized and answers to the questions posed at the beginning of this research are represented:

- There is a meaningful relationship between the syllabic structure of derivational verb affixes in Persian language and their productivity rate as all 7 most productive affixes out of total 20 discussed here begin with a vowel. So it could be concluded that beginning with a vowel can be received as one of the factors of the productivity of that affix.
- The reverse could also be true. Only the 4 affixes beginning with a consonant are the most unproductive derivational affixes and can only produce 21 derivations which means 1.2 percent of the total derivations considered.
- The two front vowels æ, e are the most productive vowels used in the nucleus of the syllable in derivational verb affixes in Persian language. While the two vowels e and o are not found in the nucleus of any affixes. In general, it could be concluded that the category of front vowels of Persian language are more productive than back vowels in this regard.

By considering the issues raised in this article, it can be concluded that, although the productivity rate of derivational affixes to a great extent depends on morphological and semantic factors(some as blocking, syntactic and aesthetic factors), in Persian language the syllabic structure of affixes and the vowels located in the position of their nucleus have a meaningful and undeniable relation with the productivity of these affixes and this could be considered as one of the effective factors in the productivity of derivational verb affixes. The results presented are obvious enough to account for this statistical relation and correlation in this research. Reviewing the collaboration and common principles of morphology and phonology in case of such issues mentioned above can be combined with remarkable results.

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## THE EFFICACY OF MULTIMODAL VS. PRINT-BASED TEXTS FOR TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS TO IRANIAN HIGH SCHOOL THIRD GRADERS

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### ABSTRACT

Literacy education, specially teaching reading comprehension, for today's students whose environment is replete with visual, electronic, and digital texts, has experienced a "paradigm shift" (Bearne, 2003). Within the context of this changed literacy pedagogy, it is timely that challenges and implications of multimodal texts for reading comprehension education to be taken into consideration. Accordingly, this study aims to investigate the effect these multimodal texts might have on reading comprehension proficiency of Iranian high school third graders. To this end, the first phase of the study included a sample of 60 high school students who were homogenized and divided into experimental and control groups using an OPT (Oxford Placement Test). After a six-week period of using multimodal texts, a sample reading section of PET (Preliminary English Test), served as the posttest, was administered to the participants of both groups so as to measure their reading comprehension proficiency. The results illustrated that the idea of the effectiveness of using multimodal texts in L2 reading classrooms to improve student's comprehension process was supported. In the second phase of the study, a questionnaire was used to gauge the participants' perceptions and attitudes towards different modes of a text such as image, video, and audio. The present study would contribute new knowledge to the field by paving the way for more studies on multimodal textbooks, which many believe will be a regular part of our classrooms in the future. It suggests that if schools continue to invest heavily in textbooks, they will need to more carefully consider both the print and visual versions of the texts.

**KEYWORDS:** multimodal texts, reading comprehension, literacy education

### INTRODUCTION

Indubitably, current dramatic advances in technology-mediated educational settings have created a new pedagogical perspective in all subjects, and more specifically foreign language teaching program, and as a consequence, the world of literacy is also in the midst of dramatic changes (Coiro, 2003; Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Leu et al., 2008). Yet, many schools are not meeting the demands of today's young learners of English, nor are they preparing them for a life in an ever-changing world. Many educational systems in the first decade of the twenty-first century have not changed with the times even though there are well-researched calls for the need for curricular changes (e.g., Anstey & Bull, 2006; Bellanca & Brandt, 2010). Though digital versions of the textbook have been available for quite some time (Lewin, 2009; Surdin, 2009), these online versions are largely digital copies of the hard print versions (Burroughs, 2010; Foderaro, 2010), which means that they do not make the most of these digital spaces. On the other hand, in the realm of literacy education, unlike the digital changes, there is much discussion of the textual shift, and thus 'paradigm shift' (Bearne, 2003) that has occurred for today's students whose environment is filled with visual and pictorial texts, where the world of communication for children is entirely different from what schools offer and prepare them for (Kress, 2003; Gee, 2003). These kinds of texts, which are used to conceptualize the textual shift and changed learning paradigm, are referred to as multimodal texts.

Accordingly, multimodal texts are defined as texts which communicate their message using more than one semiotic mode, or channel of communication. Put it another way, Multimodal texts are those texts that have more than one 'mode' so that meaning is communicated through a synchronization of modes. That is, they may incorporate spoken or written language, still or moving images; they may be produced on paper or electronic screen and may incorporate sound. Different types of multimodal texts that students commonly encounter in their educational environment in print form are picture books, information books, newspapers and magazines. Although contemporary picture books are used extensively in many elementary and secondary reading programs, the primary focus in both elementary and secondary reading educations has been on the strategies and skills necessary for

understanding written language, i.e., print-based texts. This lack of pedagogical attention to visual images and visual systems of meaning presents serious challenges to teachers at a time when image has begun to dominate the lives of their students (Fleckenstein, 2002; Kress, 2003). Although many research projects have been conducted on the strategies readers should use to comprehend a written text, pedagogical approaches addressing various strategies for comprehending visual images, in particular those included in contemporary picture books, have only recently emerged in elementary and secondary pedagogical discussions (Anstey & Bull, 2006; King-Sears & Duke, 2010).

### *The nature of multimodal texts*

It is important to understand how the characteristics of texts impact reading comprehension, in particular the similarities and differences between traditional print-based and modern multimodal texts. Shared characteristics may include an understanding of the author's intent, the social purpose of a text or genre, how it is structured, whether it adheres to that structure, how well it is written, the subject matter, vocabulary, language choices, the reading level, and other surface features (Arizpe & Styles, 2003). However, Anstey (2002) proposed that there are key differences with multimodal texts. For example, there may be a blurring of genres as multimodal texts become more hybrid and intertextual in nature, with the notion of text continuing to change as technology and society changes. Multimodal texts, rather than having a fixed surface, use different modes of communication, with particular modes or combination of modes separately and independently offering opportunities or affordances for meaning making (Bearne, 2003; Walsh, 2006).

Although multimodal texts and print-based texts are not mutually exclusive, I will examine some of the differences that occur in the reading of multimodal texts compared with the reading of print-based texts. Two theoretical perspectives are brought together with the purpose of considering a conceptual framework for the reading of multimodal texts. The first perspective is based on established theories of reading education that have been traditionally applied to print-based texts and mostly monomodal texts. The second perspective draws on recent innovative research and conceptualization by others regarding the reading of images and multimodal texts.

The reading process in print-based texts involves different levels of decoding, responding and comprehending at affective and cognitive levels, critiquing and analyzing. Decoding involves using strategies of word recognition, pronunciation, vocabulary knowledge, and the recognition of graphic, morphemic and phonemic patterns. Levels of meaning, depending on the type of text, can be enhanced by the reader's background knowledge of the world, of how language works and of how texts work as well as the recognition of discourses and ideologies. Reading of multimodal texts, on the other hand, is a different process. A reader of a picture book or an information book needs to simultaneously process the message in the words, picture, images and graphics. In order to understand the multimodal texts such as picture books, the first step is the knowledge of the three categories of images. According to Harrison (2003), three categories of images are summarized as follow:

1. **Icon:** if an image bears a similarity or resemblance to our background knowledge about an object or person, it is considered iconic. Paintings, maps, and photographs are, but few, types of icons. For example, On the Web, a common icon is the house used to represent the home page.
2. **Index:** an image is an index as far as it helps us to understand the relationship between the image and the concept that it stands for. Indexical signs are confusing, and as such, require an accompanied text for us to recognize them. A common Web index is the upward-pointing arrow to indicate the top of a Web page.
3. **Symbol:** An image is a symbol when it has no visual or conceptual connection to an object or person. We know the meaning of the image only because of convention; that is, it's something we've learned. A common Web symbol is the line beneath a word or phrase used to indicate a link, as shown in Figure 1. Although the indexical and symbolic images play a partial role in some multimodal text, the primary focus of the present study is on iconic images, simply because many reading professionals such as Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) believe that these types of images are among the most common images used in contemporary textbooks.

**This is a link.**

*Figure 1: When a line appears beneath a word or phrase on the Web, it is a symbolic image.*

The similarities in the reading of either type of the texts occur in the meaning making and interpreting process. Whether reading words or images, or both, in a novel, a picture book, or an information text, we need to be able to understand the message to make meaning. However, if meaning making occurs as a basic process for reading all types of texts, the differences then must be related to the way different modes contribute to the process. But what are these differences? Clearly differences are dependent on the way modes are processed and how particular modes activate a meaning-making process for the reader. In multimodal texts, compared with print-based texts, the reader will use various senses (sight, hearing, tactile, kinesthetic) to respond to other modes. As an example, in reading print-based texts readers use their visual, and sometimes tactile, senses, whereas in reading multimodal texts, more senses including visual, tactile, hearing, and kinesthetic are used.

On the basis of aforementioned facts, it can be claimed that there have been a number of studies conducted on the effect of multimodal texts on students' learning processes. Few, however, investigated the way different modes of a text are processed by readers and which particular modes affect students' understanding the most. Accordingly, the present study aims to fill in the gap by employing both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

There have been many controversies regarding the types of literacy skills students of 21<sup>st</sup> century require and discussions concerning this issue have recently appeared in numerous educational publications receiving a variety of reactions (Bellanca & Brandt, 2010; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Many practitioners of the field (e.g., Kress, 2010; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003) have claimed that the skills a postmodern reader requires to understand and make meaning out of a text have expanded from simply being able to read and understand the traditional print-based texts to being capable of making meaning out of a variety of texts across traditional and new technologies. This shift from a focus on monomodal, print-based texts to a focus on the skills necessary for producing and consuming multimodal texts requires readers to navigate, design, interpret, and analyze texts in new and more interactive ways (Anstey & Bull, 2006; Serafini, 2009a; Unsworth, 2002).

In this regards, Coiro and Dobler (2007) began to explore new thought processes that are involved in multimodal texts reading comprehension in a study involving 11 skilled sixth grade readers. From their findings, they concluded that reading multimodal texts requires similar but more complex variations of print-text comprehension in the processes of prior knowledge, inferential reading strategies, and self-regulated reading. They concluded that print-based text reading processes were necessary, but not sufficient for making meaning out of texts accompanied by visual images, graphic elements, or sound effects. In similar vein, Verhoeven and Perfetti (2008) conducted a study and observed that the fundamental models of text comprehension have shown that text comprehension cannot be achieved with only the information that is present in the text. The learners should also use their knowledge to construct new knowledge, which is relevant to learners' experience and situation. Verhoeven and Perfetti also explained that the components, which are mixed up in multimodal text processing, allow the learner to make inferences about what is in the text based on their prior knowledge. Accordingly, to activate readers' prior knowledge, other sources of information such as visual images or supplemental videos can accompany the text. As such, the students using text model and pictorial model are expected to read more comprehensively than students who use only the text model.

The findings of a large number of studies conducted recently, both theoretical and practical, reveal that multimodal texts have a positive effect on the students' reading comprehension achievement. As an example, Son (2003) conducted a study to investigate the effect of three different types of reading text formats, namely, paper-based format (PF), computer based non-hypertext format (NHF), and computer-based hypertext format (HF). The study aimed to find out the degree of usefulness of hyperlinks on the online lexical resources, which provide readers with optional assistance during independent reading. The findings showed that the integration of text with sound and images eventually paves the way for greater comprehension of the reading text, as well as better pronunciation and contextual use of lexical items in a way that instructional paper-based texts cannot achieve. Similarly, Kuo, Yang, and Kuo (2010) conducted a study to investigate the effect of multimedia, specifically the Reading Comprehend (RC) Platform, on student's reading comprehension. RC Platform focuses on the integration of various multimedia. The result showed that the students displayed a high interest in the RC Platform and had also gained great benefits on reading comprehension via the technology-enhanced project within the RC Platform. Hence, the researcher concluded that the Platform enhanced students' performance in English reading comprehension.

Mayer's (2005) cognitive theory explains why multimodal texts might have a positive effect on improving students' reading comprehension skills. The theory proposes that the human's mind is composed of two different channels for processing information, that is, one for visual processing and the other for auditory processing. Learners process information that is presented to the eye (text) via the visual channel, and at the same time they can process information that is presented to the ears (audio) when information is presented to the ears (audio) via auditory channel. Thus, the students read comprehensively when information is presented in the two channels — visual and the auditory channels.

Finally, Segers, Verhoeven, and Hulstijn-Hendrikse (2008) investigated the effect of the cognitive processes underlying multimedia text understanding among students in basic schools. The students were taught reading comprehension lessons by using different formats: in written presentation accompanied by pictures, oral presentation only, and oral presentation accompanied by pictures. The findings showed that students using oral presentation with pictures performed better than students using written presentation accompanied by pictures.

There are, however, a number of studies carried out on reading comprehension processes from cognitive sciences perspectives that challenge the positive affect multimodal texts might have on students' reading comprehension skills. Some findings suggest that providing students with different modes does not always guarantee their reading comprehension improvement. Kalyuga, Chandler, and Sweller (2004), for example, maintain that when students are offered one mode at a time, their cognitions can process a text better than when they are offered multiple modes of texts simultaneously simply because this can avoid cognitive overloading and maximize memory functions. In this regards, Macedo-Rouet, et al. (2003), conducted a study, using 45 college students, on the effect of multimodal texts on students' reading comprehension proficiency. Considering Hypertext as an additional mode, they concluded that different modes such as hypertexts was the main reason of cognitive overloading and might decrease the learners' comprehension. They also added that texts accompanied by graphics would make reading more difficult without improving student's understanding. Similarly, Sweller (1988) found that when human mind tried to activate many processes simultaneously, the comprehension process slowed down. He pointed to a body of research that showed in particular how the processes of problem solving and schema acquisition, when employed simultaneously, seemed to interfere with each other.

Although the findings of these types of studies, which are related to cognitive approaches and the idea of what might be occurring within the mind as it processes information, may help the field of literacy to conceptualize reading as a series of discrete processes that bring about comprehension, and that this comprehension can be aided (or even hindered) by variables and combinations of modalities, but they may not be conclusive because most of the studies are conducted on small samples within a lab environment using college-aged students. Moreover, these cognitive approaches do not recognize the contexts of these reading events. They ignore variables beyond those that can be directly observed and controlled. As Unsworth (2001) claims, the school literacies have been experiencing rapid cultural and technological changes in form of communication, both oral and written, and the most salient among these changes is the significant impact of images and sounds on an increasing range of texts. Serafini (2011) has also underlined the importance of the visual element within texts by stating that "the texts that adolescents encounter today are often multimodal, meaning they incorporate a variety of modes, including visual images, hypertext, and graphic design elements along with written text" (p. 342).

Accordingly, the present study focuses on the interrelation of text, image/graphic, supplemental videos, and audio recordings of the text within the broad contextual lens of social semiotics. Although many studies have reviewed the closed link between multimodality and multiliteracies within the current educational settings (Serafini, 2011; Sewell & Denton, 2011; Unsworth, 2001; Walsh, 2010), or the connection between multimodality and foreign languages (Farias, Oblinovic & Orrego, 2011; Lamy, 2007), but hardly any previous research has focused on the role of multimodality and the reading comprehension of a foreign language. Even if such has been the case, the focus has been more on college-aged students than on high school students. Therefore, the present study aims at making contribution to this field by examining the multimodal texts and their effect on reading comprehension skills of Iranian high school third grade students.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the present study, the researchers seek to answer two questions regarding the impact multimodal texts might have on the reading comprehension skills of students. As such, multimodal theory informs my research questions with its focus on how various modes of academic texts, like pictures, audio recordings, or supplemental videos, might influence the comprehension and meaning making process. Accordingly, the following research questions have been formulated:

1. Do multimodal texts, compared to print-based texts, improve the reading comprehension skills of Iranian high school third graders?
2. What are students' perceptions and attitudes towards each modality (image, video, and audio)?

Accordingly, the present study is divided into two phases (*see figure 2*). The quantitative phase of the study seeks to answer the first question which addresses the comprehension, and qualitative phase of the study, which includes a questionnaire, seeks to answer the second question addressing meaning making process.

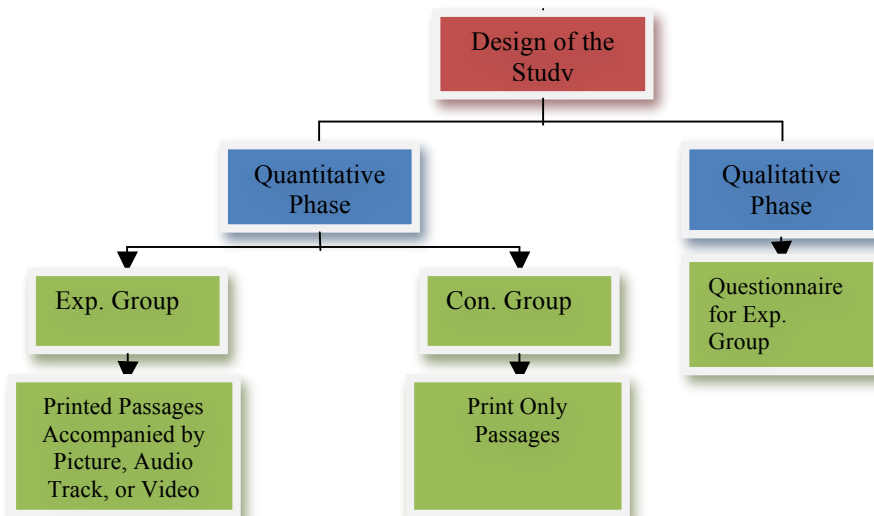


Figure 2: Diagram of the mixed methodology design used for this study.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

To reach the purpose of the study, initially a sample of 90 students from the population of high school third grade students from two public high schools in Isfahan, Iran, both male and female, aged between 15 and 17, was randomly selected. Using an OPT test, they were homogenized and divided into two groups, namely, experimental and control. Afterward, the reading proficiency of participants of the study was estimated in terms of ACTFL proficiency guidelines (2012), and as a result, 60 students, who enjoyed an approximately high level of reading proficiency (advanced low), were finally selected for the study so that it could be assumed that they had a good command of reading skills, and as a result, were familiar with the multiple-choice types of reading comprehension tests.

### Instruments

The instruments used for this study were of several kinds. First, an OPT (Oxford Placement Test), served as pretest, was used to select participants with the same level of general English proficiency. The other instrument used for this study was a PET (i.e., Preliminary English Test) reading sample (*See <http://www.cambridgeesol.org/exams/pet/index.html>*). A sample PET reading test was selected and given to the participants of both control and experimental groups, served as the reading comprehension posttest. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability of OPT and sample PET reading tests were estimated to be 0.80 and 0.78, respectively. A time allocation of 30 minutes was decided for the participants to be appropriate to answer the OPT test questions, and a 45 minutes time period was designed to participants to answer the posttest, which were all in multiple choice formats. The percentage of right answers was used as criterion for the final score of each student. In addition to these instruments, a total of 24 reading passages were also selected, of which 12 were accompanied by audio, image, and in some cases videos to be taught to the participants of experimental group and the rest were only print-based



passages [taken from Mirhassani & Farhady's (2012) *New Reading Through Interaction*, book two], used for the comparison group. In order to engage participants in the reading process, readings' topicality had to be appealing to them. As such, popular texts about music, media, taboo, and love issues were preferred. Also, in order for the passages to be of the same text difficulty as the passages included in the EFL course books of participants, Fogs' readability formula (see Farhady, et al, 1998, p. 82) was used. The readability index found for the EFL text book passages was approximately 26. Thus, this readability index was considered as the criterion against which the selection of the reading passages employed in the study were made. Finally, to answer the second research question, an opinionnaire (questionnaire) was also given to the participants hoping to find their attitudes and perceptions towards different modes of the text. Naturally, the validity and reliability of this instrument must be established based on specialists' opinions and piloting.

### ***Data Collection Procedures***

To accomplish the purpose of the present study, the following procedures were carried out. First, for the experimental phase of the study, an OPT test was administered to the participants to make sure that the participants of two groups were at the same level of proficiency, hence their homogeneity. During a six-week period, the reading classes of both groups were held twice a week, each session taking an hour and a half. Both control and experimental groups' reading classes were taught by the researcher focusing on various reading-related activities and skills such as introducing the topic, skimming, scanning, guessing the main idea of the passage based on the title, and the like. Evidently, these common activities were the same for both groups and formed a great part of a regular reading class for both groups. The experimental group's classes, however, were conducted somewhat differently. For example, due to the fact that the passages used for experimental group were accompanied by visual images, supplemental videos, and audio tracks, the participants were required to discuss about the relationship between text and picture of the text, or they were asked to interpret some of the ideas whenever they heard a change of voice, and so on. Predicting the content of the given passage, answering warm up questions, summarizing the passage, and inferring other information were among the other activities that students of the experimental group had to carry out during the session by looking at the picture and/or listening to audio of the related text.

On the whole, the activities practiced by the participants of the experimental group tended to rely somewhat on the relationships between texts and their accompanied images, audios, and/or videos. It was believed that because different modes (audio, video, and image) accompanied by the texts play a complementary role, gearing the texts with them would result in the learners' practicing skimming, scanning, or getting the main idea of the passages in a more interesting and efficient manner than the learners' skimming and scanning of the only printed texts.

After each session, the participants answered the comprehension questions related to the given text and finally after six weeks the results of both groups were compared by using a PET reading test as posttest. It should be noted that the test was first piloted with 20 EFL learners and some necessary changes were applied in terms of item characteristics, i.e., item facility and item discrimination. The appropriacy of materials, time, wording, and instruction of the test was also assessed by piloting the test. Then, to compare the progress of both groups after six weeks of instruction, an independent samples *t*-test was carried out on the mean scores of participants' posttest. Moreover, in order to answer the second research question and to gauge the participants' opinions and attitudes toward the effectiveness of using multimodal texts on their reading comprehension, the researcher provided the participants with a well-organized questionnaire. Giving some explanation on the reason the questionnaire was used, and some instruction on how to answer the questions, the researcher asked participants to complete the questionnaire. There were 15 questions and the questions were all multiple choice so that the participants were asked to choose from among 5 possible choices, based on the Likert Scale (i.e., completely agree, agree, not sure, disagree, completely disagree), the best one that is in line with their personal opinion.

### ***Data analysis***

With due regards to the data analysis process, certain statistical procedures were utilized to analyze and interpret the data elicited by the study. The main statistical procedure employed in this project was an independent *t*-test in order to compare the mean scores of the experimental and comparison groups of the study so as to determine whether or not the application of the treatment had any considerable effect on the learning process of the experimental group. Also, to statistically analyze the results of the posttest given to both groups for the experimental phase of the study, the software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was of great help in this research.



## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As table 1 shows, the descriptive statistics of the posttest of reading comprehension for experimental and control groups demonstrate that the participants of experimental group received a higher mean score ( $M=70.87$ ) than those of control group ( $M=54.53$ ) on reading test items. Moreover, the standard deviations in the two groups did not show great variability in the posttest scores.

*Table 1: Group statistics for the reading comprehension posttest on experimental and control groups*

### Group Statistics

	groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
reading posttest	experimental	30	70.87	6.016	1.098
	control	30	54.53	6.394	1.167

Considering the first research question “Do multimodal texts, compared to print-based texts, improve the reading comprehension skills of Iranian high school third graders”, an independent *t*-test was run to compare the mean scores of experimental and control groups on reading comprehension posttest. As it can be induced from table 2, the Levene’s test was not significant ( $p=.569$ ), indicating that equality of variances may safely be assumed. The results of the *t*-test also revealed that the difference between experimental and control groups’ mean scores on the posttest of reading comprehension was statistically significant ( $t(58)=10.191$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Consequently, the null hypothesis represented as “multimodal texts, compared to print-based texts do not improve the reading comprehension skills of Iranian high school third graders” would be rejected. Having received the treatment, the experimental group experienced better performance on the posttest of reading comprehension than control group. Due to the fact that the control group also underwent a course of instruction, it makes sense that at the end of the course, they have made some progress. But the point is that the control group has made little progress compared to the experimental group which is certain proof of effectiveness of treatment.

*Table 2: T-test for the effect of multimodal texts on the participants’ reading comprehension test scores*

### Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
reading posttest	Equal variances assumed	.328	.569	10.191	58	.000	16.333	1.603	13.125	19.542
	Equal variances not assumed			10.191	57.786	.000	16.333	1.603	13.125	19.542

The results of this study are not in line with what such researchers as Kalyuga, Chandler, and Sweller (2004) and Macedo-Rouet, et al. (2003) concluded from their studies. In both studies, it was found out that providing students with different modes (multimodal texts) at the same time would decrease their reading comprehension because this would cause the cognitive overloading and maximize the memory functions. It should be noted that these experimental research projects, which took cognitive approaches into consideration, were conducted on small samples within the lab environment and considered only variables that were directly observable. They did not consider the contexts of the reading events.

The findings of the experimental phase of the present study are, however, quite compatible with the results of the study conducted by Son (2003) in which it was concluded that the integration of text with sound and images

eventually paves the way for greater comprehension of the reading text, as well as better pronunciation and contextual use of lexical items in a way that instructional paper-based texts cannot achieve. The study's findings are also consistent with a number of other studies that have been completed within the field of new literacies, like Corio and Dobler (2007) who suggest that the print text reading processes are necessary but not sufficient for making meaning. This study certainly bolsters that claim, but it also extends it. Meaning-making in these kinds of literacies occurs through the reading, viewing, understanding, responding to and producing, and interacting with different modes of a given text. Accordingly, a single written mode may not be sufficient for students to discover the semantic maps as they read the text.

With due regards to the merits of reading multimodal texts, it should be noted that multimodal texts reading processes not only helped the participants of experimental group to gain a considerable amount of useful additional information on reading skills, but also served as a strong motivating factor and made the reading class more enjoyable, compared to regular reading classes with only print-based texts. The learners expressed frequently their satisfaction with practicing reading skills through different modes of a given text, and claimed that it is really necessary for them to learn how to deal with multimodal texts because nowadays a lot of authentic reading is multimodal.

Another advantage of reading multimodal texts is that learners would gradually become extensive readers simply because working with different modes of a given text would increase students' motivation towards reading. Healey (1999) points out that extensive reading improves reading proficiency. Accordingly, it seems reasonable to assume that learners who have become accustomed to reading multimodal texts will ultimately be spending more time reading English texts, which would lead to more extensive reading, than those who are limited to reading only print-based texts. As such, it can be claimed that most of the learners will continue their reading, which would lead to a natural improvement in their reading proficiency. That is why the superiority of the multimodal texts over traditional print-based texts can be claimed.

The above-mentioned facts stemmed from the experimental phase of the study inspired the researcher to further support the results of the study by gauging the opinion and attitudes of the participants of experimental group toward how multimodal texts might affect their reading skills. Accordingly, to answer the second research question, the researcher provided the participants of experimental group with a questionnaire so as to give their opinion and attitudes towards the affect of multimodal texts on their reading comprehension proficiency. The questionnaire was comprised of 15 items and took participants about 20 minutes to complete it. The analysis of the results obtained from the questionnaire revealed that reading multimodal texts, especially texts accompanied by visual images, videos, and graphics, played a major role in improving learners' reading comprehension proficiency. Majority of participants expressed their favourable reactions to the different modes of a text such as visual images, videos, and audio recordings.

As is illustrated in Table 3, the means of item 1 and 2 indicated that up to 90% of participants were interested in reading multimodal texts as their reading comprehension activities in their reading classes because they believed it is more enjoyable. In fact, fewer than 10% of participants seemed to show a specific preference for the print-based texts in their reading class. Maybe it might be assumed that they did not find any difference between multimodal texts and print-based texts in their comprehending a text. Regarding the reading comprehension activities, the answers to item 15 also revealed that most participants always flash back to the pictures of the text whenever it is hard for them to summarize the passage as a reading activity. Moreover, it can be resulted from their answers to items 7, 8, 12, and 14 that they highly accept the visual images and supplemental videos accompanied a given text as useful resources in comprehending the text and carrying out the reading comprehension activities. For example, they believed that visual images, compared to audio tracks of the text, would be of great help in fulfilling such activities as summarizing the passage, predicting the content of the passage, expressing the main idea of the passage, and guessing the meaning of unknown words from the context.

*Table 3: Participants' responses to the items concerning their beliefs about multimodal texts.*

	Item Explanation	Mean out of 5
1	I am interested in reading activities, using multimodal texts.	4.5
2	Reading multimodal texts are more enjoyable and profitable.	4.5
3	I would feel more confident completing reading activities when the text is accompanied by related images, videos, and/or audio recordings.	3.7
4	Reading multimodal texts will improve my self-confidence when it comes to answering a reading comprehension question.	3.5
5	I make faster progress in the L2 reading comprehension when I read texts accompanied by both images and audio tracks.	4.7
6	Processing different modes of a text while reading helps me better recall the content of a passage later.	4
7	Images/graphics of the text serve as an adequate resource in understanding the text in foreign language reading classes.	4.2
8	I can easily summarize a given passage when it is accompanied by related visual images or supplemental videos.	4.5
9	Reading multimodal texts has a positive effect on my comprehension, be it print text with audio or print text with image.	3.2
10	By listening to audio recordings of a given passage, I feel I can easily get the main idea of the passage.	2.8
11	At some stages of comprehension, the audio track helps me to understand the text easier.	3
12	At some stages of comprehension, the visual images help me to understand the text easier.	4.5
13	Audio tracks of the text help me recall the unknown vocabulary of the text easier.	2.5
14	Visual images of the text help me recall the unknown vocabulary of the text easier.	4
15	I tend to flash back to visual images of the passage whenever it is hard to summarize the text.	4.2

In terms of students' sense of self-efficacy, it was resulted, as the mean of answers to item 3 indicates, that above 74% of participants had general beliefs about how different modes of a text would help them to understand the text, and that they would feel more confident completing reading assignments of multimodal texts versus print version of the text. In fact, it was general perceptions of students in terms of self-efficacy, which was not related to any particular mode of a text. By looking at answers to items 8 and 12, however, it seems reasonable to assume that students would have increased feelings of confidence in carrying out comprehension activities of a given text accompanied by visual images or supplemental videos. In other words, many students tied their sense of competence to specific modes of a text such as visual pictures/graphics or videos serving as additional useful resources in comprehending the text. In this regards, Bempechat (2008) points out that access to supplemental resources is a strong factor in shaping what students believe about their ability to complete a reading task.

On the whole, the means of the participants' answers to the questions revealed some facts, which would follow: a) all participants believed that different modes of a given text could be considered as useful aids in comprehending reading passages of English, b) as most participants claimed, the use of visual images and graphics was of great help to student' reading comprehension in a way that provided them with an overview of the text so that they could become familiar with what the text might be about. The use of visual pictures also improved students' understanding of the text, as they believed, because pictures helped them to keep information in their minds, and c) visual images and supplemental videos helped students more in comprehending the passage than did audio recordings of the text. That is, it was resulted that the use of printed version of the texts accompanied by visual images or graphics was of greater help to students' reading comprehension skills, compared to printed version of the texts accompanied by only audio tracks. A few students, however, believed that audio recordings of the passage did actually help them to grasp the main idea of the passage because they were less fluent readers compared to others.

The findings of the questionnaire are somewhat contrary to what Segers and Hulstijn-Hendrikse (2008) concluded from their investigation on the effect of different modes of a text on reading comprehension of students in basic schools. They taught participants reading comprehension lessons by using different formats; in written presentation only accompanied by pictures, oral presentation only, and oral presentation accompanied by pictures, and found out that students using oral presentation with pictures performed better than students using written presentation accompanied by pictures. In this study, conversely, it was found out that most student claimed texts accompanied by

visual images, videos, and/or graphics were of greater help to their reading comprehension proficiency than those accompanied by audio recordings. What is of most important, however, is that a text accompanied by different modes, be it visual or oral, is empirically proved to have more positive effect on students' understanding than a text in print version only.

## CONCLUSION

In this mixed methodology project, the researcher put an attempt to quantitatively and qualitatively document the effect multimodal texts might have on reading comprehension skills of Iranian high school third graders. Considering the research questions and the data that were collected during the two phases of the study (i.e., experimental phase and qualitative phase), the following conclusions was made. The findings of the experimental phase of the study revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of experimental and control groups on the posttest of reading comprehension. This means that multimodal texts, compared to traditional print-based texts, had a positive effect on students' reading comprehension skills. They can result in greater depth of language processing by presenting multiple input modalities and increasing motivation among learner. As a consequence of this increasing motivation, students would put in more time reading English texts, which in turn could lead to their extensive reading. The results of the questionnaire, on the other hand, indicated that all students believed different modes of a text, be it visual or oral, brought together can serve as a useful resource in reading comprehension. Most of the students, however, would prefer the texts to be accompanied by visual images and graphics than by audio recordings, and claimed that visual images could be of greater help to their understanding of the passage by virtue of the fact that the pictures and supplemental videos provided them with a background knowledge and an overview of the content of the passage.

## Limitations of the study

There are a number of limitations which might have influenced the findings of the present study and might have restricted the generalizability of the results. First, the small-scale nature of the research, i.e. the limited number of selected passages and the small sample participants, was an important limitation. Evidently, the choice of a larger sample, more passages, and longer hours dedicated to teaching reading skills would increase the reliability of the results. A limited period of time for instruction (twelve sessions) is perhaps not enough to lead to noticeable changes in the students' general reading proficiency.

In addition, this study was limited to Iranian high school third graders with the same proficiency levels. A comprehensive pedagogical model of graphic, picture, audio, and written relations in multimodal texts needs to examine the effects of multimodal texts on different types of learners. Therefore, further investigation is needed into the complementary and concurrent effects of these texts on different proficiency levels, field dependent vs. field independent learners, and learners from different cultural backgrounds.

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## INVESTIGATING THE EFFECT OF THINK ALOUD STRATEGY ON READING COMPREHENSION ABILITY AMONG EFL UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of conducting the current study is to investigate the effect of think aloud strategy on improving reading comprehension ability among Iranian English foreign language (EFL) university students in bachelor level. The required data were obtained from 80 students (male-female). A questionnaire based on Sukyadi and Uswatun (2000) questionnaire, was distributed among the participants to screen the students who are familiar with think aloud strategy. Then a reading comprehension test based on Sukyadi & Uswatun (2000) was performed among students to consider the effect of think aloud strategy on reading comprehension ability. The data obtained throughout the study were analyzed via SPSS software. To consider the normality of the statistical Population, kolmogrove- semirnov test was applied. The findings of this study revealed that those students - familiar with think aloud strategy can apply appropriately the prior knowledge and connect the new information to what they already know. Based on the findings, think aloud evokes students to apply the cognitive process and helps them to access the background knowledge of the texts. Accordingly, think aloud strategy improves students reading comprehension ability.

**KEYWORDS:** Think Aloud, Reading Comprehension, Comprehension Strategy

### INTRODUCTION

Reading is a collection of linguistic and cognitive skills that are embedded and hierarchical in nature. Reading comprehension, for everyone who faces with a text in every type, can be as a highly complex cognitive process, involving intentional interaction between the reader and the text to create meaning (Tovani, 2000). In the other words, comprehension doesn't just happen, but also it requires efforts from the reader (Neufeld, 2002). Readers must intentionally and purposefully work to create the meaning from what they read. Good readers become so fluent and automatic at strategic comprehension processing, that we all rarely see the work they are doing. Most of results are based on studies of how good readers interact with texts. Researchers have found that good readers are active or strategic readers who use a variety of comprehension strategies before, during and after the reading a text (Atkinson, 1975). Strategic processing, a necessity for efficient and effective comprehension, involves using strategies to understand the text, knowing when to use the various strategies, actively thinking about, monitoring what is read and understanding text structure and engaging in meaningful discussion about text (Tovani, 2000). Think aloud helps to enhance student's ability of the thinking process and understand what they comprehend (Block & Israel, 2004). It allows for the reader to connect meaning and understanding with the text. Block and Israel (2004), say that, students feel that think aloud is beneficial for their thinking process, when the correct method is taught to them and it allows for teachers to become better educator. Teachers show their thinking process and how their thoughts are occurring during the reading for students who are struggling with comprehension. Through using thinking aloud, teachers are able to vocalize how they think as they read (Davey, 1983). Along with the hands on learning, learning from text is one of important aspect of any content areas. (Neufeld, 2002). If students are taught comprehension strategies explicitly, this can help them to read more effectively in other contents area. According to Neufeld (2002), comprehension strategy instruction, will be the most effective, if it is being taught in context with what students are learning (Neufeld, 2002). If they expected to read something, then they need to be taught the comprehension strategies that will help them to understand this new concept.

Foundation of think aloud is what psychologists in 1920 and 1930 referred to as to introspection method. Introspection is based on an idea that one can observe events that take place in consciousness more or less, as one can observe events in outside world (Someran, 1994). In 1920, several researchers asked subjects to think or talk aloud when facing with a given problem. Watson (1998), an early behaviorist, documented the first analysis of an experiment using think aloud as a research tool. His findings were the beginning of the think aloud method breaking away from the introspection method. He summarizes his findings as *following*:

A good deal, more can be learned, about psychology of thinking, by making subjects think aloud definite problems than by trusting to the unscientific method introspection (Ericson & Simon, 1998). But the history of think aloud is not without controversy. Kitchener and James (1986), and other popular psychologists of time, took the idea of introspection to extremes. They asserted that trained psychologist, could observe their own thoughts process by using introspection method on themselves to gather data.

Today, think aloud plays a major part in educational research as a tool for studying both teachers and student's thought processes (Wittrock, 1986). Think aloud is also a popular method in scientific communities of psychology and computer science. It is a staple method in usability in laboratories, across the world. In fact, according to some researchers, think aloud is often described as the most widely used evaluation method, in the computer industry (Jacob, 1998). The think aloud instructional strategy, is used to demonstrate what a thought process is. Teachers verbalize what they are thinking as they perform a particular task, read a passage, or solve a problem to enable student to hear the inferences and choices that are being made (Strong, 2004, p 152).

### ***Why we use think aloud?***

According to Smilovitz (1994), it is used for several purposes: first, it helps student to learn to monitor their thinking as they read and improve their comprehension. Second, it teaches student to reread a sentence, read ahead to clarify, and /or look for context clues to make sense of what they read. Third, it slows down reading process and allows students to monitor their understanding of a text. There are various researches about think aloud as a way of improving reading comprehension abilities exemplified the strengths and weakness of the think aloud method in a study by Smilovitz (1994) entitled as: are we overlooking some usability testing method?.

Jordan (1998) writes that a think aloud method is asking participants to perform two tasks, first task which they are performing for the researcher, and the second task of talking about their thoughts. Jordan (1998) suggests that, it is quite possible that the task can clash. This can manifest itself as difficulties in the first task, caused by having part of working memory, being used taken up by verbalization of their thoughts.

The essential concept here is that, verbal reporting is the verbalization of information that your mind has stored in working memory (Somerén, 1994). Researchers, have long been aware of this, and have invented protocols that tax working memory as little as possible. One common protocol is to have users practice thinking aloud, on a mock task, before they begin the real task (Cennamo, 1995).

Based on what was said, think aloud method from its birthday as psychology introspection, to its developments, and has proven as a scientifically respectable method. The main goal of this study is to investigating the effect of think aloud strategy on improving reading comprehension ability among EFL Iranian students in bachelor level. Other purposes are briefly mentioned as following:

1. Determining if there is any meaningful difference between students who use and don't use this strategy in responding to reading comprehension questions.
2. Determining the effect of sex on function of using think aloud strategy.
3. Determining if there is any meaningful difference between the performance of students using this strategy in Azad and State universities.
4. Determining the effect of think aloud strategy on comprehending the main idea of story texts.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Does familiarity with think aloud strategy can cause a meaningful difference in obtained score?
2. Does the gender of the students make a meaningful difference in obtained score?
3. Does university (State-Azad) makes a meaningful difference in obtained scores?

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Participants***

The subjects in this research were 80 Iranian male and female students studying English teaching at Arak universities (Iran, Arak province, include Azad university-State university). A questionnaire based on sukyadi and

uswatn (2000) questionnaire, was distributed among 80 students to screen the number of students who are familiar with think aloud strategy and divide participants into two different groups. The first group are familiar with think aloud strategy and the second group are not. Among 80 students, 32 students were familiar with this strategy and 48 students were not. Tables 1 and 2 show the frequency of respondents based on gender and university.

*Table 1: Frequency of respondents based on gender*

Sex	Percent	Frequency
Female	45	36
Male	55	44
Sum	100	80

#### *Sex*

The First data related to personal characteristics, is about sex of respondents. According to the table 1, %55 (44 people) of respondent are male and %45 (36 people) are female.

*Table 2: Frequency of respondent based on university*

University	percent	Frequency
State university	50	40
Azad university	50	40
Sum	100	80

#### *University*

According to university, respondents were classified into two groups, as table 2 revealed, % 50 (40 people) of respondents study English teaching in Azad university and %50 (40 people) in State university.

#### **Materials**

In this study, different sample movies (Animation) related to think aloud strategy were presented for students in order to introduce the main ideas of this strategy to those students who are familiar with think aloud and those who are not familiar.

#### **Instruments**

As the first instrument, a questionnaire based on uswatun and Sukyadi(2000) questionnaire which its reliability was calculated using Cornoba Alfa (0/81) was distributed among 80 students to screen the students who had applied the think aloud strategy before and were familiar with this strategy. Accordingly, students who were not familiar with think aloud strategy was separated from other participants. Then a reading comprehension test based on sukyadi and uswatun (2000), including 100 questions was distributed among these two groups to evaluate the effect of think aloud strategy on reading comprehension ability. Criteria for answering reading comprehension test are listed as following:

Good: 70 (answer to 70 questions of reading comprehension test), weak: 40, Moderate: higher than 40 and lower than 70.

#### **Procedures**

What the researcher used to conduct the research in forecasted time, and procedures of collecting data for statistical population are provided below:

#### ***Date Collection procedures***

Just prior to the beginning of research, the researcher obtained the consent of managers of state and Azad universities of Arak province (Iran, Arak province includes Azad university and state university) for participating their students in this study, then the researcher explained the complete details and purposes of the research study and informed the probable consequences of participating in the study for them. The researcher distributed a questionnaire based on Uswatun and Sukyadi (2000), among students. Based on familiarity with this strategy, students filled the questionnaire. Then during the conducting research which took one month, the researcher applied a reading comprehension test among all 80 students to evaluate the effect of think aloud strategy on reading comprehension ability and compare the performance of these two groups. First group were students familiar with think aloud strategy and second group were not familiar.

#### ***Data analysis procedures***

After collecting data from the questionnaire, the researcher divided the participants into two different groups based on familiarity and unfamiliarity with think aloud strategy. After applying a reading comprehension test among students, for comparing the marks of these two groups (marks ranged 0-100), using SPSS (statistical package for social science) software and applying an independent t-test, the researcher analyzed the data.

#### ***Data analysis***

##### ***Familiarity with think a loud strategy***

Attending to familiarity with think aloud strategy, respondents are classified into two groups. As table 3 reveals, % 40 (32 people) of respondents are familiar with this strategy and % 60 (48 people) are not.

*Table 3: Frequency of respondents based on familiarity with think aloud strategy*

<b>Familiarity</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Familiar	40	32
Unfamiliar	60	48
Sum	100	80

##### ***Familiarity with think aloud strategy based on sex***

As table 4 reveals, 14 of girls are familiar with think aloud strategy and 22 are not familiar. 18 boys are familiar with this strategy and 26 boys are not familiar.

*Table 4: Frequency of the subjects based on gender and familiarity with think aloud strategy*

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Familiarity with think aloud strategy</b>		<b>Sum</b>
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
<b>Female</b>	14	22	36
<b>Male</b>	18	26	44
<b>Sum</b>	32	48	80

##### ***Familiarity with think aloud strategy based on university***

As table 5 shows, 14 students of state university are familiar with think aloud strategy and 26 students are not. 18 students of Azad university are familiar with this strategy and the rest are not.

Table 5: Familiarity with think aloud based on university

University	Familiarity with think aloud strategy		Sum
	Yes	No	
State university	14	26	40
Azad university	18	22	40
Sum	32	48	80

*Performance of the subjects based on sex*

As table 6 reveals, 18 girls had a good performance in answering the questions, 12 girls had a moderate performance, and 6 girls had a weak performance. As for the male subjects, 28 boys had a good performance in answering the questions, 8 had a moderate performance and the other subjects had a weak performance.

Table 6: The frequency of the subjects performance based on sex

Sex	PERFORMANCE			sum
	Good	Moderate	Bad(weak)	
Female	18	12	6	36
Male	28	8	8	44

*The performance of the subjects based on university*

As table 7 shows, 22 students of state university had a good performance in answering the questions, 12 students had a moderate performance and 6 students had a weak performance in answering the questions. As for Azad university, 24 students had a good performance in answering the questions and 8 had an moderate performance and the others had a weak performance in answering the questions.

Table 7: Performance of students based on university

University	Performance			Sum
	Good	Moderate	Bad(weak)	
State university	22	12	6	40
Azad university	24	8	8	40
Sum	46	20	14	80

*Familiarity with think aloud and performance of students*

As table 9 reveals, 26 students who are familiar with this strategy had a good performance in answering the questions; two of them had a moderate performance and two students had a weak performance. As for unfamiliar students, 20 students had a good performance in responding the questions and 18 students had a moderate and 10 students had a weak performance.

Table 9: Frequency of the subject's performance based on familiarity with think aloud strategy

Familiarity with think aloud	Performance			Sum
	Good	Moderate	Bad(weak)	
Familiar	26	2	4	32
Unfamiliar	20	18	10	48
Sum	46	20	14	80

*Descriptive statistics:*

As table 10 shows, mean (67.85) is between 41 to 69, it reveals that the test scores are moderate; standard deviation also is 18.57

Highest obtained score is 94 and lowest score is 29

Table 10: Descriptive statistics related to test scores

Variables	Amounts
Number	80
Mean	67.85
Standard deviation	18.57
Range	65.00
Maximum	94.00
Minimum	29.00

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First of all, statistical population is tested by Kolmogorov Smirnov test. Results are listed as following:

Table 11: Kolmogorov –Smirnov test for consideration of being normality of statistical population

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
Number		Sum
		80
Normal Parameters	Mean	67.85
	Std. Deviation	18.57
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z		0.776
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		0.601
A Test distribution is Normal.		
B Calculated from data.		

According to meaningful obtained level (0.601) which is more than (0.05), it can be concluded that statistical population has a normal distribution. Because of the normality of statistical population, the researcher used independent t-test to test the research hypothesis.

### Hypothesis 1:

Familiarity with think aloud strategy can  
Cause a meaningful difference in obtained score:  
This hypothesis is defined as below:

$$\begin{cases} H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 \\ H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2 \end{cases}$$

According to hypothesis 1, obtained mean score by students who are familiar with think aloud strategy and those who are not, shows a meaningful difference. Null hypothesis stated that there is no a meaningful difference in mean scores of familiar and unfamiliar students.

Table 12: Independent t-test (statistics related to performance of students based on familiarity with think aloud)

Meaning full level(p)	T	Grade Freedom	Differences means	Standard deviation	Mean	Number	Variable
0.042	1.852	38	10.77	17.303	74.312	16	Familiar
				18.476	63.541	24	Unfamiliar

### Hypothesis 2:

Sex of students makes a meaningful difference in obtained score.  
This hypothesis is defined as below :



$$\begin{cases} H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 \\ H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2 \end{cases}$$

In this hypothesis, there is a meaningful difference between obtained mean scores of girls and obtained mean scores of boys.

Table 13: Independent t-test (statistics related to performance of students based on gender)

Meaning level(p)	T	Grade Freedom	Differences means	Standard deviation	Mean	Number	Variable
0.708	-0.377	38	-2.25	19.02	66.61	36	Male
				18.58	68.86	44	Female

Hypothesis 3:

University (State – Azad) makes a meaningful difference in obtained score.

This hypothesis is defined as below:

$$\begin{cases} H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2 \\ H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2 \end{cases}$$

Based on this hypothesis, between the obtained score of the subjects in State and Azad universities, there is a meaningful difference. Based on the null hypothesis, there is no meaningful difference in the obtained mean scores of the participants.

Table 14: Independent t-test (statistics related to performance of students based on university)

Meaning level(p)	T	Grade Freedom	Differences means	Standard deviation	Mean	Number	Variable
0.987	0.017	38	0.1	18.28	67.90	40	STATSE
				19.35	67.80	40	AZAD

### Discussion

As mentioned earlier, Think aloud is a strategy which helps to enhance student's ability of the thinking process and understand what they comprehend (Block & Israel, 2004). It allows for the reader to connect meaning and understanding with the text. According to results derived by SPSS software, research hypothesis are considered as following:

#### Hypothesis 1:

*Familiarity with think aloud strategy*

*Causes a meaningful difference in obtained score.*

As table 12 reveals, ( $t_t = 1.852 > t_{0.05,38} = 1.645$ ), and according to meaningful level ( $P=0/042<0/05$ ), null hypothesis is rejected and hypothesis 1 is accepted.

Accordingly, difference between mean scores of the students who are familiar with think aloud strategy and those who are not is positive. We can conclude that, students who are familiar with this strategy had a better performance in obtaining the scores. Generally, familiarity with think aloud strategy improves ability in reading comprehension tests.

#### Hypothesis 2:

*sex of students, makes a meaningful difference, in obtained score by them.*

In this hypothesis, there is a meaningful difference between obtained mean scores of girls and obtained mean scores of boys.

According to table 13, ( $t_t = -0.377 > t_{0.05,38} = -1.645$ ), and meaningful level is ( $P=0/708<0/05$ )

There is no reason for rejection of null hypothesis; accordingly, sex of students will not make a meaningful difference in the obtained mean score and hypothesis 2 is rejected.

### Hypothesis 3:

*type of university (State – Azad) makes a meaningful difference in obtained score.*

According to table 14, ( $t_t = 0.017 < t_{0.05,34} = 1.645$ ), and meaningful level is ( $p=0.05>0.987$ ). There is in no reason, to reject the null hypothesis. Therefore, type of university, doesn't make a meaningful difference in obtained mean scores in the comprehension test. According to meaningful level ( $P=0.042<0.05$ ), null hypothesis is rejected and hypothesis 1 is accepted.

As regards, Difference between mean of scores by students who are familiar with think aloud strategy and those who are not familiar with this strategy, is positive, we can conclude that student who are familiar with this strategy, were better in obtaining the score. The findings of this study revealed that those students familiar with think aloud strategy can apply appropriately the prior knowledge and connect the new information to what they already know. Based on the findings, think aloud evokes students to apply the cognitive process and helps them to access the background knowledge of the texts. Accordingly, think aloud strategy improves students reading comprehension ability.

Whereas some of reading comprehension tests which were distributed among participants, include, story text, we can conclude that students who have been familiar with think aloud and have applied it before, can comprehend the main ideas of story texts.

### CONCLUSION

The results revealed that, familiarity with think aloud strategy makes a meaning full difference in obtained mean score of the students. Students who are familiar with think aloud strategy had a better performance in comprehending the reading text Difference between score mean by students who are familiar with think aloud strategy and those who are not familiar with this strategy, is positive. Accordingly, the students who are familiar with this strategy were better in obtaining the score. In all, familiarity with think aloud strategy improve reading comprehension ability. Whereas some of reading comprehension tests which were distributed among participants, include, story text, it implies that students who are familiar with think aloud and have applied it before, can comprehend the main ideas of story texts.

### Research limitations

1. Difficulty in access to related sites about think aloud strategy.
2. Hard limitations and bureaucracy rules in allowing access to other thesis.
3. Difficulty in applying reading comprehension test among participants.
4. Huge and dispersal of the required data and the time limitation in collecting, classifying, and analyzing them.
5. Lack of enough collaboration in answering the questionnaire from student's part.

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## MISSION AS A STRATEGY IN SUBTITLING

Mansoorreh Hosseinnia

### ABSTRACT

In the era of globalization, which is making the world smaller and smaller, audiovisual translation has a key role in bringing cultures closer to each other. One main branch in audiovisual translation is subtitling. Unfortunately, audiovisual translation in general and subtitling in particular are not so far properly dealt with, especially in Iran. This study reported on a corpus-based analysis of omissions in subtitling. The findings were based on a non-evaluative, and comparative analysis was carried on English-Persian parallel corpora with over twenty one thousand words. The research materials were three corpora of the English TV series along with their translations in Persian in the form of subtitles. The theoretical framework of the present study was based on Mona Baker's (1992, pp.40-86) classification of elements that are subject to omission in subtitling. The purpose of this research was to find out the quantity of omission taking place in subtitles and categorization of omissions based on the aforementioned model. The findings revealed that words or expressions are usually omitted in subtitling. Based on the results, it can be concluded that among the linguistic elements, words or expressions are commonly omitted in subtitling. The present research has profound implications for enriching the studies done in the field of audiovisual translation in general and subtitling in particular. It can provide a source of information and inspiration for the researchers in the field and for the professional translators and subtitlers.

**KEYWORDS:** Subtitling, omission, audiovisual translation, TV series, subtitling strategies

### INTRODUCTION

Translation studies as a discipline has grown enormously in recent decades. The scope of fields that translation studies would cover, includes machine translation, history, literature, philosophy, linguistics, terminology, signed language interpreting, screen translation, translation pedagogy, software localization and lexicography (Online St. Jerome publishing commercial page, 1998, Para. 1).

In one time, the term '*translation studies*' was more considered to be the translation of literary texts than other forms of translation, but today this is no longer the case. As Baker (2001, p.277) states, "translation studies is now understood to refer to the academic discipline concerned with the study of translation at large, including literary and non-literary translation various forms of oral interpreting, as well as *Dubbing* and *Subtitling*". In the era of globalization, which is making the world smaller and smaller, audiovisual translation has a key role in bringing cultures closer to each other. One main branch in audiovisual translation is subtitling.

Technological developments have made audiovisual translation the most dynamic field in translation studies. According to Lambert (1997), media translation has revealed how easy the shift is from oral into verbal discourse and vice versa. He (1997) states that movies can be 'translated' into written subtitles or rendered as dubbing or voice-over versions. Various new techniques of speech recognition make it possible to transfer speech from written into oral texts, or from oral into written formulation.

Henrik Gottlieb (2001, p.244) says, "Since 1929, when the first sound films reached an international audience, two methods of film translation have been dominant: subtitling and dubbing. The latter is sometimes referred to as post-synchronization". Lambert (1997) refers to dubbing and subtitling as a part of our daily life and focuses on the shift from oral into written codes, which has become more and more common.

According to Ivarsson (1992), a subtitler is in a much more vulnerable position than a translator because when a person who reads a book in translation or sees a dubbed film must go to the original text to check what they suspect is a faulty translation, while in subtitling the original is available for all to see and hear (cited in James, 2001).

Diaz-Cintas (2009) believes despite being a professional practice that traced back to the very origins of cinema, audiovisual translation (AVT) has been a relatively unknown field of research until very recently. However, over the last 20 or so years the audiovisual industry provided a fertile ground for a burgeoning activity in academic studies,

in which translation is placed at the core. Therefore, there is no need to justify about the inclusion of Audiovisual Translation within the field of Translation Studies.

Considering what has been said above, this research focuses on one of the strategies used by subtitlers in TV series.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study, which falls under the categorization of subtitling strategy of omission, followed Baker's categorization of omission.

According to Baker (1992, pp. 40-86) omission in translation might have three forms: 1- omission in word or expression, 2- omission in idiom, 3- omission in content of information.

### ***Audiovisual Translation***

According to Diaz-Cintas (2005) audiovisual translation refers to the translation of products in which the verbal dimension is supplemented by elements in other media. In cases such as songs and radio programmes the message is conveyed only auditorily. In some other cases, the visual channel is the only one: comic strips, published advertisements, etc. Other products such as films, CD-ROMs or documentaries resort to both channels to convey their message. (Delabastita, 1989).

Audiovisual translation scholars have given different typologies within the area of audiovisual translation. According to O'Connell (1998) the two most common forms of screen translation or AVT are dubbing and subtitling. Because Subtitling is the most common form of audiovisual translation, it was defined differently by many scholars.

### ***Subtitling***

Gouadec (2007) defines subtitling as the captioning of the translation of the spoken dialogue in the original soundtrack. Except if the translator receives a ready-for-subtitling version and just needs to convert the script into subtitles, subtitling is a rather complex operation that varies according to available technologies in a context where things change ever so fast.

### ***Subtitling Constraints***

Subtitling has several constraints. As O'Connell (2007) said the ultimate constraint on subtitling arises from the fact that it is an overt form of translation i.e. it can be evaluated by those who know the source language of the voicetrack. Time and space are further constraints. As regards time, people speak more quickly than they can read so most language needs to be summarised in subtitles. Space constraints arise because there is room for only about 30 or 40 characters/spaces across a screen, and also because of the technical constraints posed by a maximum limit of two to three lines of text across the bottom of a screen.

### ***Subtitling Strategies***

Tomaszkiewicz (1993, cited in Pettit, 2008, pp.223-227) offers a brief discussion of the strategies in operation in film subtitling, noting that some culture-specific terms are untranslatable.

“The strategies are:

- (1) Omission, whereby the cultural reference is omitted altogether.
- (2) Literal Translation, where the solution in the target text matches the original as closely as possible.
- (3) Borrowing, where original terms from the source text are used in the target text.
- (4) Equivalence, where translation has a similar meaning and function in the target culture.
- (5) Adaptation, where the translation is adjusted to the target language and culture in an attempt to evoke similar connotations to the original. Strictly speaking this can be considered a form of equivalence.



(6) Replacement of the cultural term with deictics, particularly when supported by an on-screen gesture or a visual clue. This strategy was not observed in the selected audiovisual texts and will not be discussed here.

(7) Generalisation, which might also be referred to as neutralisation of the original.

(8) Explication, which usually involves a paraphrase to explain the cultural term”.

### ***Omission***

According to Ivacovoni (2009, para. 1) “Omission means dropping a word or words from the SLT while translating. This procedure can be the outcome of the cultural clashes that exist between the SL and the TL. In fact, it is in subtitling translations where omission attains its peak in use. The translator omits words that do not have equivalents in the TT, or that may raise the hostility of the receptor”.

### ***Omission in Translation***

Dimitriu (2004, p.163) believes that omission has normally been neglected in translation studies:

Whereas it has been amply demonstrated that many translators, at least between Indo-European languages, exceed their sources in length, comparatively fewer studies have approached instances in which, for various reasons, translator have not translated, ‘omitted’ something from the source-text in their translation. Many recent dictionaries of translation studies do not have any particular entry for term ‘omission’, or (at least) for some of its partial synonyms, ‘implication’, ‘subtraction’, ‘economy’, ‘condensation’, or ‘deletion’. Moreover, books on translation studies that incorporate translation strategies tend to briefly mention omission, and mainly in close connection with its more ‘positive’ counterparts, i.e. addition and explication.

“Beside these strategies, Toury (1995, p.82) has successfully shown that omission is a legitimate translation strategy, and it is perhaps used in subtitling than in any other form of translation, due to the restrictions of the medium”(Pedersen, 2008, p.104). Guardini (1998) claims that many critics of subtitling have singles reduction out as a major shortcoming compared to dubbing, but in many instances the shortcoming only consists in deciding what is padding and what is essential information. Clarity of expression and fidelity to the original are at stake: the deletion of ostensibly redundant elements cannot be done automatically, as they may be integral to the mode of expression of a character. The major problem a subtitler encounters when transferring spoken dialogue into subtitles originate from the stylistic and structural divergences between speech and writing. Written texts are more formal in style, while spoken language is characterized with informal style and plenty of redundancy and repetition.

### ***Forms of Omission***

According to Baker (1992) omission in translation might have three forms:

“This strategy may sound rather drastic, but in fact it does no harm to omit translating a word or expression in some contexts. If the meaning conveyed by a particular item or expression is not vital enough to the development of the text to justify distracting the reader with lengthy explanations, translators can and often do simply omit translating the word or expression in question” (P.40).

Somewhere else Baker (1992) states:

“As with single words, an idiom may sometimes be omitted altogether in the target text.

This may be because it has no close match in the target language, its meaning cannot easily paraphrased or for stylistic reasons” (P. 77).

Also Baker (1992) adds:

“The change in the information content of the message may be in the form of omitting information specified in the source text. If the target language lacks a grammatical category which exists in the source language, the information expressed by that category may have to be ignored” (P. 86).

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

The researcher sought the answer to the following question:

Which specific linguistic elements are commonly omitted in subtitling?

## METHODOLOGY

### Materials

The data was categorized according to the name of the director, release date and selected time as a sample in Table1. The researcher recorded these TV series on a videotape from the satellite. They contained both English and Persian subtitle and at the end of each episode, the name of translator.

*Table1: Characteristics of the Original English TV series*

No.	Original English TV series (Title)	Director	Release Date	Selected Time
1	Lost	J.J Abrams	2004	80min
2	Alias	J.J Abrams	2006	30min
3	Primeval	A Hodges & T Haines	2007	45min

The data is represented in Table 2, under the headings of the name of subtitling translator, and selected time as a sample.

*Table 2: Elements of the Subtitled TV series*

No	TV series (Title)	Subtitling translator	Selected Time
1	گمشدگان	ع.ف جاوید	80min
2	آلیاس	ای.م.س	30min
3	دوران کهن	ح.ق	45min

### Procedure for Data Collection and Recording

After deciding on the corpus of the study, the researcher carried out the data collection procedure. In the first stage, three TV series from the satellite were recorded by random and some beginning parts of them were watched as a sample. At the second stage the TV series were watched again and subtitled English versions were compared with Persian one and every types of omission which occurred by the translator in the process of subtitling were transcribed. Omission instances of the TV series which were found through data collection were about 295.

### Data Processing

Omission instances of the TV series which were found through data collection are demonstrated in tables one to one.

### Samples

In the following table, omission instances are extracted from Lost.

*Table 3: Omission Instances of Lost*

No.	Original Script	Subtitled Script	Omission
1	Somebody, help me out.	یکی کمک کنه.	Word
2	I don't know which one would work best.	من نمی دونم کدومش بهتره.	Content of information
3	On the count of three.	-----	Expression

Table 3 presents the frequency and percentage of the forms of omission in subtitling instances of Lost.

Table 4: Frequency of forms of omission in subtitling instances of *Lost*

Omission	Fr.	%
Word or expression	108	81/8
idiom	0	0
Content of information	24	19/2
Total	132	100

The above table shows that the use of word or expression omission is substantially high among other types of omission. In other words, in the subtitle of *Lost*, words or expressions were omitted by the translator more than any other types. The second common omission is content of information. In other words, lack of grammatical category of source subtitle in the target subtitle is second common omission. The last type of omission is idiom which wasn't used in the subtitle. In other words, all idioms in the original script were translated in the target language.

In the following table, omission instances are extracted from *Alias*.

Table 5: Omission Instances of *Alias*

No.	Original Script	Subtitled Script	Omission
1	Then, I'll ...just... finish.	اینم از پایان...	Word
2	I cry at every damn thing.	من زود گریه ام می گیرم.	Content of information
3	I can't go through double shift again, holding on to this.	من دوباره می تونم برم دو شیفت کار کنم.	Expression

Table 6: Forms of omission in subtitling instances of *Alias*

Omission	Fr.	%
Word or expression	51	79/7
idiom	0	0
Content of information	13	2/3
Total	64	100

Considering the above table, the use of word or expression omission is substantially high among other types of omission. In other words, in the subtitle of *Alias*, words or expressions were omitted by translator more than any other types. The second common omission is content of information. In other words, lack of grammatical category of source subtitle in the target subtitle is second common omission. The last type of omission is idiom which wasn't used in the subtitle. In other words, all idioms in the original script were translated in the target. In the following table, omission instances are extracted from *Primeval*.

Table 7: Omission Instances of *Primeval*

No	Original Script	Subtitled Script	Omission
1	I've never heard of it.	اصلاً نشنیدم.	Word
2	That explains the compass going crazy.	دلیل اینکه قطب نما قاطی می کنه اینه.	Content of information
3	You see I argued that all life on earth derived...	-----	Expression

Like the two previous tables, the above table shows that the use of word or expression omission is substantially high among other types of omission. In other words, in the subtitle of *Lost*, words or expressions were omitted by translator more than any other types. The second common omission is content of information. In other words, lack of grammatical category of source subtitle in the target subtitle is second common omission. The last type of omission is idiom which wasn't used in the subtitle. In other words, all idioms in the original script were translated in the target. The researcher found the same results from the three tables.

*Table 8: Forms of omission in subtitling instances of Primeval*

<b>Omission</b>	<b>Fr.</b>	<b>%</b>
Word or expression	41	85/4
idiom	0	0
Content of information	7	14/6
Total	48	100

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

According to the above data, omission in word or expression has the highest frequency in all TV series and omission in idiom has the least.

### ***Discussion on Findings***

Table 9 presents the frequency and percentage of the forms of omission in subtitling instances of TV series.

*Table 9: Subtitling Omission Strategies of Instances of TV series*

<b>Omission</b>	<b>Fr.</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Word or expression	200	67.8
2. Idiom	0	0
3. Content of information	95	32.2
Total	295	100

The above table shows frequency and percentage of subtitling omission strategies of instances of all TV series. As the distribution of omission shows, out of 295 data collected by the researcher from three TV series, 200 instances refer to word or expression, 95 instances refer to content of information. At result, word or expression is commonly omitted in subtitling TV series with 67.8. After word or expression, content of information is usually omitted with 32.2. There is no omission in idiom in TV series.

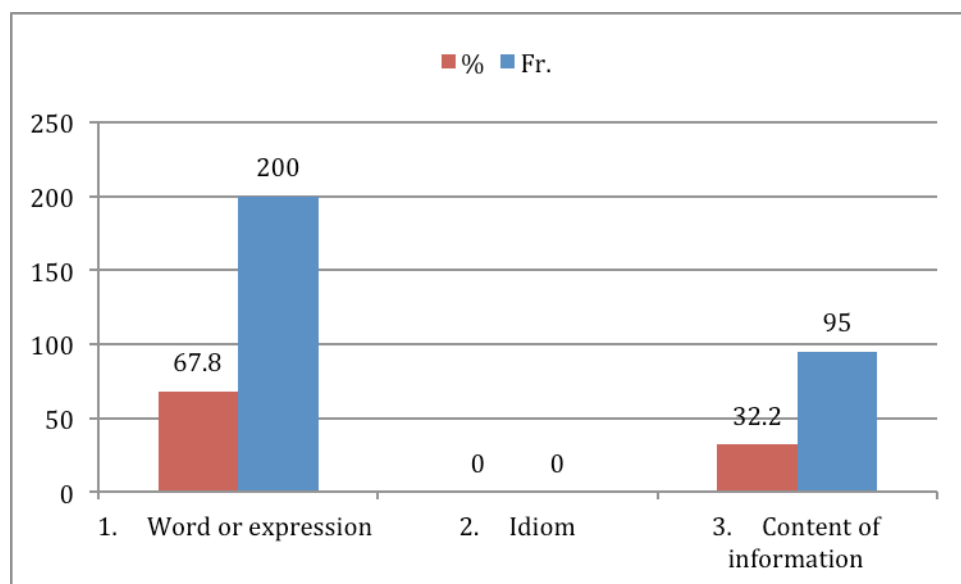


Figure1: Subtitling Omission Strategies of Instances of TV series

## CONCLUSION

Subtitles should be accurate, comprehensible and give the impression of being part of the action on the screen. The ideal in subtitling is to translate each utterance in full, and display it synchronically with the spoken words on the screen. However, the medium imposes serious constraints on full text translation. One major obstacle is the limitations of the screen space. Bearing in mind the difference between the speed of the spoken language and the speed in reading, a complete transcription of the film dialogue is not possible. Both the physical limitation of space on the screen and the pace of the spoken word require a reduction of the text. Also sometimes some subtitlers may ignore some parts.

Regarding that words or expressions are the basic elements of the sentences and dialogues and they are used more extensively in them, they are usually omitted in subtitling more than any other types of elements. But because idioms are special phrases in every language, subtitlers usually try to translate them and therefore they are rarely omitted.

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## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOAL ORIENTATION, CRITICAL THINKING, META-COGNITIVE AWARENESS AND SELF-REGULATED LEARNING OF IRANIAN STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate the direction of the relationship between goal orientation, meta-cognitive awareness, and critical thinking in order to understand the impact of these three constructs on students' self-regulation. The participants were 129 M.A. students of Tabriz University in Iran. Four types of questionnaire, named, meta-cognitive awareness inventory, Board's self-regulated learning questionnaire, Elliot's A GQ Questionnaire, and California's critical thinking inventory, were distributed among the students. Data were analyzed through correlation and regression. Though all four variables were highly correlated, the main finding was that goal orientation, meta-cognitive awareness can predict subsequent self-regulation. Because of the high dependency of the learners to the teacher in school years and the necessity to develop autonomous learners, the implications of the results for school years are discussed.

**KEYWORDS:** goal orientation, meta-cognitive awareness, critical thinking, self-regulation

### INTRODUCTION

So far, a lot of research had been done on students' performance in educational context in order to create self-dependent, autonomous learners. Studies have been directed towards finding out appropriate cognitive processes and self-regulation. The knowledge of cognitive process has provided researches with evidence that meta-cognitive awareness and critical thinking ability can increase learners' attendance to learning materials and help them take account of their learning process. Achievement goal orientation theories have provided some explanation of the processes that lead students to engage in academic tasks. According to these theoretical constructs, several findings have provided empirical evidence which supports the role of self-regulation, meta-cognitive awareness, goal orientation, and critical thinking in predicting learners' effective performance in educational context (Minnaert & Janssen, 1999; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Simons, Dewitte, & Lens, 2004; Vermunt, 2005; Koenig and Harris 2005).

Furthermore, some studies have revealed the interrelatedness between self-regulation and goal orientation (Kaplan, Lichtinger, & Gorodetsky, 2009; Zimmerman, 1999; Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004), goal orientation and cognitive process (Simons et al., 2004; Galand, Raucourt, & Frenay, 2010). Other studies also have shown a significant link between self-regulation and cognitive processing strategies (Neuville, Frenay, & Bourgeois, 2007; Pintrich, 1999; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). Educational policies have been directed towards educating self-dependent learners who can cope with different learning situations and problems all by themselves (Dochy, 2001). Learners are expected to develop self-regulated, autonomous competences to develop lifelong learning (Poldner, Simons, Wijngaards, & vander Schaaf, 2012). In the same vein, several studies have emphasized the need for development of effective learning process which contributes to learners' autonomy (Clump, 2005; Johnson & Spicer, 2006; Young, 2005). There are only a few researches studying the important factors effecting self-regulated learning in relation to a group of different factors which all together are closely related.

Therefore, in this study the components of goal orientation, meta-cognitive awareness, critical thinking, and self-regulation will be investigated to find out significant relationships. Thus, the main focus of this study is to investigate the relationship between goal orientation, meta-cognitive awareness, critical thinking, and self-regulation of Iranian students and the direction of the relationships in the prediction of learners' autonomy.

Before dealing with this study, a brief review of literature on self-regulation, goal orientation, meta-cognitive awareness, and critical thinking will be presented.

### *Self-regulated learning*

The term 'learner autonomy' is generally defined as 'one's taking responsibility of his own learning, willingness and capacity to control or oversee her own learning'. In social psychology researches, Deci (1995) defined autonomy, "feeling free and volitional in one's actions" as a basic human need. David Little (1991) views learner autonomy essentially as a matter of the learner's psychological relation to the process and content of learning, a capacity for

detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. In another definition, Elias and MacDonald (2007, p.2518) have defined self-regulation as the ways in which an individual controls and directs his or her own actions. There are also several researches having been operated to find out, whether learners self-regulate or not.

Researches on autonomous and self-regulated learning indicated that learners success is not solely based on their cognitive skills and abilities, but also based on such factors as self-regulative, motivational profiles of the learners (Schunk, 2005; Dahl, Bals, & Turi, 2005; Nota, Soresi, & Zimmerman, 2004). Other consistent empirical evidences from cognitive psychology support the view that self-regulation is crucial to understand student's learning and academic performance (Minnaert and Janssen 1999; Nota et al., 2004; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990).

The necessity of training self-regulated learning also provoked a bunch of numerous studies in various fields of postsecondary education such as Engineering (Hutchison, Follman, Sumpter, & Bodner, 2006), Marketing (Young, 2005), Math (Pereis, Dignath, & Schmitz, 2009), Nursing (Kuiper & Pesut, 2005), and Teacher Education (Perry, Phillips, & Dowler, 2004), to name a few. Self-regulation involves students being proactive with regard to their learning behavior or strategies to achieve self-set goals (Cleary & Zimmerman, 2004). Such self-regulative processes can be affected by students' goal orientations, intrinsic or extrinsic.

### ***Goal orientation***

Over the recent decades, one of the most prominent theories in the field of motivational research has concentrated on achievement goal theory (Elliot & McGregor, 2001). Dweck and Leggett (1988) defined goal orientation as the goals individuals implicitly pursue while attempting to attain certain performance outcomes. According to Pintrich (2003, p. 676), goal orientation is defined as "the reasons and purposes for approaching and engaging in achievement tasks".

Achievement goal orientation identifies the reasons and the purposes of why students engage in learning tasks and performances. Two distinct types of achievement goal orientation are traditionally distinguished, namely mastery and performance goal Orientation (e.g., Ames, 1992; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliot, 1999; Elliott & Dweck, 1988; Nicholls et al., 1989).

Mastery goal orientation represents a focus on learning and mastering the task, developing new competences toward self-improvement. On the other hand, performance goal orientation represents students concern to show his/her competence and attempt to surpass others (Button, Mathieu, & Zajac, 1996; Elliot, McGregor, Holly, & Gable, 1999; VandeWalle, Brown, Cron, & Slocum, 1999). Also a third dimension to goal orientation, which is suggested to be considered, is task or performance-avoidance goal (Ames, 1992; Elliot, 1997, 1999; Elliot & Church, 1997; Harackiewicz, Barron, Pintrich, Elliot, & Thrash, 2002). According to, Fenollar, Romajn, and Cuestas (2007, p. 877), work avoidance can be referred to the concern "to get work done with a minimum amount of effort".

Studies on goal orientation, regarding mastery goal orientation has consistently indicated positive outcome in academic achievement (Bong, 2005; Simons et al., 2004) and long term retention (Elliot & McGregor, 1999), intrinsic motivation (Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996), absorption during task involvement (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996), help seeking (Ryan & Pintrich, 1998), persistence (Pintrich, 2000), and high performance outcomes (Elliot & Church, 1997).

Performance-approach goals also has been revealed to have positive outcomes such as absorption during task involvement (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996), high performance outcomes (Elliot & Church, 1997), academic self-concept (Pajares, Britner, & Valiante, 2000; Skaalvik, 1997), task value (Wolters, Yu, & Pintrich, 1996), and intrinsic motivation (Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996). Performance-approach goals have also been connected to negative outcomes such as test anxiety (Elliot & McGregor, 1999; Middleton & Midgley, 1997), low self-efficacy (Skaalvik, 1997), and higher avoidant help seeking (Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Ryan & Pintrich, 1998).

Finally, task-avoidance goals have been linked with negative outcomes, such as low absorption during task engagement (Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996), an unwillingness to seek help with schoolwork (Middleton & Midgley, 1997), and reduced intrinsic motivation (Elliot & Church, 1997), lower level performance (i.e. Fenollar et al., 2007), underdeveloped in relations with other achievement goal (Kumar & Jagacinski, 2011). Inconsistency of performance

goal orientation on academic achievement has been reflected on many Studies (Meece & Miller, 1999, 2001; Seifert, 1996; Harackiewicz, Barron, Tauer, & Elliot, 2002; Galand & Frenay, 2005; Shim et al., 2008; Galand et al., 2010).

In recent years, the achievement motivation literature has focused on identifying how different types of goal orientations influence various self-regulatory processes and strategies.

### ***Meta-cognitive awareness***

Recent years have witnessed a host of studies on the ability of the learners to perceive their learning process termed meta-cognition or meta-cognitive awareness. Ever developing societies call for learners who can take account of their learning and awareness of their cognition which helps them control their learning .generally Gana(2004) defined meta-cognition as a person's thinking about thinking or cognition about cognition. Meta-comprehension research traditionally emphasizes the importance of making judgments about one's own learning. This field of research typically focuses on three types of judgments: ease of Learning judgments, Judgments of Learning and Retrospective Confidence Judgments. Meta-cognition is a form of cognition and a high level thinking process that involves active control over cognitive processes (Wenden, 1998). It is also considered as the 'seventh sense' and one of the mental characteristics that successful learners use (Birjandi, 2006). Schraw and Dennison (1994), referred to meta-cognition as the ability to reflect, control and understand, in a self-aware mode, one's own learning and cognition.

O'Neil and Abedi (1996) have regarded meta-cognition as the conscious and periodic self-checking of whether one's goal is achieved and when necessary, selecting and applying different strategies. As a result, meta-cognitively aware learners are more effective learners, show higher performance levels, use more strategies and better regulate their own learning (Hammann and Stevens, 1998). According to Zimmerman (2001, 2002), what characterizes self-regulating students is their active participation in learning from the meta-cognitive, motivational, and behavioral point of view. According to, Brown et al. (1983), the term meta-cognition has two major components including meta-cognitive knowledge and meta-cognitive strategies. Meta-cognitive knowledge refers to what learners know about their learning, while meta-cognitive strategies are general skills through which learners manage, direct, regulate, and guide their learning. There exist a lot of evidence that learners' meta-cognition can directly affect the process and the outcome of their learning (Boekaerts, Pintrich, & Zeidner, 2000; Bolitho et al., 2003; Eilam & Aharon, 2003; Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002; Palmer & Goetz, 1988; Victori & Lockhart, 1995; Zimmerman& Schunk, 2001; Purpura, 1997, 1998). Further research on meta-cognitive skills focused on their impact on learning outcomes. Kim, Park, and Baek (2009) found a significant effect on gaming and learning performances in virtual environments via problem solving. Additionally, it was shown that the generation of meaningful hypotheses increases when meta-cognition is performed (Kim & Pedersen, 2011). Therefore, meta-cognition and success in problem solving are somehow correlated (Taconis & Ferguson-Hessler, 2001) According to wenden (1998) meta-cognitive knowledge influences the self-regulation of learning in planning; monitoring and evaluating skills and these skills can constitute self-directed language learning. It is also suggested that language learning strategies are the key factors in accomplishing autonomy (Wenden, 1991; Brown, 1994; Oxford, 1996; Skehan, 1998; Yang, 1998) and that meta-cognitive strategies increase learner autonomy and its direction toward more individualized instruction (Fewell, 2010).

### ***Critical thinking***

More recently, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills has identified critical thinking as one of several learning and innovation skills necessary to prepare students for post-secondary education and the workforce. In addition, the newly created Common Core State Standards reflect critical thinking as a cross-disciplinary skill vital for college and employment. Despite widespread recognition of its importance, there is a notable lack of consensus regarding the definition of critical thinking. The basic characteristic of human being is the ability of thinking. Thinking is defined in the intransitive sense as a process "to exercise the powers of judgment, conception, or inference" (Miriam Webster, 2006). One of the important thinking abilities that should be acquired by learners in school and university is the ability of a critical thinking. Some scholars (Paul & Elder, 2005; Giancarlo, Blohm & Urdan, 2004; Silverman & Smith, 2002; Scriven & Paul, 1996; Angelo, 1995; Rudinow & Barry, 1994; Wilson, 1988; Primacy, 1986; Glaser, 1985; Modjeski & Michael, 1983) viewed critical thinking as the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. Researchers do not agree on the definition of critical thinking (Kennedy, Fisher & Ennis, 1991). Lyutykh (2009) refers to critical

thinking as "a right way of thinking". Bowell and Kemp (2005) refer to critical thinking as an individual's engagement in making decision on responsibility for their actions in daily life. Some researchers believe that critical thinking is determined by especial skills such as ability to evaluate the presented reasons sensibly (Mason, 2008). Citing Bloom, Page (2007) believes that critical thinking relates to high level cognitive thinking such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Bullen (1998) says that critical thinking is a focus on what we believe and what we do. Facion (1994) suggests that critical thinking includes evaluation, inference, analysis, deductive reasoning and inductive reasoning. Some researchers believe that the investigation of the relationship between critical thinking skill and style will be of benefit to education (Sternberg & Lubart, 1995, Zhang, 2003).

### ***The studies on the relation between self-regulation goal orientation, meta-cognitive awareness and critical thinking***

Years of studies have revealed the fact that self-regulation, goal orientation, meta-cognitive processing strategies and critical thinking are correlated. In current models of self-regulated learning, motivational and cognitive elements of learning are integrated, in order to show how achievement goals and learning expectancies influence students' use of cognitive processes (Covington, 2000; Nicholls, Patashnick, Cheung, Thorkildsen, & Lauer, 1989; Pintrich, 2003; Schunk, 2005; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2001). The underlying assumption of these models is that achievement motivations and goals to a great extent determine the type of cognitive process learners apply in different educational context. The outcome of the learning is dependent on students' information processing (Craik & Lockhart, 1972; Entwistle, 1979, 1988).

The correlation between achievement goal orientation and self-regulation (Zimmerman, 1999) and cognitive strategy (Simons et al., 2004) has been documented in several studies. Other studies have also provided consistent empirical evidence supporting the view that self-regulation and cognitive strategies are correlated (Pintrich, 2003).

Achievement goal theorists hypothesize that highly mastery goal oriented students will engage in deep cognitive processing to increase their comprehension (e.g., Ames & Archer, 1988; Bouffard, Bouchard, Goulet, Denoncourt, & Couture, 2005; Bruinsma, 2004; Phan, 2009a; Dweck, 1985; Graham & Golan, 1991; Fenollar et al. 2007; Nicholls et al., 1989; Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990). According to several studies, mastery goal orientation is positively correlated with the use of self-regulation strategies (Pintrich, 1999; Shell & Husman, 2008; Patrick, Ryan, and Kaplan 2007). Pintrich (1999, p. 467) concluded that "If students set as their goal self-improvement and learning, then they will be much more likely to continue to engage in various cognitive and met cognitive activities in order to improve their learning and comprehension". Phelps et al (2001) depicting a connection between met cognition and the concept of the expert learner, argued that the autonomous learner needs to be meta-cognitively aware.

There is extensive evidence that learners' meta-cognition can directly affect the process and the outcome of their learning (Boekaerts, Pintrich, & Zeidner, 2000; Bolitho et al., 2003; Eilam & Aharon, 2003; Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002; Palmer & Goetz, 1988; Victori & Lockhart, 1995; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001; Purpura, 1997, 1998). There is a need for meaningful and goal-oriented environments, which can be used for the assessment of complex constructs in various domains and which take into account meta-cognitive aspects of learning (e.g., Funke & Frensch, 2007; Lee, 2010; Yen & Lee, 2011).

Halogen (1995) identifies meta-cognition as the ability to monitor the quality of critical thinking. Similarly, Halpern (1998) casts meta-cognition as monitoring thinking and strategy use by asking the following kinds of questions. Schraw et al. (2006) draw connections between meta-cognition, critical thinking, and motivation under the umbrella of self-regulated learning, which they define as "our ability to understand and control our learning environments" (p. 111). Self-regulated learning, in turn, is seen as comprising three components: cognition, meta-cognition, and motivation. The cognitive component includes critical thinking, which Schraw and associates explain consists of identifying and analyzing sources and drawing conclusions.

### ***The present study***

Although, there are some studies have been carried out investigating the relationship between self-regulation and some other factors such as goal orientation, cognitive processing, there is no study on the relationship between self-regulation, meta-cognitive awareness, goal orientation, and critical thinking which considers them all together in Iranian educational context. In this study, it was attempted to find out how different sub parts of self-regulation is related with goal orientation, met cognitive awareness, critical thinking. Investigations like this could provide a better understanding of the Learning process and could therefore allow for a better promotion of students' effective learning.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the aim of the study the following questions have been made:

- 1) Does the importance of the relationship between goal orientation, meta-cognitive awareness, critical thinking, and self regulated learning differ in significant way in Iranian higher educational context?
- 2) In every factor being analyzed, which of the subcomponents of the factors suit well together and have significant relationship?
- 3) Which relationships seem to have the highest value in developing self-regulated learner (the direction of the relationship)?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The participants of this study were 129 Iranian M. A (Master of Arts) students from Tabriz University majoring in different fields of study. The participants were all male students aged around 22 to 25. All the students were assured of the confidentiality of their responses.

### *Instrument*

Four different types of questionnaire were used to collect data in this study. Each one of them was designed to assess different factors consisting of California's critical thinking inventory, Straw and Dennison (1994). Assessing meta-cognitive awareness inventory, Board's self-regulated learning questionnaire, and Elliot's A GQ Questionnaire. Questionnaires were translated to Persian to reduce the ambiguity that may be caused by participant's lack of English proficiency. All items of the questionnaire were rated on five-point Likert-type-scales (Critical thinking and met cognitive awareness: 1= never to 5= always; self-regulated learning and achievement goal orientation: 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Table 1 shows the factors representing each variable in this study. The Cronbach alpha of this questionnaire was .754.

*Table 1: the factors representing each variable in this study*

	Subparts	Number of items
Critical thinking	Analysis	4
	Comprehension	2
	Evaluation	3
Meta-cognitive awareness	Monitoring	5
	Knowledge	5
Self-regulation	Executive strategy	5
	Cognitive strategy	3
	Evaluation	2
Goal orientation	Mastery goal	5
	Performance goal	4

### *Procedure*

Participants were all selected randomly among the students who have been accepted in university of Tabriz in MA degree to study in different majors. Because all of the participants have already passed national university entrance exam with a high degree or rank, all of them are considered as competent learners. The participants were told that the purpose of the experiment was to understand the relationship between Self-regulation, goal orientation, met-cognitive awareness, and critical thinking in Iranian students. The participants completed the questionnaire presented to them in paper form. Before completing the questionnaire, all of the participants were asked to answer to the questions about their age and mother tongue. Using the SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences) version 17 software the data was analyzed and the results were discussed. The limitations of this study and the application of it also were discussed.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics is first and prime step for quantitative analysis because they provide information about the distribution of scores (i.e., average and mean scores) thus helping to discover any inconsistency in data.



Table 2: Descriptive Statistics. Mean, Standard Deviations, minimum and maximum of main variables

Descriptive Statistics			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
crit	3.9553	.30420	129
meta	4.0408	.39877	129
selfr	4.0977	.33090	129
goal	3.9212	.35555	129

Table 2 represents the mean scores of students for the variables of goal orientation, self-regulation, met cognitive strategies, critical thinking.

Table 3: correlations

	SELFR	GOAL	CRIT	METAC
Self-regulation(SELFR) Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1  129	.728**  .000 129	.672**  .000 129	.713**  .000 129
goal orientation (GOAL) Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.728**  .000 129	1  129	.858**  .000 129	.678**  .000 129
critical thinking (CRIT) Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.672**  .000 129	.858**  .000 129	1  129	.700**  .000 129
Meta-cognitive awareness (METAC) Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.713**  .000 129	.678**  .000 129	.700**  .000 129	1  129

In the analysis and commenting the data; by using the Pearson product moment correlation statistical technique,  $P < 0.05$  significance has been taken. SPSS (Statistical package for social sciences) has been used in the evaluation of the data and finding the estimated values.

The results of correlation matrix show, that there is positive and significant relationship between of self-regulation and goal orientation, meta-cognitive awareness, and critical thinking.

As seen in Table 3, there is a significant relationship between self-regulation and goal-orientation ( $r = .728^{**}$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ).

It is revealed that there is a significant relationship between the self-regulation and critical thinking ( $r = .672^{**}$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ).

It is revealed that there is a significant relationship between the self-regulation and meta-cognitive awareness ( $r = .713^{**}$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ).

It is revealed that there is a significant relationship between the goal orientation and critical thinking of the students. ( $r = .858^{**}$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ).

It is revealed that there is a significant relationship between the goal orientation and meta-cognitive awareness ( $r = .678^{**}$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ).

It is revealed that there is a significant relationship between the critical thinking of the students and meta-cognitive awareness orientation and relationship need of the students engaged in team sports ( $r = .700^{**}$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ).



The correlation of subcomponents of self-regulation, goal orientation, critical thinking, and meta-cognitive awareness is presented in the table 4.

Table 4: The correlation of subcomponents of self-regulation, goal orientation, critical thinking, and meta-cognitive awareness

			AN	COM	EVEL	EXCU	COG	SELE V	MS	PERF	AVOI	MONI	KNOWL
AN			1										
COM			.844*	1									
EVEL			.473*	.445**	1								
EXCU			.506*	.469**	.468**	1							
COG			.393*	.410**	.360**	.387**	1						
SELEV			.540*	.501**	.412**	.418**	.499**	1					
MS			.754*	.669**	.517**	.472**	.514**	.557**	1				
PERF			.866*	.713**	.521**	.527**	.477**	.539**	.788*	1			
AVOI			.657*	.628**	.552**	.536**	.497**	.519**	.629*	.691**	1		
MONI			.638*	.602**	.472**	.561**	.468**	.458*	.654*	.593**	.492**	1	
KNOWL			.571*	.558**	.491**	.518**	.575**	.585**	.558*	.566**	.522**	.740**	1

As seen in Table 4, there is significant positive relationship between almost all of components except that, cognitive strategy which is considered to be one of the sub-components of self-regulation is only moderately correlated with analysis( .393\*\* ), evaluation ( .360\*\* ) of critical thinking, performance goal ( .477 ) , avoidance goal ( .497\*\* ) of goal orientation and monitoring ( .468\*\* ) of meta-cognitive awareness.

Multiple regression analysis was used in order to identify the role of the goal orientation, critical thinking and Meta cognitive awareness in prediction of self-regulation.

Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.787 <sup>a</sup>	.619	.610		.20676

a. Predictors: (Constant), me, gol, cr

b. Dependent Variable: se

ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.671	3	2.890	67.616	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	5.344	125	.043		
	Total	14.015	128			

a. Predictors: (Constant), meta, goal, cri

b. Dependent Variable: se

Coefficients a

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	1.086	.240		4.527	.000
	cri	-.001	.123	-.001	-.012	.991
	goal	.422	.102	.453	4.116	.000
	meta	.337	.066	.406	5.136	.000

a. Dependent Variable: se

The results of the regression indicated that three predictors explained .61.9% of the variance ( $R^2=.619$ ,  $F= 67.616$ ,  $p<.000$ ). As can be seen in table of coefficient, the goal orientation and meta-cognitive awareness scales had significant positive regression weights, indicating students with higher scores on these scales (goal orientation=.453; Meta-cognitive awareness=.406) were expected to have higher self-regulated learning skills, after controlling for the other variables in the model. Thus self-regulated learning is predictable through linear combination of the goal orientation and met cognitive awareness of the students. Critical thinking had negative non-significant regression weight (-.001), so it did not contribute to the multiple regression model.

### **Discussion**

This study aimed to broaden our understanding of self-regulation, goal orientation, meta-cognitive awareness, and critical thinking in higher education. The main concern was to determine how these four constructs are related to each other. The three precise assumptions here were that goal orientation, meta-cognitive awareness and critical thinking will predict self-regulated learning and that they will be interrelated. The results provided some evidence on these points. The analyses carried out have provided part of the answer to the questions put forward above. Multiple linear regression and correlation were conducted in this regard. The findings revealed that:

First, there is a significant correlation between self-regulation and three independent variables. This means that, for instance, self-regulated learning improves in accordance with goal orientation. In other words if students establish better learning goal their autonomous learning ability will be improved too.

Second, confirming our assumption and the results of previous studies (Fenollar et al., 2007; Phan, 2009a; Young, 1997), Goal orientation proved to be a consistent predictor of self-regulated learning. . Accordingly, it can be concluded that a student who is interested in improving his competence in a study will therefore enhance his thinking activities in order to achieve a deeper understanding of the task hence gain autonomy in learning.

Third, the results also indicated that students with high meta-cognitive awareness will develop autonomous (self-regulated) learner. Forth, the results revealed that students' critical thinking ability cannot predict the learning autonomy of them. It is revealed that critical thinking is highly correlated with goal orientation and meta-cognitive awareness and its ability to predict self-regulation is not direct.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study and results indicate that the ability of each individual in setting certain goal on their learning and reflecting on the role of their meta-cognitive characteristics could be a useful instrument in the development of the autonomous lifelong learner. Because the participants of this study ware mostly Ma students, they have all passed university entrance exam with high ranks, the results showed that they have already developed autonomy in their learning. Because of, the close relationship between meta-cognitive awareness and critical thinking it was expected that they both can predict self-regulation, but the result did not confirm the assumption that critical thinking can predict self-regulation. Thus it was found out that students who control their learning and are aware of the way and quality of their studies can develop autonomy in their lifelong learning even if they don't think critically. Critical thinking can be helpful to develop meta-cognitive awareness but not necessarily learning autonomy.

The overall results provide evidence for the justification that it seems fruitful for the learners to integrate goal orientation, meta-cognitive awareness and critical thinking in their educational programs and classes from school years.

### **Limitations of the study**

Although the study resulted in some significant conclusions, yet some limitations exist. There are a number of important limitations in this study regarding the characteristics of the participants, Generalizations from this study, the administration tools, sex difference between the participants and the limitedness of this study on groups with certain age range. Because the participants were all male students within certain age range, the possible effect of age and sex type were ignored in this study, revealing an obvious necessity to take these issues into consideration in future studies. Other studies to find out the appropriate styles and strategies with reinforce autonomous learning in earlier stages of school years may reveal much more important results which can be helpful in identifying effective factors in training autonomous learners. Generalizations of the findings of this study should be taken with caution because of the participants and data collection tools. The data collection tools and procedures can be improved by the use of other data collection tools like interviewing, observation,... etc.

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**A COMPARATIVE EXPLORATION ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO  
DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT OF LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN THE CONTEXT OF IRAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

Listening ability is one of the important skills in foreign language learning. In spite of its importance, listening has long been the neglected skill in foreign language acquisition, research, teaching, and assessment. There has been little research on the listening problems that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second language (ESL) learners experience in learning to listen to spoken English in the classrooms. The present study aimed to conduct a comparative investigation on the diagnostic capacities of three different approaches to Dynamic Assessment (DA), namely, interventionist and interactionist, as well as the potential effects of multi-media DA-based instruction on the development of listening comprehension ability of Iranian university students studying Teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). The study was based on a longitudinal research design enabling the observation of listening development over time. Based on these premise, the study implemented a mixed methods research methodology, i.e., microgenetic analysis, a key sociocultural method, and proposition analysis, as a supplementary analytical method. The results of the study showed that lack of effective listening strategies, lack of functional knowledge, insufficient phonological knowledge, deficient vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, together with many other factors were the major listening comprehension problems encountered by EFL Iranian learners. Understanding students' learning difficulties may enable EFL teachers to help students develop effective learning strategies and ultimately improve their English listening skill. Suggestions are made for addressing problems regarding how teachers can help their students overcome listening comprehension problems. The results of this study may also be useful for those who are interested in this field.

**KEYWORDS:** dynamic assessment, interventionist, interactionist, multimedia, CDLT

**INTRODUCTION**

Listening ability is one of the important skills in foreign language learning. In spite of its importance, listening has long been the neglected skill in foreign language acquisition, research, teaching, and assessment. There has been little research on the listening problems that EFL/ESL learners experience in learning to listen to spoken English in the classrooms. On the other hand, despite the fact that DA is gaining increased attention in applied linguistics all over the world, empirically grounded research scrutinizing the effects of DA on L2 acquisitional processes still remains scarce. Considering the premise, the present study was an attempt to conduct a comparative investigation on the diagnostic capacities of three different approaches to DA, namely, interventionist and interactionist, as well as the potential effects of multi-media DA- based instruction on the development of listening comprehension skill of university students majoring in TEFL. The participants of this study were nine female students studying at Islamic Azad University, Tehran North Branch.

This study applied the aforementioned three DA-based approaches applying a longitudinal research design to enable the observation of listening development over time. Based on these premises, the study implemented a mixed methods research methodology, i.e. microgenetic analysis, a key sociocultural method, and proposition analysis, as a supplementary analytical method striving to add a new dimension to L2 DA research as well as to L2 research and pedagogy by applying an innovative approach, i.e., comparing the three approaches to DA, to investigate, diagnose, and promote listening development in an EFL context.

**REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE**

DA is a relatively new approach to L2 assessment that has been introduced to L2research and educational community by Lantolf and Poehner (2004) and Poehner and Lantolf (2005). Since 2004, there has been growing



support for the use of DA in language pedagogy (Ableeva, 2007, 2008; Antón, 2009; Lantolf & Poehner, 2004; Poehner & Lantolf, 2005; Poehner, 2005, 2008). The authors of L2 publications on DA argue in favor of this qualitative procedure and provide examples of how students benefit from DA-based language instruction.

By definition, Dynamic assessment integrates assessment and instruction into a seamless, unified activity aimed at promoting learner development through appropriate forms of mediation that are sensitive to the individual's (or in some cases a group's) current abilities. In other words, contrary to traditional assessment that focuses on already matured abilities, "DA promotes functions that are maturing" in the ZPD and "foregrounds future development" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004, p. 54). These manifestations of DA result from its underpinning in such foundational SCT concepts as the zone of proximal development, mediation (or collaboration, in Vygotsky's terms), and learners' responsiveness to mediation. That is, SCT-based DA sees mediation as a pedagogical instrument that "is provided during the assessment procedure and is intended to bring to light underlying problems and help learners overcome them" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p. 273). Following Vygotsky, L2 research views DA as a procedure that unifies assessment and instruction (e.g., Lantolf & Poehner 2004, 2008). It is argued that assessment and instruction are inseparable components of the same dialectical activity and that "assessment and instruction become as tightly conjoined as two sides of the same coin and there are no one-sided coins" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, p.274). This point of view is in sharp contrast to traditional testing procedures that dichotomize instruction and assessment and conceive assessment in a more conventional, standardized way (Haywood & Lidz, 2007; Poehner, 2005; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002).

According to Lantolf and Poehner (2004), DA comprises *Interventionist* and *Interactionist* types that usually involve three stages: pre-test → mediation → post-test. The most important proponents of these two orientations are Budoff and Feuerstein respectively. The interventionist type of DA includes intervention from the examiner during the test procedure itself but it is a more formal and standardized approach. During interventionist DA, the examinees are given instruction item by item and if they cannot solve the item correctly, they are given pre-fabricated hints. Interactionist DA entails mediation emerging from interaction between examiner and examinee. During interactionist DA, leading questions, hints or prompts are not planned in advance; instead, they *emerge* from mediated dialogue (or collaborative interaction) between the examiner and the examinee in which the examiner reacts to the examinee's needs and constantly re-calibrates his/her mediation. It is important to note here that within DA the examiner-examinee relationship is based on the idea of teaching and helping, e.g. learners are allowed to pose questions and receive immediate feedback. Within both formats of DA, the instruction may be given in individual or group settings (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005; Poehner, 2005; Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002).

Although at present DA is attracting increased attention among applied linguists and L2 educators, empirical research on DA-based instruction in second and foreign language acquisition remains scarce (see Ableeva, 2008; Antón, 2009, Poehner, 2005). However, the few DA-based studies done so far (e.g., Ableeva, 2008) suggest that DA is a valuable qualitative tool which allows instructors to diagnose the actual level of students' listening abilities, as well as those abilities "that are now in the state of coming into being, that are only ripening, or only developing" (Vygotsky, 1986, pp. 447-8). The promising results from these studies served to motivate the present investigation.

### **Multimedia Listening**

Quite a bit has been written about the different characteristics of multimedia that can enhance reading (Chun & Plass, 1997), vocabulary acquisition (Plass, Chun, Mayer & Leutner, 1998), and even speaking (Borras & Lafayette, 1994). However, a smaller number of studies (Brett, 1996, 1997) investigated the use of multimedia software for listening comprehension. When investigating learners' attitudes towards multimedia, Brett (1996) found that 86.9% of students believed that a multimedia application they were introduced to would improve their listening skills. Also, in questionnaires, participants preferred multimedia for listening over media such as video and audio (Brett, 1997). Finally, learners had better listening comprehension scores on a multimedia task than on a paper and pencil task in which the input was delivered via video and audio tapes (Brett, 1997). More research into the use of multimedia listening materials is necessary as is research into help options, which Pujolà (2002) defined as "resources of the program which assist the learner in performing a task" (p. 241). Many theories have been proposed in this regard, one of which is interactionist theory of CALL (Long, 1996; Pica, 1994).

A key component of this theory, that only the input that is noticed, or apperceived, can become beneficial, provides guidance for the design of instructional materials, which should contain features that *enhance input* through modifications (Chapelle, 2003, p. 40) such as added redundancy and change of the input mode. Following Chapelle's (1998) suggestions relevant for the development of multimedia CALL, this study is to investigate the effectiveness of two types of input modifications, *i.e.*, 'transcript' and 'useful expressions' options, within some listening comprehension tasks. In particular, this textual help option is selected because it can add redundancy to the aural

input by changing the input mode from its aural form in the video into the textual form of subtitles. Moreover, participants will have the advantage to use an online English- English dictionary whenever needed.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to investigate the study goals, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Does an interventionist DA (IV) procedure enhance the development of listening skill among EFL language learners?
2. Does an interactionist DA (IT) procedure enhance the development of listening ability among EFL language learners?
3. Does a multi-media interventionist based DA (MT) procedure enhance the development of listening skill among EFL language learners?
4. How frequently do the MT participants use the two help options offered in a multimedia activity in each group?
5. Does any specific form of mediation during DA-based pedagogical interventions best nurture the development of listening skills of EFL language learners?
6. Do the learners exhibit any specific moves to mediation during the DA-based pedagogical interventions?

## METHODOLOGY

This study implemented a mixed method design, applying qualitative and quantitative approaches in order to conduct the pedagogical experiment and to report its results. The use of different methods was necessary to attain a comprehensive view of the research findings. Following a SCT-based DA framework, the study gave priority to a qualitative approach which is best suited to the ZPD concept. Accordingly, a qualitative approach was applied to interpret the data obtained during the mediated portions (or learners' mediated listening recalls) of the DA and carry over sessions. Despite a preference for qualitative analysis, and to supplement this approach, minimal quantitative analysis was also incorporated into the study in the form of frequency counts of mediation offered by the instructor and responsiveness to mediation provided by the learners.

### *Participants*

The participants of the study were **nine** female university students whose scores were at three different levels of language proficiency selected based on 'the Oxford Level Guide' as follows:

*Table 1: Biographical/ language background information of the participants*

- ✓ Three **pre-inter** learners called ‘high-achievers’ here with their scores ranging from 50- 64. They will be referred to as ‘A’ in the three groups;

Given Name	Pre-test Listening score	Gender	Age	No. of years studying Eng.	Semester studying in university	Travel overseas	Time in English-speaking countries	How often they listen to Eng. Texts within a week
A1	57	F	35	6	2	4 Times	4	Every day, several hours
A2	58	F	27	5-6	2	3 Times	2	Every day, at least 3 hours
A3	55	F	35	5	3	Once	-	Every day, at least 3 hours
B1	44	F	28	4	2	Once	1	Almost every day, 2 hours
B2	39	F	31	4	2	None	-	4-5 times in a week, 1-2 hours
B3	37	F	33	4	2	None	-	3 days in a week, 1-2 hours
C1	22	F	31	1	2	2 Times	1	2 times in a week, At least 1 hour
C2	27	F	28	2	3	None	-	Once a week, about 1 hour
C3	24	F	25	1	3	None	-	Once a week, about 1 hour

- ✓ Three **post-Elem** learners called ‘mid-achievers’ here with their scores ranging from 35-49. They will be referred to as ‘B’ in the three groups; and
- ✓ Three **Elem** learners called ‘low-achievers’ here with their scores ranging from 20-34. They will be referred to as ‘C’ in the three groups.

The following table introduces the participants of the study (with their given names). The data is based on the participants' information obtained through their answers to two pre-study biographical/language questionnaires.

The *nine* selected participants were assigned to three different groups with different levels of language proficiency; i.e., in each group, there were three participants: one high-achiever, one mid-achiever, and one low-achiever to set the stage for later comparisons. The design was in such a way that one group experienced the interventionist mediation, the other one the interactionist approach, and still the third one, a mixed multi-media based mediation.

### Instruments

Before the study and to select the participants, a PET language proficiency test, listening part as well as the listening part of the Oxford Placement Test (2004) were used to assess the overall listening comprehension skill of the learners.

As another instrument used in this study was CDLT (Figure 1) which stands for Computerized Dynamic Listening Test. Since one of the goals of this investigation was to compare the effect of using multimedia mediation on participants' listening comprehension development, this software was designed in order to act as a mediator during this section of the study.

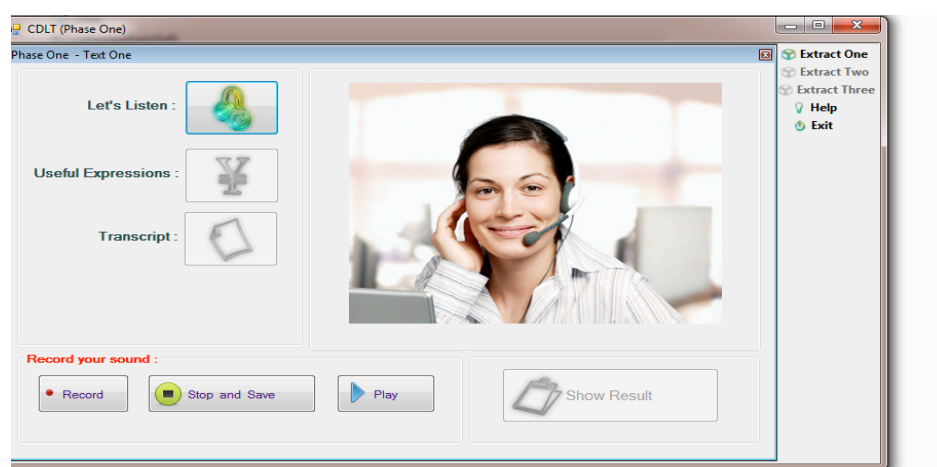


Figure 1: The software designed for the study

The software package had been designed in such a way that any PC could run it easily and could be installed properly on any computer. On the opening page of the software, some icons were designed to help the participants go through the process easier. It should be mentioned here that before the study, they went through a tutorial that explained how to go through the activity and offered a sample to minimize the exploratory behavior sometimes found in the initial steps of using this kind of program (Hubbard, 2004).

The first page of the software was designed in such a way that it guided the participants to move smoothly through the tasks. There were some icons whose mission was to act as mediators during the study, such as *help*, *useful expressions*, and *transcript*. On the 'help' option, the software provided the participants with a short and simple description of the software both in English and Persian and it was up to participants which description to choose and read. After reading the description, they could start the assessment. On the 'useful expression' option, some of the expressions used in the extracts were presented to participants and the 'transcript' option provided them with the complete text of the extracts. By starting the test, the first phase appeared on the screen. They were to choose 'extract one' and then start listening to the first extract. During the first listening, they couldn't get help from any of the icons, since during their first non-dynamic listening, they should listen independently, recall it and record their voice after finishing the part. However, while listening to the same extract for the second time, they were allowed to use any help option as many times as they needed to and they could even replay a part if they were not able to comprehend that. Also, they could have an impeded view of the extract transcript. After that, they were required to record their voice. Afterward, they could go to the next part. It should be mentioned that the software was designed in a way that only if each participant completed the listening task, she could have gone to the next part. Moreover, if she moved to the next part, it was impossible for her to return to the previous part. After each listening, a result section was shown which showed:

1. The number of times each participants used useful expression help option;
2. The number of times each participant used transcript help option.

### **Materials**

In order to provide listening materials that would correspond to the study requirements, it was decided to use some extracts from the books taught at university level to cover the term syllabus as well. Since the participants' language proficiency levels were different, seven different segments were selected for each group. The selected segments were based on the functions of language use like greeting, introducing oneself, accepting and refusing an invitation, and so on calibrated to the learners' levels. The extracts were used in dependent and independent sections of the study plus the carry over sections. The texts were the same for all the participants with the same level of proficiency, i.e., all the high achievers listened to the same extracts in the three groups, for instance. Additionally, for the three participants who experienced the multi-media version of mediation, the same extracts were played electronically using the designed software. Besides, this study adopted the methodological suggestions advanced by L2 research while implementing pausal unit analysis and recall task for assessing comprehension of L2 aural texts, an example of which is provided below (Figure 2).

<b>Extract 1: NDA1</b>	
	<b>D1:</b> Hi, Marta!
<b>S1:</b> Are you going to the movies with us after class tonight?	
	<b>D2:</b> Hi, Steve!
	<b>D3:</b> Sure.
	<b>S2:</b> I'd love to.
	<b>D4:</b> By the way,
<b>M1:</b> have you met my cousin Tammy?	
<b>M2:</b> She's visiting us from New York for a few days.	
	<b>D5:</b> Hi, Tammy, Nice to meet you.
	<b>D6:</b> Nice to meet you, too.
<b>S3:</b> Tammy's just seen the latest Johnny Depp movie.	
	<b>D7:</b> Really?
	<b>D8:</b> How was it?
	<b>D9:</b> Awesome.
	<b>D10:</b> I love Johnny Depp.
.....	
<b>Main IUs: 2</b>	
<b>Supportive IUs: 3</b>	
<b>Details: 10</b>	
<b>Total IUs: 15</b>	

Figure 2: A sample scoring instrument based on the idea units of the text used for NDA1 session, low-level

To measure comprehension, the participants were asked to recall the texts as much as they could of what they had just listened to with a special focus on the main ideas of the text. Then, the researcher identified the relationship between propositions (idea units) of the original text and the texts of participants' recall. In this fashion, propositions from the learners' immediate oral recalls that were closely related to propositions from the original text were counted and scored against the list of idea units designated independently by the raters before the study. The number of recalled idea units was viewed as evidence of text comprehension.

### **Data Collection**

In order to compare the potential effectiveness of the the three approaches aforementioned, the methodologies advocated by Budoff, Feurestein, and a computer-assisted model were taken into consideration while elaborating the pedagogical experiment. Therefore, three different designs were proposed and conducted for this investigation to make this comparison feasible. The three groups assigned in this study were the interventionist (IV), the interactionist (IT), and the multi-media (MT). All the three groups experienced four stages in the study: pre-test, training (the IV group) / the Enrichment program (the IT and the MTgroups) , post-test, and carryover sessions.

Considering the point that the students were at different levels of proficiency and the main goal of the study was to assess listening comprehension of each individual dynamically, each of the participants was assessed individually during the three main phases of the study and just the Enrichment Program was conducted in group for each of the pre-assigned groups.

### **The Findings**

Throughout the study, each pre-test/post-test/carryover session in the IT and the MT groups normally involved two stages: one independent unassisted performance (IP, conducted non-dynamically) and one mediated performances (MP, carried out dynamically) (the IV group only experienced independent performance).

Moreover, for the two groups, NDA1 and NDA2 consisted only of the first stage. As it was explicated before, in the present study, the participants were assigned to three different groups based on two criteria, i.e., one classification was based on their language proficiency scores (e.g., high-achiever, mid-achiever, and low-achiever) and the second one was derived from the kind of mediation they were going to receive (e.g., interventionist, interactionist, and multi-media). The following will present the results of quantitative and qualitative analyses respectively.

## QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Considering the learners' language proficiency level, the overall comparison of means demonstrated that the number of idea units recalled during each of the post-test sessions were generally higher than those recalled during the first pre-test sessions. However, CA3, the final session of the study, represented an abrupt drop in the learners' production of acceptable IUs. The comparison of the medians demonstrated that the participants as low-intermediate EFL learners were faced with a difficult listening task, i.e., oral recalls of a foreign aural language. The data obtained showed that the high-achievers were able to comprehend the texts better while the mid-achievers lagged behind the other learners in their listening development (Table 2). Examination of the SDs and ranges showed that there were some ups and downs in the variation among the learners in the three groups, specially after the enrichment program, which point to the potential benefits of DA interventions and the enrichment program offered during the study.

Table 2: descriptive statistics of the participants based on their language proficiency

	Achievement	Placement Score	Pre NDA1	Pre DA1	Pre CA1	Post NDA2	Post DA2	Post NDA3	Post NDA4	Post NDA5	Post NDA6	CA2	CA3
NO of IUs			27	29	25	29	20	25	21	20	26	26	27
Mean	3.00	56.67	7.33	8.00	9.00	11.67	12.00	8.00	11.00	9.00	7.00	10.00	6.00
Median	3.00	57.00	7.00	9.00	12.00	12.00	12.00	8.00	11.00	9.00	7.00	10.00	6.00
Std. Deviation	0.000	1.528	.577	2.157	5.196	2.517	2.828					1.414	1.414
Range	0	3	1	4	9	5	4	0	0	0	0	2	2

Regarding the mediation type they received, comparison of the means and medians in the three groups demonstrated that in the IV and IT groups, the mean and the median had a zigzagged trajectory while they showed a continuous increase in the MT group up to the CA sessions. What is noteworthy is that in general, the mean increase in the MT group was more significant than that of two other groups as the highest mean in the three groups can be observed in this group.

Table 3: Number of acceptable (IUs) recalled independently by each of the mediational groups in each assessment session

The Interventionist Group (IV)		Achievement	Placement Score	Pre ND A1	Pre ND A2	Post ND A3	Post ND A4	Post ND A5	Post ND A6	Carry over CA1
		Mean	2.00	41.00	6.33	7.67	6.33	6.67	7.67	7.00
	Median	2.00	44.00	6.00	8.00	6.00	5.00	7.00	7.00	3.00
	Std. Deviation	1.000	17.692	.577	1.528	1.528	3.786	1.155	2.000	2.000
	Range	2	35	1	3	3	7	2	4	4

The	Achievement	Placement Score	Pre	Pre	Pre	Post	Post	Carry	Carry
-----	-------------	-----------------	-----	-----	-----	------	------	-------	-------



Interactionist Group (IT)		ent	nt	NDA	DA	CA1	NDA	DA2	over	over
			Score	1	1		2		CA2	CA3
	Mean	2.00	41.33	6.00	7.67	8.67	7.00	8.00	7.00	3.33
	Median	2.00	39.00	5.00	6.00	7.00	6.00	7.00	7.00	3.00
	Std. Deviation Range	1.000	15.631	1.732		2.887	4.583	1.732	2.000	1.528
The Multimedia Group (MT)		Achievement	Placement Score	Pre NDA1	Pre DA1	Pre CA1	Post NDA2	Post DA2	Carry over CA2	Carryover CA3
	Mean	2.00	38.67	5.67	7.33	9.67	9.67	10.00	8.67	6.33
	Median	2.00	37.00	5.00	7.00	9.00	8.00	8.00	9.00	7.00
	Std. Deviation Range	1.000	15.567	1.155	1.733	2.082	3.786	3.464	2.517	2.082
		2	31	2		4	7	6	5	4

Comparing the CA sessions, it is apparent that the lowest mean belonged to the IV group while the highest was achieved by the MT group. It may point to the possibility that the MT learners were able to benefit more in their listening development than others from the DA and enrichment program. Moreover, this group had the opportunity to experience the enriched input provided for them in form of two help options they could use during their mediated recalls which may add to the advantage. It can also point to the fact that there was a difference in the effects of the different mediation approaches used in this study. It seems that using multi-media as a new way of assessment could provide the enriched input for the MT learners promoting their level of performance (Table 3).

However, it should be mentioned that the descriptive statistics appeared to point to a general improvement in listening skill of all the participants as measured by an increase in the number of IUs independently recalled from the NDA1 and DA1-IP sessions to the CA1-IP, NDA2, DA2-IP, CA2-IP and CA3-IP sessions. This improvement seems to be primarily the result of mediation and the enrichment program that was tuned to the learners' ZPDs. Furthermore, through disaggregate analysis of the data, first the learners' performances were analyzed first considering their level of language proficiency and then based on the mediation type they received.

Pertaining to the learners' language proficiency level, in the high achiever group, there was a progressive trend in the number of idea units each learner produced. Moreover, it was shown that the number of IUs the MT learner in this group (i.e., A3) produced was more significant than those of her group-mates. The possible reason was that the learners in the MT group had the opportunity to experience the help options whenever needed.

However, considering regression and progression, the count of the learners' IUs in the three groups demonstrated a regression in CA1/CA3 session suggesting that even though the learners' ability to comprehend the texts was improving, they were not able to fully control the task to the complexity of the task.

The same process was observed in the mid- and low achiever groups. However, it appeared that the IV learner experienced a constant regression and progression. The possible reason was that the IV learners did not have the opportunity to enjoy mediation during the study sessions. Here again, it seems that the IUs the learners in the MT group produced increased constantly which may be due to their access to the help options as an extra advantage whenever needed.

In the low achiever group, the count of the learners' IUs in the three groups exhibited a regression in TA1/CA3 session for the IV and IT which may be due to the complexity of texts in time 3. Here again, the MT learner shows the highest number among the low-achievers. With regard to the mediation types the learners experienced, the number of IUs produced by the learners increased significantly from NDA1 to NDA2 and then to CA2 which can point to the development in the learners' listening performance from session to session (Table 4). However, the number of IUs produced in NDA6 in the IV group and CA3-IP sessions reduced significantly comparing to CA2-IP which can be explained referring to the difficulty level of the texts as well as the conflictual nature of development that inevitably witnesses not only progression but also regression as naturally occurring characteristics of development in the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978).

Table 4: Raw scores summary of total number of IUs produced by each participant in all sessions of the study

Participants	Placeme nt scores	Pre-Test No of IUs produced by the participants			Enrichm ent/ training	Post-Test No of IUs produced by the participants						Carryover No of IUs produced by the participant s	
		NDA 1	DA 1- IP	CA 1- IP		NDA 2	DA2 -IP	NDA 3	NDA 4	NDA 5	NDA6	CA2 -IP	CA 3- IP
IV-H: A1	57	7	A	3		9	A	8	11	9	7	A	A
IV-M: B1	44	6	A	2		8	A	6	5	7	5	A	A
IV-L: C1	22	6	A	5		6	A	5	4	7	9	A	A
IT-H: A2	58	8	9	12		12	10	A	A	A	A	9	5
IT-M: B2	39	5	7	7		6	7	A	A	A	A	8	5
IT-L: C2	27	5	5	7		3	7	A	A	A	A	7	3
MT-H: A1	55	7	10	12		14	14	A	A	A	A	11	7
MT-M: B1	37	5	8	9		7	8	A	A	A	A	6	4
MT-L: C1	24	5	7	8		7	8	A	A	A	A	9	8
Total	-	54	46	65		72	54	19	20	23	21	50	32

Interventionist group: IV; Interactionist group: IT; Multi-media group: MT

High-achiever: H; Mid-achiever: M; Low-achiever: L

NDA: non-dynamic assessment DA: dynamic assessment

CA: carryover session IUs: idea units

IP: Independent recall

A: the person was not included in the session

\* For the IV group, CA1 session followed all NDA sessions.

In order to find out whether an interventionist, interactionist, or multi-media (MT) DA procedure could enhance the development of listening skill among EFL language learners and to see if there were any differences between the developmental processes of the three participants receiving each type of mediation, the number of IUs produced by each of the learners in the three groups were examined in detail.

With regard to the learners in the IV group, listening comprehension performances of the high-achiever (A1), the mid-achiever (B1), and the low-achiever (C1) in this group were analyzed. A1's microgenetic listening development showed a continual improvement which can be attributed to her positive response not only to the enrichment program but also to the mediation offered during the assessment session. On the other hand, the microgenetic analysis of B1's IU production showed that her production of IUs was quite uneven, indicating an increase and decrease in her listening development. It may point to the fact that in some sessions, her ZPD was not still ripening. Also, C1 listening performance was rather insignificant. It pointed to her low motivation during the study which might have had an impact on her very moderate listening development. Thus, it can be claimed that motivation can be accounted for as an influential factor in listening comprehension.

Table 5: The summary of the number of expected and observed IUs produced by each participant in the IV group in all independent recall sessions

participant sessions	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No Of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	Total
	NDA1		NDA2		NDA3		NDA4		NDA5		NDA6		CA1-IP		
A1	27	7	29	9	25	8	21	11	20	9	26	7	27	3	54
B1	20	6	23	8	23	6	16	5	13	7	23	5	22	2	39
C1	25	5	15	5	22	7	9	3	15	7	11	7	25	3	37

The microgenetic analysis of the listening comprehension of the learners in the IT group revealed that like A1, A2 (the high-achiever) experienced a continuous improvement in her listening performance from session to session. However, she produced more IUs than her peer A1 in the IV group and her recalls also witnessed a balanced increase of IU production. Based on her own claim, it could be due to her better knowledge of vocabulary and her access to the mediator through out the study sessions, an advantage A1 could not benefit from.

B2's (the mid-achiever) developmental path was rather uneven like that of her peer microgenetic pathway in the IV group. Although B2's listening micro-gains followed a zigzagged trajectory, she exhibited development in her IU production, which may be primarily explained by her mediated exposure to listening. An additional factor that might influence her listening improvement was her high motivation with regard to participation in this study. C2 (the low-achiever) listening comprehension was better than her groupmate B2 at mid-level. At first, Her scores indicated continuous ups and downs in the number of IUs produced. This certainly points to the uneven changes in her listening development. As in B2's case, C2 positive attitude and enthusiasm toward her participation in the study and active engagement in the listening activities may have contributed to the micro-gains concerning her listening development.

Table 6: Summary of the number of expected and observed IUs produced by each participant in the IT group in all independent recall sessions

participant sessions	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No Of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	Total
	NDA1		DA1		CA1		NDA2		DA2		CA2		CA3		
A2	27	8	29	9	25	12	21	12	20	10	26	9	27	6	66
B2	20	5	23	7	23	7	16	6	13	7	23	5	22	2	39
C2	25	6	15	6	22	5	9	4	15	7	11	9	25	5	42

As it was mentioned before, the learners in the MT group had the advantage to enjoy both the mediator's help plus the helps provided by the computer. Considering the learners' performances in this group, A3 (the high-achiever) produced the highest count of IUs in the study exhibiting substantial development in her IU production. It can be primarily explained by her doubled mediated exposure to listening. An additional factor that might influence her listening improvement was her English proficiency level and high motivation with regard to participation in this study. B3 (the mid-achiever), whose total IUs count was the lowest in her group, even lower than C3's, showed moderate development in her IU production. She exhibited instances of development in relation to IU production which may have been influenced by her exposure to multi-media interventions and the enrichment program as well as her positive stance concerning English language learning in general as well as her active engagement in the listening activities. What was interesting was that C3, as the low-achiever in this group, produced the highest count of IUs compared to the other two low-achievers in the IV and IT groups. Her production of IUs was continuously increasing, indicating improvement of her listening performance from session to session. The microgenetic analysis of her IU productions also demonstrated that in comparison to the other low-achievers in the study, C3's post-test and CA results showed a greater improvement in her listening development. She even produced more IUs compared to her group-mate C2 which may indicate a more considerable development in her ZPD. Her significant improvement can be due to different factors such as her intense interest in learning, high degree of motivation in addition to her exposure to double sided mediation.

Table 7: Summary of the Number of expected and observed IUs produced by each participant in the MT group in all independent recall sessions

Participant sessions	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No Of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	No of IUs exp.	No of IU obs.	Total
	NDA1		DA1		CA1		NDA2		DA2		CA2		CA3		
A3	27	7	29	10	25	12	21	14	20	14	26	11	27	7	75
B3	20	5	23	8	23	9	16	7	13	8	23	6	22	4	47
C3	25	5	15	7	22	8	9	7	15	8	11	9	25	8	52

Another advantage in the MT group was that they could use two help options. The three learners in this group showed a decrease in the number of times they used the help options which may point to development of their ability to comprehend and recall the texts independently (Table 8).

*Table 8: Number of times MT participants used the ‘transcript’ and ‘useful expressions’ help options*

A3 (The high-achiever)	Sessions	Number of IUs	No. of times transcript option has been used	No. of times useful expressions option has been used
	DA1	29	5	8
	CA1	25	7	7
	DA2	20	5	6
	CA2	26	4	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26</b>
B3 (The mid-achiever)	Sessions	Number of IUs	No. of times transcript option has been used	No. of times useful expressions option has been used
	DA1	23	8	11
	CA1	23	6	10
	DA2	13	5	7
	CA2	23	6	4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>31</b>
C3 (The low-achiever)	Sessions	Number of IUs	No. of times transcript option has been used	No. of times useful expressions option has been used
	DA1	25	10	7
	CA1	22	9	8
	DA2	15	4	6
	CA2	11	6	7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>28</b>

However, the analyses showed that the highest number of use belonged to C3 which may be because of her low language proficiency level. Her count demonstrated that her use followed a zigzagged trajectory indicating progression and regression in her listening development. Therefore, considering these points, it can be asserted that there was a difference in the use of help options between MT participants at different proficiency levels. The low-achiever learner used more help options than her two group-mates.

It seems that all the participants, specifically the low achievers, could benefit more from the program in the IT and MT groups which can be resulted from the materials presented to them in the enrichment program sessions. They had also the opportunity to enjoy the mediator’s assistance during the DA and CA sessions of the study which as they claim, could provide them “some hints and effective feedback”. Also, they believed that having their teacher beside them while listening made them feel “more comfortable and self-confident”, and that “listening to the text was not difficult anymore”. In addition to, the MT group could benefit from a new way of assessment which proved to be effective in the EFL learners’ process of listening comprehension development.

To see if a multi-media DA (MT) procedure could improve the development of listening skill among EFL language learners and to see if there were any differences between the developmental processes of the three participants receiving the *multi-media* mediation, the MT participants’ use of the two help options (transcript and the useful expressions) was analyzed. Based on the findings, the number of times A3 used the ‘transcript’ help option has increased from DA1 to CA1. However, it is followed by a slight decrease in DA2 and CA2 which may point to development in the learner listening performance. In general, the number of times she used the ‘transcript’ option was lower than those of her group-mates which may be due to her language proficiency level.

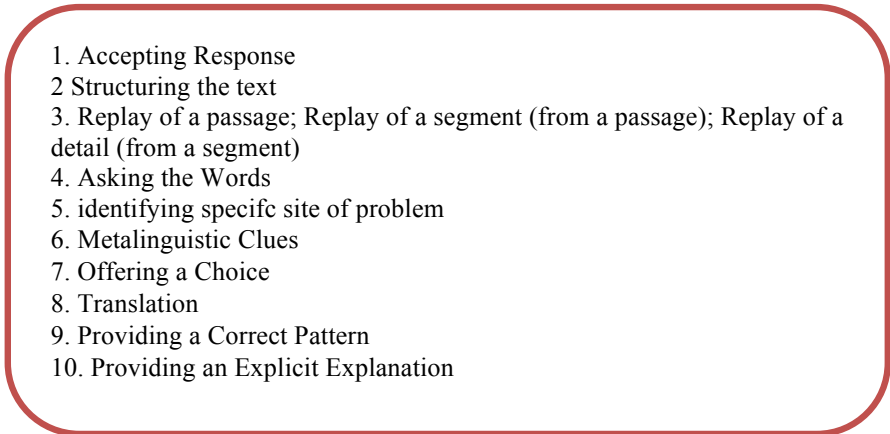
B3’s count revealed that she used the ‘transcript’ option more than A3. Her use of the help option showed a continuous decrease proceeded by a slight increase in CA2 which can be explained by the difficulty of the CA2 text.

Comparing to her two group-mates, C3's count displayed the highest number of 'transcript' option use which may be because of her low language proficiency level. Although, it was shown that the count decreased from DA1 to DA2 pointing to her potential listening performance development. Again here, her count bears in witness to a slightly increasing number in CA2 probably stemmed from the text difficulty at CA2 session.

Regarding the 'useful expression' option in the study, the data showed the number of times A3 and B3 used this help option declined gradually from session to session which may point to development of their ability to comprehend and recall the texts independently. However, C3's use followed a zigzagged trajectory indicating progression and regression in her listening development. Therefore, considering these points, it can be asserted that there was a difference in the use of help options between MT participants at different proficiency levels. It seems that, in general, the help options could assist the MT learners listening comprehension development but more proficient users could benefit slightly more from the help options.

### QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF MEDIATED PERFORMANCE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The goal of this part was to see what forms of mediation during DA-based pedagogical interventions best nurtured the development of listening skill of EFL language learners and to explore the types of responsive moves the learners exhibited to mediation during the DA-based pedagogical interventions. The arrangement of the mediator's strategies in this study paralleled Aljaafreh and Lantolf's (1994) regulatory scale in that it followed the principle of abstract (most implicit) to concrete (most explicit). For example, **Replay** was a more explicit strategy than **Accepting Response** or **Structuring the Text** since it encouraged the learners to attempt to recall a portion of a text a second time.

- 
1. Accepting Response
  2. Structuring the text
  3. Replay of a passage; Replay of a segment (from a passage); Replay of a detail (from a segment)
  4. Asking the Words
  5. identifying specific site of problem
  6. Metalinguistic Clues
  7. Offering a Choice
  8. Translation
  9. Providing a Correct Pattern
  10. Providing an Explicit Explanation

*Figure 3: Typology of mediator's strategies occurred during Dynamic Assessment of L2 listening comprehension*

It should be specified that the strategies frequently occurred during each dynamically conducted assessment and for this reason they were selected as the major strategies since they proved to be effective in promoting learners' listening ability. Similar to Poehner's (2005) study, the DA-based mediation did not always follow the hierarchical order of strategies. The strategic mediation was tightly linked to the learners' needs and the mediator had to adjust her assistance, going back and forth, depending on the specific response of the learners.

In order to conduct a more thorough microgenetic analysis of the learners' listening performance, the moves that occurred in response to mediation during the DA-MP and CA-MP sessions were further grouped into two interrelated categories: (1) a category was comprised of moves that reflect distinctive characteristics of listening development within the ZPD; and (2) the second category contained moves related to the effects of DA-based instruction observed during the assessments.

The analysis suggested that, while working in the ZPD, the learners tended to produce various contrastive responsive moves. These contrastive moves can be explained by the fact that the ZPD, by definition, consists of maturing and unstable functions. The instability of maturing listening ability was examined in the study through the notions of progression and regression. The rationale for this examination was in line with the SCT genetic approach which reflects Vygotsky's double-sided view of development as an evolutionary as well as revolutionary process (Vygotsky 1978; 1997a). To track developmental changes of L2 listening ability over time, the study microgenetically captured the frequency of mediational strategies and responsive moves at three specific stages of DA-based interventions, i.e., DA1, DA2, and CA3.

Comparisons of the selected sessions displayed the microgenetic growth of the learners' ZPD and developmental changes that occurred at three different points in time during the study (Table 9).

Table 9: Mediator's moves within the learners' ZPD (during DA1-MP, DA2-MP and CA3-MP)

Participant	A2			A3			B2			B3			C2			C3		
Category	DA1	DA2	CA3	DA1	DA2	CA3	DA1	DA2	CA3	DA1	DA2	CA3	DA1	DA2	CA3	DA1	DA2	CA3
Accepting response	25	16	18	23	15	20	17	12	19	21	13	11	15	9	11	14	10	11
Replay of a paragraph	7	5	5	10	5	6	11	7	6	12	7	2	14	7	4	11	5	2
Replay of a seg./det.	14	8	18	23	9	24	28	11	30	35	24	38	30	25	31	31	23	31
Structuring the text	1	1	0	1	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	3	2	3	1	2	2	1
Asking the words	2	1	1	2	0	2	3	1	1	3	2	0	3	1	2	2	1	3
Identifying problem area	2	3	5	4	2	5	4	1	6	6	3	4	7	4	3	9	1	3
Metalinguistic clues	3	1	2	4	3	1	7	2	7	8	0	9	9	1	2	9	6	0
Offering a choice	1	0	3	2	4	1	3	4	2	5	2	1	4	0	3	5	1	3
Translation	1	2	5	3	1	2	8	1	5	13	1	3	11	4	8	11	4	6
Providing correct pattern	8	5	5	10	2	3	8	2	3	8	6	5	9	4	7	11	5	5
Providing explanation	2	2	1	4	1	2	6	4	2	7	5	4	10	3	4	10	2	5

Analysis of the findings showed that from among the strategies delivered by the mediator, 'Replay', specifically 'Replay of a segment' or 'Focused replay', was the most frequent strategy used by the mediator. However, the fluctuation in the number of times this strategy was offered could confirm the results obtained through quantitative analysis by reflecting learners' regressive and progressive movements, which, in turn, indicated the growth of the learners' listening comprehension ability. Furthermore, the observed decrease in the need to translate and to provide correct pattern might also indicate progressive changes in the learners' ZPD, leading to development (Table 9).

With regard to total number of mediational strategies used at three different points in the study, a significant decrease was observed in their use at time 2 as compared to time 1 and a slight decrease at time 3 as compared to time 1. This tendency in strategies use can be explained by the varying complexity of the texts used in the study: the texts selected for DA1 and DA2 were selected from among the basic functions of language identical in terms of format (e.g., introducing others, giving and receiving information, etc.), whereas the texts selected for CA3 were different in a more substantial way, i.e., in genre (monologue) and in topic (e.g., instruction, report). Be it as it may, the



frequency of total strategies used by the mediator clearly showed the learners' movement towards self-regulation concerning their ability to understand spoken English.

Table 10: Learners' moves within the ZPD (during DA1-MP, DA2-MP and CA3-MP)

Participant	A2			A3			B2			B3			C2			C3		
Category	DA1	DA2	CA3	DA1	DA2	CA3	DA1	DA2	CA3	DA1	DA2	CA3	DA1	DA2	CA3	DA1	DA2	CA3
Responsive	1	2	2	0	1	4	3	4	7	4	2	6	9	2	8	7	6	8
Unresponsive	0	3	6	2	0	1	3	2	3	3	2	4	8	2	11	8	3	7
Providing positive response	13	8	15	13	5	17	18	12	16	14	11	21	24	15	19	25	14	23
Providing negative response	10	3	9	10	5	7	14	3	8	17	4	7	26	17	13	27	14	10
Making right choice <sup>a</sup>	2	1	1	2	3	0	0	0	2	1	2	2	1	0	1	1	4	2
Making wrong choice <sup>a</sup>	1	0	3	1	1	2	2	3	1	1	3	1	8	1	3	6	2	2
Decipher pattern <sup>a</sup>	14	9	19	16	10	21	16	6	18	14	9	17	14	12	16	10	12	20
Doesn't decipher pattern <sup>a</sup>	7	1	3	8	2	7	14	7	5	14	3	4	15	10	7	12	8	7
Overcomes problem <sup>a</sup>	10	3	11	8	5	11	14	5	4	10	12	6	7	4	8	8	5	10
Doesn't overcome problem <sup>a</sup>	4	4	3	4	2	3	7	2	4	7	1	3	5	9	3	4	6	5
Total responsive moves	62	34	72	64	34	73	91	44	68	85	49	71	117	72	89	108	73	94
Total progressive move	40	23	48	39	24	44	51	27	47	43	36	52	55	33	52	51	41	63
Total regressive moves	22	11	24	25	10	29	40	17	21	42	13	19	62	39	37	57	32	31

Considering the learners' moves, the moves 'Decipher a pattern correctly' and 'overcomes a problem' were considered here to be important indicators of listening development over time since they demonstrated the learners' emerging ability to function independently without reliance on the mediator's assistance. The slight increase in frequency of this move at time 3 (CA3) provided clear signs of the learners' improved ability to understand aural spoken English. That is, the counts of these two moves suggested that even though the learners still required

mediation and were not able to fully control the task, their ability to comprehend spoken texts was improving since at time 3 they were asked to recall a more complex text as compared to the texts at time 1 and 2. In addition, the counts of the responsive move '*Does not decipher a pattern*' and '*doesnot overcome a problem*' tended to decrease over time. This responsive move is the mirror image of '*Decipher a pattern correctly*' and its decrease is regarded here as an indication of development of listening comprehension skill.

With regard to regression and progression, the counts of learners' responsive moves revealed that generally the learners tended to produce more progressive than regressive moves with the number of progressive moves shows an impressive increasing impressively from session to session. From a Vygotskian perspective, this tendency clearly points to the growth of the learners' listening ability in the ZPD.

## **CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The investigation of mediated listening performance allowed for diagnosing several factors that impede L2 listening comprehension at the three levels of language proficiency in question. As evident from the qualitative analysis, the mediational phases of the DA and CA sessions, as opposed to non-mediated phases and NDA sessions, offered a fuller picture of the difficulties experienced by the participants while listening to the texts. The problem areas that impeded successful listening performance resided in all aspects of language learning, i.e., lack of effective listening strategies, functional knowledge of language use, phonology, lexis, grammar, and some other factors. The diagnostic analysis revealed that grammatical and phonological problems present a noticeable challenge for all the learners at these levels. The analysis demonstrated that for these learners L2 phonology constituted one of the biggest challenge in text comprehension since poorly developed L2 phonology did not allow them to recognize previously acquired words and compelled them to confuse L2 sounds.

Moreover, this study explored whether strategy instruction might have any effect on the learners listening comprehension improvement in the foreign language listening classrooms. It seems that the results speak in favor of such a role. That is to say, strategy training is intended to raise the students' awareness of metacognitive strategies, through which the learner is more able to select strategies appropriate to a particular problem, rather than engage in the activity for its own sake. To make it simple, students should not be only taught what to learn, but also how to learn.

To conclude, it should be noted that the traditional idea of only exposing EFL students to listening texts in listening classes should be challenged by an approach in which strategies can effectively and successfully be embedded in the listening course by means of strategy training program. The knowledge of language that the students need is that of vocabulary and grammatical structures. At the same time, students should be trained about how to effectively use listening strategies. The more strategies they know, the more beneficial it will be for them.

Besides, any approach to listening instruction requires teachers to have relevant knowledge of, and know how to implement, appropriate techniques, not just listening strategy instruction. I would suggest that most teachers have the capacity to develop the knowledge and ability, either by themselves or through 'In Service English Teacher Training' sessions, to include elements of strategy instruction in their listening lessons within allocated course times.

### ***Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research***

There were several limitations to the study that need to be acknowledged and addressed. The limitations described below may also be regarded as orientation for potential future L2 DA research and/or L2 listening.

The first limitation concerns the length of the study. Despite the longitudinal nature of the present study, the development of the learners' listening ability was tracked only within nine-month period of time. Accordingly, further investigation that would track development of listening ability over longer periods would offer more insights and refine our understanding of L2 listening comprehension processes.

The second limitation had to do with the extent to which the findings can be generalized to EFL university learners. The number of learners participating in this study was too limited for broad generalizations. Also, the participants in this study were female EFL learners. Consequently, more investigation can be done using both male and female learners. Moreover, the present study was conducted among three different levels of language proficiency; therefore, further empirical evaluations are needed to replicate the findings in different contexts and possibly at other levels of

language proficiency. The future investigations can potentially replicate the design of the present study but should take into account of the third limitation discussed in the next paragraph.

The third limitation relates to the carry-over tasks. The texts used in the CA2 and specifically in the CA3 sessions caused severe comprehension difficulties for the learners when recalled independently. In order to calibrate carry-over assessments to the learners' microgenetic gains, it would perhaps be more appropriate to design the tasks in terms of text selection after the first NDA and DA sessions and/or after the enrichment program rather than a priori, as was done in the present study.

Finally, more rigorous diagnostic qualitative analyses of L2 listening processes via DA should be performed. This dissertation has provided diagnostic insights only into the processes related to listening comprehension of EFL university students. To inform listening instruction, it would be necessary to conduct a range of empirical studies in order to reveal problem areas that cause comprehension difficulties of L2 learners studying various languages and at different proficiency levels. The focus of these studies should be on the degree to which each of the components of listening comprehension has an influence. With regard to listening research, one factor that could be considered in future studies is the role of non-verbal behavior, including gesture, facial expressions, body posture, etc. This factor was left unexplored in the present study. Thus, future studies offering empirical insights into the role that non-verbal behavior plays in L2 listening would also enhance our understanding of the processes involved in L2 aural text comprehension.

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## ABSTRACT

In the process of teaching and learning English, one of the most problematic parts for teachers and learners is applying spatial (place) and temporal (time) prepositions. This issue is one of the common topics among most languages. Prepositions are troublesome because there are vary characteristics and usage for prepositions in English language. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the role of audio-visual (A/V) modalities affecting learning place and time prepositions among pre-intermediate English as foreign language (EFL) learners in Iranian context. These three prepositions were *at*, *in*, and *on* instructed through three types of *audio*, *pictorial-speech*, and *visual* modalities. 100 participants were randomly divided into three experimental groups who received audio, pictorial-speech, visual modalities in learning spatial and temporal prepositions, and one control group who received the usual and conventional training on learning prepositions without the specific focus on the proposed modalities. The experimental groups received instructions based on the related modalities while the control group received some placeboes on place and time prepositions throughout 10 sessions. To get the impact of using these modalities, the post-test on spatial and temporal prepositions was run among all groups. Data were analyzed through One-way ANOVA to determine the significant effect of using *audio*, *pictorial-speech*, and *visual* modalities on learning prepositions among pre-intermediate EFL learners ( $p < 0.05$ ). The results showed that *visual* modalities were the most effective modality in teaching spatial and temporal prepositions and the *pictorial-speech* modality was more effective than the *audio* one.

**KEYWORDS:** Spatial, Temporal, Prepositions, Audio, Pictorial-speech, Video, Modalities

## INTRODUCTION

Within syntax, there are two basic categories of words: content and function words. Content words are those that have meaning or semantic value. They include nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Function words, on the other hand, are those that exist to explain or create grammatical or structural relationships into which the content words may fit. They have little meaning of their own and are much fewer in number than content words. Function words include prepositions, pronouns, articles, and conjunctions. Most linguists will classify prepositions as function words (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2007).

As part of the grammatical system, prepositions seem to occur everywhere in speaking and writing (Morenberg, 1997). Biber, Conrad and Reppen (2000, pp. 91-93) studied prepositions in different varieties of English such as conversations, fictions, newspapers and academic prose. Although it is often said that function words (in this case prepositions), as opposed to individual lexical words, are frequent in any text, there are wide differences among registers. Prepositions are the most frequent function word class in news and academic prose; however, they are much less common in conversation. Academic prose and news reportage have the highest frequency of nouns and also the highest frequency of prepositions which serve as extensions or specifications of nouns (Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 2000, pp. 91-93). Prepositions are a hybrid category. At least in English, prepositions, like functional heads, are cases less free standing morphemes that do not combine with tense or aspect morphology (Svenonius, 2004). However, it is difficult to learn to use prepositions correctly as most of them have several different functions and there are not many rules to help in choosing which prepositions to use correctly (Swan, 1988). English Second Language learners still face problems in learning prepositions long after they have achieved a high level of



proficiency in English. Even proficient English speakers exhibit variable performance with regard to which prepositions they use for a particular meaning (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1999).

Studies on prepositions in first language show the same finding as studies in second language prepositional meanings are not acquired all at the same time (Rice, 1996, 1999). Evans and Tyler (2005) describe each language's vantage point as "privileged" or "conventionalized". In other words, each culture will take a certain, traditional view of the image. The way a culture views that scene will determine the way it is expressed in the language. So the emphasis by a culture and therefore by the language of that culture determines preposition to use and how to use it. If two cultures/languages view a scene from different angles, they will use different prepositions; thus the mismatch problem.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

This study aimed to discover three common prepositions between *place* and *time* taught in English textbooks commonly among junior high school students in Iran. It also dealt with the types of errors EFL learners make in the use of prepositions (inter-lingual or intra-lingual). The final objective of the present study could be the determining whether the possible source of the errors can be attributed to the types of teaching materials or being commonality of preposition between time and place. The main purposes are that the prepositions are one of the most difficult categories in the English language and few textbooks address the problem. It is necessary to inform teachers, particularly junior high school teachers, textbook writers, and material developers, of the types of materials which are used to teach prepositions and which are likely to facilitate learning and particularly of the problems in the understanding the meaning and use of prepositions and to raise some awareness concerning prepositions and second language acquisition.

The researchers hope that this identification and analysis would result in implications for instructional strategies used by teachers of English. The prepositions selected for this study are *at*, *in* and, *on*. The reason for researchers is that they are the most commonly used by junior high school learners and consequently more errors are detected in their use as compared to the frequently of errors made in the use of other prepositions (Hayashi, 2001).

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Over the last two decades a considerable amount of cross-linguistic research has been carried out on people's perception and conception of space, and the way this is reflected in their use of spatial lexis such as prepositions (Pederson, 1995). Because it is high confusion and problematic use, the English preposition system, which includes the basic characteristics, the co-occurrences with verbs, adverbs, adjectives, and nouns, the lexical compounding and the deletion of preposition, is one of the notoriously difficult structural elements for ESL students (Jackendoff, 1973; Cho, 2002). In fact, it has often been considered hard grammar, very difficult if not impossible to teach (Marianne & Diane, 1999). However, EFL teachers should be able to plan strategies and select or adapt appropriate teaching materials to be used in teaching prepositions. All the prepositions stipulated in the syllabus must be introduced and taught repetitively in a structured way according to its functions to enhance students' understanding. As it has been emphasized the teaching of grammar is to be incorporated into the four language skills and should be taught in context and in a meaningful way. Hence, it may be then that we should not teach certain prepositions in isolation but rather to teach them as in relation to their occurrence with other words (Celce-Murcia & Larsen Freeman, 1999). There are forty-eight prepositions in the English language.

In The British National Corpus's (Leech, Rayson, & Wilson, 2001, p. 120) list of the thirty most commonly used words in English, there are eight prepositions. In this study, we deal with "at", "in" and "on" as our target prepositions to investigate. The reason for this choice is that they are among the most basic prepositions and they have various meanings (Hayashi, 2001). McCarthy (1972, cited in Hamdallah & Tushyeh, 1993) maintains that "As any English teacher well knows, our prepositions are particularly troublesome lot to the non-native speaker of English" (p. 181).

According to Quirk and Greenbaum (1993), a preposition expresses a relationship between entities: they indicate a relationship in space (between one object and another), and /or a relationship in time (between events). In addition to other relationships such as instrument and cause. Prepositions can be used with different parts of speech of the same root word; one preposition can be used with the verb form, another with the objective and still another with the noun form of the word. e.g.: *We are fond of something-We have fondness for it* (Hamdallah & Tushyeh, 1993).

Prepositions can be classified according to their form, function and meaning. Concerning form, prepositions can be simple (one-word preposition), or complex (also called two-word, three-word, or compound prepositions). Simple

prepositions are closed class. That is, we do not invent new single word prepositions. However, complex prepositions are open class because new combinations could be invented (Grubic, 2004). In English, there are approximately seventy simple prepositions. The most frequently used are: *at, by, for, from, in, of, on, to* and *with* (Grubic, 2004).

### ***Spatial properties***

Leung (1990, cited in Hasan & Abdullah, 2009) maintains that “the function of spatial preposition is to locate spatially one object with reference to another object” (p. 609). In the sentence: *My friend lives in a small village*, there is a spatial relationship between “*my friend*” and “*small village*” through the use of the preposition (*in*). Cognitive linguists use the expressions “*trajectory*” and “*landmark*” to refer to respect to *my friend* and *small village*, and both “*trajectory*” and “*landmark*” are located within a spatial domain (Hasan & Abdullah, 2009).

Bennett (1957, p. 12) sees that any comprehensive account of spatial uses of English prepositions assigns a prominent *place to the distinction between locative sentences*, such as “*Gyneth is at the supermarket*”, and *the directional sentence*, such as “*Trevor went to the post office* “. Hence, locative sentences show clearly where something is located while directional sentences describe a change of position (i.e., from one position to another). According to Close (1981, p. 148), in using spatial prepositions, we are concerned not so much with objective measurement, i.e. with the actual dimensions of the things to which we are referring, as with how we imagine them to be at the time of speaking.

The contrast between *on* (expresses a surface) and *in* (expresses an area) has various amplifications according to context, as these examples show: *-The forest made patterns on the window* (window is used as a glass surface). *-A face appeared in the window* (window means a framed area) (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1993, p. 148). A cause-and-effect relationship is obtained between the notions of simple position (or static location) and direction (movement with respect to a destination).

### ***Temporal properties***

There are two sub-types of time enclosure: the first indicates a period of time such as *in the afternoon, in the early 19s, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, in summer*, etc. Whereas the second sub-type indicates duration such as length of time .e.g.: *promised to come back in a few hours* (Hasan & Abdullah, 2009, p. 605).

Quirk and Greenbaum (1993) refer to ‘*at*’ and ‘*in*’ as prepositions of ‘time when’ because they are used to answer the question ‘when’? *At* is used for points of time mainly clock-time (*at ten o’clock, at 5:30 P.M, at noon....etc.*), for holding periods (*at the weekend, at Christmas, at Easter*) and for phrases (*at night, at the / that time....etc.*). ‘*on*’ is used with phrases referring to days (*on Monday, on the following day....etc.*). ‘*In*’ is used to indicate periods of such as: *in the evening, during holy week, in August, in the months that followed*.

The prepositions are usually optional with phrases referring to times such as: ‘*on*’ *Monday week*, ‘*in*’ *the January before last, on the day before yesterday*. It is also optional with phrases identity a time before or after a given time in the past or future: ‘*in*’ *the previous spring*, ‘*at*’ *the following weekend*, ‘*on*’ *the next day* (Quirk & Greenbaum, 1993).

Prepositions belong to syntax category which is a problematic area for EFL learners (Cho, 2004). They are one of the most frequent error types. It means that they are the second category of the most frequent error after pronunciation. English prepositions have no a definite usage and meaning. They have many meanings across languages. It means that they do not use uniformly. On other hand, prepositions have attracted less attention than other language features. They are one of the areas which the learners most often deviated from standard English. So source of prepositional errors can be created by both mother-tongue interference and intra-English interference. It means that prepositional problems belong to both the students’ mother tongue interference and the influence of the target language itself.

EFL learners have often been supposed to be hard grammar, very difficult tasks if not impossible to teach and they create many problems for EFL instructors and they try to test different approaches and techniques for teaching English prepositions. Some studies of English prepositions indicate that learning prepositions creates difficulties for all non-native learners and one of the most difficult area for EFL students because the EFL learners use them based on their own mother tongue prepositional system and other factor which create problems for the EFL learners is the difference between the prepositions of their mother tongue and target language.

The first type of error occurs when a learner of a second language carries over the habits of his mother tongue into the second language. These inter-lingual interferences mean that his first language habits (patterns, system or rules) interfere or prevent the learner, to some extent, from acquiring the patterns and rules of the second language (Corder, 1986). The second type of error is caused by the interference of the second language itself. This is termed “intra-lingual interference”. Some of the errors that are made by learners of a second language are caused by the structure of the target language and not the mother tongue and are signs of false hypothesis. The learners, in this case, “try to derive the rules behind the data to which they have been exposed, and may develop hypothesis that correspond neither to mother tongue nor to the target language” (Richards, 1970, p.6).

The research problem in the present study will be to discover the effect of three modalities which are *audio*, *pictorial-speech*, and *visual* on teaching spatial and temporal prepositions which overlap each other and the EFL learners cannot distinguish the differences between them and create interference and lack of learning for them. It is important to mention that a few researchers have used modalities to study the teaching of preposition and most of the researchers have done their studies to memorize the prepositions by EFL learners.

English prepositions are often defined as the words that describe the location of one object in relation to another. However, prepositions are often vague and confusing even for native speakers (Cho, 2004). It is extremely hard for English language learners to learn nuances of all the English prepositions, how to understand them, and how to use them. Part of the reason is that just as prepositions are hard to understand, they are also hard to teach. One cannot really explain a preposition without using one or two more prepositions in the definition. Next, the teacher would have to define those new prepositions. They are one of the important factors in language mastery. On the other hand, learning prepositions are basic cases in the mastery of syntax and they have essential role at the early stage of syntax development. It means that prepositions indicate a relationship between the sentence elements. They are also effective to sentence meaning by signifying relative temporal and spatial relationships of many kinds (Richards, 1974).

According to Brown (2000), spatial or locative prepositions refer to concepts of location or position. In fact, this indicates the position of objects in the environment. The main significance of this study is to gain and investigate a comprehensive understanding of the prepositional problem. Systematically by discovering and analyzing errors it is possible to (1) identify the causes of learner errors, and (2) obtain information on common difficulties in language learning as an aid to teaching or in development of teaching materials. Of course, this point is important to mention that language teaching cannot stand away from the findings of error analysis. Students’ errors have always been of interest and significance to teachers, syllabus designers, and test developers. This may lead educators to devise appropriate materials and effective teaching techniques, and constructing tests suitable for different levels (Corder, 1986).

The preposition is a compound word itself which includes pre + position that means “place before”. It usually comes before noun or noun phrase. The all of the prepositions are not usually predicated because prepositions can theoretically be added to the language every time. The prepositions never change in form. But there also is the postposition that expresses some sort of relationships between the preceding noun or pronoun (its object) and another part of the sentence, in languages where the object precedes the verb, such as Japanese (SOV languages). English has one post position: “ago”. The simple, one-word prepositions (e. g., on) are the most prepositions in English that are approximately 70%. Some are multi-word prepositions that are also called two-word, three-word, or compound prepositions (e.g., in front of).

Prepositions are grammatical words or functional words that mainly contribute to the grammatical structure of the sentence (Thornbury, 2002). In the English language, prepositions are presented in three dimensions, namely, the form, meaning, and use. Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) review the phrase structure rule for a prepositional phrase to make several observations about the form of prepositions. It is stated, also, one of the greatest learning challenges presented by prepositions is their meaning, for instance, the problem with giving an abstract definition to ESL/EFL students is that the definition is often more difficult to comprehend and apply than the form itself. Another view argues that prescribed preposition choice represents semantic refinement, rather than meaning loss incurred over the process of grammaticalization (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

An intriguing feature of English is that many prepositions are used to describe both spatial and temporal relationships (Rice, Sandra & Vanrespaille, 1999). In a survey of 53 languages from diverse families worldwide, Haspelmath (1997) found that all of them, without exception, employ spatial expressions for temporal notions. In addition, he discovered similarities as well as differences in how space-time parallelisms are manifested. For example, expressions for topological spatial relationships like coincidence (*at the corner*), supra-adjacency (*on the table*), and containment (*in the closet*) are also frequently used to indicate that an event occurred simultaneously with a

particular clock time (*at 1:30*), day-part (*in the morning*), day (*on Monday*), month (*in July*), season (*in the summer*), or year (*in 2003*); however, there is a great deal of cross-linguistic variation regarding not only the precise spatial notions that are lexically encoded (Levinson & Meira, 2003), but also which ones are associated with which time periods. Why is space time parallelisms so common cross linguistically? Several explanations have been proposed (Haspelmath, 1997), but the one that appears to be most consistent with the available data is the Metaphoric Mapping Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003). One of the fundamental tenets of this theory is that metaphor is not merely a literary or rhetorical device, but is instead a powerful computational ability that contributes significantly and perhaps uniquely (Feist & Gentner, 2003) to human cognition by allowing similar relational structures in different conceptual domains to be identified, and also by allowing candidate inferences from the “base” domain to be projected into the “target” domain, thereby enabling a kind of meaning creation for biologically inspired computer simulations.

In the literature on the acquisition of English, prepositions are said to appear as soon as a child can produce two word utterances. These first prepositions seem to be primarily spatial localizers and are part of the first twenty lexical items learnt by English speaking children (Brown, 1973). Landau (1996) found that learning the spatial use of a preposition depends not only on knowing its inherent meaning, but also on knowing how the objects related by the preposition should be represented conceptually. Locative prepositions describe general categories of spatial relations (Pinker, 2007; Tamly, 2000). For instance, if we are told that “a particular grant is at risk, the lab should be on alert, although our specific project is not in trouble,” prepositions serve a functional, grammatical role; the discrete spatial schema denoted by a particular preposition would seem uninvolved in the representation of each construction. And unlike combinations of prepositions and concrete nouns, combinations of prepositions and abstract nouns are entirely restricted, or prescribed. That is, one cannot say the project is at or on trouble. Superficially arbitrary, but prescribed preposition use suggests that prepositions in these constructions serve a grammatical function (Lehmann, 1995).

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present study seeks to answer the following questions:

- RQ1. To what extent do audio, pictorial-speech, and visual modalities affect teaching spatial-temporal prepositions among pre-intermediated EFL learners?
- RQ2. Is there a difference between EFL learners taught through audio, pictorial-speech, and visual modalities in learning the spatial-temporal prepositions?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The study conducted at junior high school in Behbahan, Iran. A sample of 100 students at the pre-intermediate level who took English as their course at school were selected based on non-random judgment sampling-method. They took a homogeneity test included 50 multiple-choice items extracted from Richards, Lesley, Hansen, Sandy and Zukowski (2008). The researchers conducted their study with four classes including four groups and each group comprised of 25 learners at one school that everyone had 25 EFL learners as a one comprised one control group and three experimental groups. Then a pre-test for checking their background information about (spatial and temporal) prepositions based on English book for Iranian EFL second junior high school students (Iran produce book company, 2012), New Interchange book 1 (Richards, 2007) and Top Notch book 1A (Soslow & Ascher, 2007) was conducted. The selected participants were female. The research took a whole academic semester of winter, 2012.

### ***Instrumentation***

Three testing instruments were utilized in the process of the present research. Initially, a homogeneity test on grammar and reading proficiency included 50 multiple-choice items extracted from Richards, Lesley, Hansen, Sandy and Zukowski (2008). *New Interchange Placement Test* was administered to the participants to determinate the learners' proficiency level and divide the sample into three groups. Homogeneity test reliability coefficient was calculated through KR-21 formula as ( $r = 0.830$ ).

A pre-test based on their English book (Iran produce book company, 2012), New Interchange book 1 (Richards, 2007) and Top-Notch book 1A (Soslow & Ascher, 2007) to measure the students' level of preposition background information and make homogenous groups. It includes 60 multiple-choice items which students must answer in the allotted time that is 60 minutes. Each test was scored. Pre-test reliability coefficient was calculated through KR-21 formula as ( $r=0.918$ ).

The third instrument was a post-test to determine the effectiveness of using different modalities on learning spatial-temporal prepositions. Both tests were piloted to meet their reliability coefficients through KR-21 formula as ( $r=0.708$ ).

### Materials

The materials in this study that afforded to the four groups consisted of English book two of junior high school for Iranian EFL students (Iran produce book company, 2012), Audio, pictures and visual CDs of New Interchange book1 (Richards, 2007), and Top Notch book 1A with its Audio, pictures and visual CDs (Soslow & Ascher, 2007). The rationale behind choosing these books was that they dealt with spatial and temporal prepositions through the units.

### Procedure

In this study, the data were collected by means of English book two for junior high school (Iran produce book company, 2012), Audio, pictures and video CDs of New Interchange book 1 (Richards, 2007), Top Notch book 1A with its Audio, pictures and video CDs (Soslow & Ascher, 2007). Respondents were the students who were in second junior high school grade. Then, the pre-test was conducted which includes 60 multiple choice questions on spatial and temporal prepositions within 60 minutes allotted time. The papers were scored based on a checklist scores obtained out of 60 based on sixty scoring criterion. During the treatment period, the three experimental groups dealt with audio, pictorial-speech, and visual modalities and one control group is working on the prepositions based on conventional methods. The teacher utilized definitions, explanations, translations, synonyms, antonyms to teach prepositions.

The researchers taught spatial and temporal prepositions by using educational film for one experimental group and pictorial and audio modalities were for other two experimental groups. Instruction lasted a whole academic semester six sessions for each group. Throughout this period, the participants in the experimental groups made their endeavor to participate.

Finally, four groups were given the post test of checking preposition like the pre test by the teacher. The post test was developed by the researchers based on the materials taught in the classroom. Before administration of the post-test, the researchers calculated the reliability coefficient of the test through KR-21 formula.

When the score of the pre-test and post-test were obtained, the mean and standard deviation of the scores were calculated. Then, One-way ANOVA was run in order to find out whether the differences between the four groups are enough significant to reject the null hypotheses. To determine the effectiveness of each modality, the post-hoc Scheffe test was conducted on the post-test scores.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To test the research hypotheses, the researchers dealt with comparing learning prepositions through three modalities through a parametric technique for analyzing the quantitative data. Data were analyzed and the results of the pre-test scores of the three groups are descriptively presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (Pre-test)

Groups	N	Mean	Std. D. Error		95% Confidence Interval for Mean			
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Min.	Max.
Control	25	48.00	2.345	.469	47.03	48.96	44.00	52.00
Video	25	48.52	1.135	46.175	50.864	30.00	55.00	
Pictorial-speech	25	49.00	.734	47.483	50.516	40.00	54.00	
Audio	25	47.76	.497	46.733	48.787	44.00	52.00	
Total	100	48.32	.376	47.573	49.066	30.00	55.00	

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistics of the audio, pictorial-speech, and visual modalities preposition learning tests in terms of the number of participants (n), means, maximum score, and minimum score. 75 students participated in this research. Their scores ranged from 30 to 55 out of 60 in the pre-test. Since the descriptive statistics could not



determine the significant differences among the groups, One-way ANOVA was run to discover the area of differences in Table 2.

*Table 2: One-way ANOVA(Pre-tests)*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	22.960	3	7.653	.533	.661
Within Groups	1378.800	96	14.362		
Total	1401.760	99			

Since critical F (= 2.74) is greater than the observed F (F= .533) with df = 3, 96, 99, the difference among the group is not significant at ( $p < 0.05$ ). Thus four groups are homogenous in pre-test.

*Table 3: Descriptive Statistics (Post-test)*

Groups	N	Mean	Std. D.	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min.	Max.
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Control	25	51.320	2.154	.430	50.430	52.209	48.00	57.00
Video	25	53.800	2.309	.461	52.846	54.753	47.00	57.00
Pictorial-speech	25	53.040	2.030	.406	52.201	53.878	49.00	56.00
Audio	25	50.320	2.593	.518	49.249	51.390	42.00	55.00
Total	100	52.120	2.637	.263	51.596	52.643	42.00	57.00

According to Table 3, there were considerable differences in preposition learning before and after the modality used. In this case, the hypothesis of no difference between spatial-temporal teaching modalities was rejected. In other words, the means of experimental groups were greater in post-test than the mean of the control groups in post-test. Table 3 shows that the groups in post-test had more progress than their scores in pre-test. It means that the four groups have changed. Accordingly, the first null hypothesis was rejected. Table 4 was run to determine the difference among the four groups.

*Table 4: One-way ANOVA (Post-Test)*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	188.720	3	62.907	12.082	.000
Within Groups	499.840	96	5.207		
Total	688.560	99			

Since critical F (2.74) is less than the observed F (F = 12.082) with df = 3, 96, and 99, the difference among the groups is significant at ( $p < 0.05$ ). Thus four groups are not homogeneous in post-test. This Table does not determine the significance between the each two groups. Table 5 was run to determine the difference between among each two groups.



Table 5: Post-hoc Scheffe test (Multiple Comparisons)

Scheffe

Dependent Variables	(I) VAR001	(J) AR001	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	Video		-2.48000*	.64539	.003	-4.3166	-.6434
		Pictorial-speech	-1.72000	.64539	.076	-3.5566	.1166
		Audio	1.00000	.64539	.497	-.8366	2.8366
Video	Control		2.48000*	.64539	.003	.6434	4.3166
		Pictorial-speech	.76000	.64539	.709	-1.0766	2.5966
		Audio	3.48000*	.64539	.000	1.6434	5.3166
Pictorial-speech	Control		1.72000	.64539	.076	-.1166	3.5566
		Video	-.76000	.64539	.709	-2.5966	1.0766
		Audio	2.72000*	.64539	.001	.8834	4.5566
Audio	Control		-1.00000	.64539	.497	-2.8366	.8366
		Video	-3.48000*	.64539	.000	-5.3166	-1.6434
		Pictorial-speech	-2.72000*	.64539	.001	-4.5566	-.8834

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

The post-hoc Scheffe test was run to determine the potential difference among the four groups in post-test in Table 5. It determines the interaction and comparisons among the four groups. Groups of video modality were better than other modalities. The results of pictorial-speech modality were higher than the audio modality. In other words, the video modality had the greatest effect on preposition learning and the pictorial-speech modality and audio modality were more effective than other modalities on learning after the first modality.

### Discussion

This section elaborates on the results and findings presented in the previous section. To discuss the results of the research, the research questions raised earlier in the study will be referred to as follows:

*RQ 1: To what extent do audio, pictorial-speech, and visual modalities affect teaching spatial temporal prepositions among pre-intermediated EFL learners?*

This study examined the effects of teaching receptive understanding of prepositions via instructive modalities. The experiment showed a clear effect for learners' *spatial-temporal* preposition learning. Considering the scores of *audio* modality group, this observation could be attributed to an explosive effect for learners. Apparently the learners in this group had acquired notable comprehension both the *spatial-temporal* prepositions in the experimental, regardless of using and applying the classical English teaching books. Apparently, the proper modality facilitates the preposition learning. The results of this paper documented the previous literary works which were mentioned in review of literature. A possible explanation for this study is that learners are extensively exposed to English to have developed full representation for *spatial-temporal* prepositions. The subjects at the intermediate levels of proficiency are sufficiently exposed to the occurring prepositions to show a difference in scores related to use *audio* modality rather than without it. Results of the current study support those of earlier studies which have found *audio* modality to be an effective means to teach concepts to young children.

Results supported this recommendation which Gifted auditory-sequential learners are more likely than equally gifted visual-spatial learners to be high achievers in academic subjects, to be selected for gifted programs, to be recognized by their as having high potential, and to be considered leaders. By way of contrast, gifted visual-spatial learners are more likely than auditory-sequential learners to underachieve (Gohm, Humphreys, & Yao, 1998).

Strongly auditory-sequential gifted students are easily identified. Strongly visual spatial gifted students with adequate abilities in the auditory-sequential realm develop compensation strategies to enable them to be successfully.

Strongly visual-spatial gifted students with serious deficits in auditory-sequential processing are under-identified as gifted, underserved in the classroom, underachieve academically, and are more likely to drop out of school. Visual-spatial abilities may atrophy through disuse (Lohman, 1994).

Multiple prepositional relations which pictures may show could include an ambiguity because of interfering by the presence of other possible prepositional that is actually intended to be presented in the picture. By considering that the presented condition in pre-test and post-test of using pictorial-speech modality was similar to pre-test and post-test by applying audio modality, the results of our data fortify that enhancing one's understanding/facility with teaching preposition by pictorial-speech modality can be attained. The question was that whether the pictorial-speech modality affect on teaching preposition.

Pictures and other graphics are an increasingly popular way to address the problems with misunderstanding and misuse of prepositions. English learning materials for primary schools in Indonesia, in particular, have made extensive use of pictures to support the prepositions learning process.

We believe that the proper pictures create the context which is beneficial for the EFL learners. This usefulness can help teachers to save the time that they spend on elaborating a task or introducing new vocabulary and on the other hand, they improve the comprehension of the language that EFL learners have. In fact, this matter proved the previous studies which the researchers referred to them in review of literature part.

The study also included the conditions for positioning self with novel objects and positioning objects in relation to other objects in order to control this effect and to measure students' abilities to generalize responding to another response mode (Egel, Shafer & Neef, 1984). While available research and results from the current study support use of video, for teaching spatial, and temporal prepositions to Iranian learners.

Recently, it has been noticeable that *visual* aids are beneficial instructional materials for Communication. *Visual* aids present the non-verbal information in real-life situations. In other words, they create the comprehensible input and the provided information by *visual* aids is natural. In addition, they are potentially motivating. So by considering to this information, using *visual* aids to teach grammar would be a practical way and to implement the communicative approach. In this way, by using *visual* aids in instruction the communicative approach will replace with the Grammar Translation Method. As proposed in this research paper, using *visual* aids (films, pictures) for teaching spatial-temporal prepositions to EFL learners can be beneficial to the learners because it makes the learning experience more interesting. A picture or *visual* modalities (aids) are as worth as a thousand words and more for EFL instruction.

*RQ2. Is there a significant difference between audio, pictorial-speech, and visual modalities in teaching spatial-temporal prepositions to EFL learners?*

Across languages, prescribed prepositions are used to talk about time (Haspelmath, 1997). Wierzbicka (1993) suggests that locative preposition usage across different temporal phrases is determined by semantics, reflecting a common spatio-temporal conceptual organization but not merely a set of idiosyncratic grammatical rules. Some prescribed prepositions may retain several meanings despite their apparent grammatical function. Thus the use of a particular spatial preposition meaningfully influences thinking about time or place. If a meaningful relation between prescribed preposition and time unit pairs is present, it could exist in one of two versions (Kemmerer, 2005). The strong version states that a fundamental overlap exists between the domains of space and time, where pairings between prepositions with particular spatial semantics (e.g. 3D containment) and abstract concepts (e.g. large temporal unit) reflect obligatory relations. This version suggests that the schematic spatial representations suggested by different prepositions are necessary for thinking about time (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Exploring these issues Casasanto (2009) argues that time is a model system for testing relations between language and thought. Space-time relations are sensitive to experimental manipulation and provide some of the strongest behavioral evidence for interactions between language and thought.

## CONCLUSION

The prepositions in this present study are common between place and time prepositions. They include *at*, *in*, and *on*. The research findings revealed that EFL Iranian students at the second junior high school level experience serious difficulties in discovering the correct prepositions. The preposition is a matter proved to be the most common in use

and the most difficult for the learners. In other words, the purpose of this paper has been to raise some awareness concerning prepositions and foreign language acquisition. The prepositions are one of the most difficult matters in the English language. On the other hand, few textbooks address the problem. The current pedagogy lacks a good strategy for addressing this grammatical point.

By learning grammar rules, learners can avoid language fossilization and improve their performance, among other related advantages. Moreover, knowing grammar rules create independent learners who can control their learning process when they are out of school and when time constrains the learning experience to the classroom only. By teaching prepositions through using visual aids, the language learning process becomes appealing and meaningful for EFL students. In fact, the visual materials provide a degree of naturalness to the language teaching and learning by revealing reality, which is essential for learners because the classroom does not reflect real-life language usage by itself. The visual aids are the source of comprehensible input. On the other hand, the visual aids support students to retrieve previous knowledge in order to make sense of the language grammar and then use it meaningfully for communication. Other benefit for teaching by using visual aids is improving students' motivation to learn their affective filter so that acquisition takes place. Therefore, grammar and visual aids are two sides of a coin that makes the foreign language process more effective and meaningful for EFL students.

In order to perform effective teaching grammar in Iranian EFL classrooms, teachers can make use of the different modalities like audio, picture, and visual aids proposed in this paper to teach grammar-related content. Visual aids can be displayed in many ways that are helpful for EFL learners. For example, creating picture books may be a good way used in the classroom to create a teaching aid that can be used with several groups of students, to teach grammar contents under different situations. As proposed in this research paper, using visual aids to teach ESL grammar under the communicative

Pictures have been used in the English textbooks as a means of introducing the meaning and use of prepositions and facilitating students' understanding of the meaning and use of prepositions. It is noticeable that all accompany pictures should play an active and effective role in supporting (preposition) learning. As a result, teachers or textbook writers need to be careful in choosing pictures intended to support verbal explanation by having information of selecting the proper picture and picture characteristics.

### ***Implications***

The English books with pictures as a means of introducing the meaning and use of prepositions and can facilitate the assessing students' understanding of the meaning and use of prepositions. The literature has shown that the use of pictures in the learning of prepositions in principle can be beneficial. The results of the present study showed that the problems for preposition learning are due to picture characteristics which may create and affect the understanding and use of prepositions. On the other hand, pictures with unfamiliar subject matter, content –unrelated (unrelated content), and ambiguous depiction of the entity arrangement are the disadvantages for using and applying pictures in the books. As the conclusion, the educational proficient such as teachers or textbook writers must be careful in selecting appropriate pictures intended to support verbal explanation by being aware of the picture characteristics that may not instruct and even hamper learning.

EFL teachers should be able to plan strategies and select or adapt appropriate teaching materials to be used in teaching prepositions. If the prepositions be introduced and taught repetitively in a structured way, this method enhances students' understanding. There are some pedagogical implications from this study. First, EFL preposition learning appears to be facilitated by using modalities, we must take this acquisition (matter) tools into consideration in both classroom teaching practice and materials. This paper proposes that teachers can facilitate English language prepositions by using modalities such as audio, pictorial-speech, and visual modalities. After the observation process of the four classes where English was taught to children of second junior high school, the supporting materials identified were films, pictures, English books of second junior high school, and video CDs. All of the noted materials used by teachers were appropriate to the topic and objective of the classes. On the other hand, they were in concordance with the student's age and knowledge (level). In fact, these materials were designed considering visual, verbal and auditory learning style, had good quality and were applied with originality and creativity to the students. The video films were the most used supplementary material in the whole observation process. After it, the pictures and audio modalities are noticeable. Another finding from this study is for the teacher, it is applying of obtaining results as educational strategies to facilitate prepositional teaching process. This study help teachers to predict the difficulties the learners may encounter when learning three common spatial and temporal English prepositions.

The present study revealed spatial and temporal prepositions errors among EFL students. However, data of 100 students are not sufficient to make strong claims. In a future study, the performance of larger groups of EFL students

needs to be investigated. This will make possible to find out whether the claims made on the basis of the EFL students can be generalized to other EFL students and it could help the future researchers with more reliable results. This study did not include male students. Due to the gender importance, (a) future research on spatial and temporal prepositions would need to focus on the EFL students for male or both sexes. Moreover, the number of spatial-temporal prepositions could be raised to ten or more to discover other areas of prepositional inquires. Other modalities rather than audio, pictorial-speech, and visual could be used to teach prepositions such as drama, simulation, role-play, and games.

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THE EFFECT OF USING GAMES ON ENGLISH GRAMMAR WITH FOCUS ON IRANIAN YOUNG  
LEARNERS OF ENGLISH

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**ABSTRACT**

This study focused on the effect of using games on English grammar among young learners of English language in Iranian context. The design of this study was based on quasi-experimental method. The study consisted of two groups, namely an experimental and a control group. The participants took a pre-test on grammar at the beginning of the course. The experimental group experienced 24 sessions of grammar treatment via game-based instruction controlled by the researchers and performed by the members of the group and the learners in the control group dealt with the traditional program of learning grammar through explanation. Finally, both groups sat for a post-test and data were collected and analyzed through Independent Samples *t*-test analysis. The results showed that the participants in the experimental group outperformed the control group significantly. Implications of the study for teaching grammar are that learning grammar could be enhanced through enjoyment and fun.

**KEYWORDS:** Games, English grammar, Young learners

**INTRODUCTION**

Learning a language is not easy and most students find it a stressful experience. And often it is considered that if students are laughing, playing a game and having fun, they are not really learning. In other words, they are just wasting time. These are statements that most of the time are heard or seen in different discussions about second language learning classes. But this is not always true. Of course, as stated in different researches, language learning is a challenging task requiring constant effort especially for young learners, but as Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (2006, p.65) state "games encourage learners to direct their energy towards language learning by providing them with meaningful contexts." In fact games are just neither for filling time nor for killing time. And we, as teachers, can use them on the way of our teaching to help our students to make progress and learn faster.

Games are really helpful for shy students who cannot express their feelings or talk in front of other people. By using games students can be more active, autonomous, and energetic, learn about environment, the world they are living in, and be engaged in the teaching-learning process. We can teach all skills and components through playing games, which is based on a learner-centered approach, meanwhile when we are teaching; we have to pay attention to the meaningfulness, appropriateness and the level of the learners (Widodo, 2006). The important point therefore is how to choose games, align them to the learners' abilities and making them useful language learning instruments.

Iranian students study English as a foreign language from the time they enter junior high school. However, many of them cannot use it effectively and still make grammatical errors, when they speak or write in English. Mackay and Mountford (1978), however present that in order to communicate effectively in English, students need to have a good foundation in grammar. There are some reasons for the mentioned problem of Iranian students; first, it might be because of the present educational system and lack of enough time devoted to English program offered at schools (which is about 2 hours a week). The course books developed in Iranian situation also are totally reading based and not oriented towards communication. The grammar presented in the books also pertains to language usage rather than language use (Amiri & Maftoon, 2010). The present system of teaching English in Iranian schools enjoys traditional methods such as Grammar Translation, Audio-lingual or into some extent Direct Method, and the curriculum presented is a centralized one (Shahini, 1998). Of course the private sector's story is totally different and this sector has proved to be somehow successful in training the interested ones.

Iranian students experience learning the English language for seven years during their junior and senior high schools. However, many of them have difficulty in using it for communication purposes especially speaking. Various types of errors including the grammatical ones are witnessed among the Iranian second language learners. This case is more visible among the ones who have just attended the formal, school oriented classes offered by the general educational curriculum of the ministry of education. Helping the learners come up with a sound understanding of grammar as



well as other areas of English language could be an ever present applicable idea. Finding ways to facilitate teaching grammar and making it more attractive to the learners could be one of the ways aiming at overcoming the problem.

By playing games students can discover what to learn, be motivated and learn better. Doing a research on the effect of games on teaching second language in general, and grammar of the second language in particular has not been well documented in the ELT literature. The present study, therefore, is an attempt to investigate the effect of using games on teaching grammar of English to young learners in an Iranian context and hopes to find an effective solution for the problems aforementioned.

Language games are not just time fillers or ice-breakers. They can be motivating, and encourage students to discover learning and solve problems. They give the opportunity to learners to learn and use language in a meaningful way and help teachers to understand the students' needs (Crandall, 1998). The first and foremost purpose of this study is to investigate if games can be used as a useful tool for teaching English grammar to young learners. The second goal of the present research is to investigate the role games can play in encouraging and motivating young learners to learn the second/foreign language better.

The importance of the present study is finding the effectiveness of using games on developing English grammar by Iranian young learners. Since learning grammar plays a significant role for having good language ability, boosting grammar repertoire would improve language ability and help the speaker to have a successful communication. Games also have proved well in creating a comfortable and stress free atmosphere for the second language learners (Dornyei, 2001). To sum up, using games may have a great pedagogical value and can be a springboard for group work. In a class which is based on teaching through playing games, there are different types of interactions such as teacher-learner, learner-teacher, and learner-learner interaction.

## REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

There are various points of view on the nature of grammar. For many years, students and teachers have operated under a static and limited conception of grammar. In this traditional view, grammar is considered as a set of fixed rules. Many people associate grammar with various paradigms and rules about linguistic forms. They see grammar as a written language governed by a set of sentence structures. Moving away from this traditional view of grammar, Ur (1988) explores the dimension of meaningfulness of grammar. In this respect, he defines grammar as, "a way a language manipulates and combines words (or bits of words) in order to form longer units of meaning" (Ur, 1988, p.4).

Celce-Murcia (1991) also stresses that "Grammar should never be taught as an end in itself but always with reference to meaning, social factors, or discourse – or a combination of these factors" (pp. 466-467). Larsen-Freeman (2001) supports this view and argues that grammar is not only a set of rules, but also it is combined with meaning and use as a whole. In this regard, it is not useful to see grammar as "a discrete set of meaningless decontextualized, static structures" or "prescriptive rules about linguistic form" (Larsen-Freeman, 2001, p. 252). It is a misconception to view grammar just a set of absolute rules. Rather, grammar should be seen as having three dimensions: forms, meaning, and use as a whole. According to Larsen-Freeman (2001) in order to acquire a language, the students in language classrooms must master all these three dimensions. It is better to think of teaching "grammaring" (Larsen-Freeman, 2001, p. 255), rather than "grammar". So that students can use grammatical structures accurately, meaningfully, and appropriately. Grammar is central to the teaching and learning of languages. It is also one of the most difficult aspects of language to teach well.

In the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, the educationalists and applied linguists were just near a period during which grammar had a great impact on language teaching. At that time, many people, including language teachers, thought of grammar as a fixed set of word forms and rules of usage. Meanwhile, they associated "good" grammar with the prestigious forms of the language, such as those used in writing and in formal oral presentations, and 'bad' or 'no' grammar with the language used in everyday conversation or used by speakers of non-prestigious forms. According to McCarthy (2001), approaches to grammar teaching and the design of course books at that time reflected a view of language that saw the sentence and sentence grammar as forming the building blocks of language, language learning, and language use. The language teachers who adopted this definition focus on grammar as a set of forms and rules. With this point of view, the goal of language teaching was defined just as to understand how sentences are used to create different kinds of meaning. The ultimate goal was to master the underlying rules for forming sentences; the teachers taught grammar by explaining these rules and forms and then made the students practice these rules in the form of different phrases and clauses applied later as a basis for written and spoken communication.

In the 1970s, Chomsky's theories of language and language acquisition and the line he drew between competence and performance had a great effect on language teaching. His ideas about the nature of a speaker's linguistic competence opened new doors to the methods of grammar teaching. Language teachers are influenced by this recent theoretical work, tended not to teach grammar separately. Believing that children acquire their first language without overt grammar instruction, they expect students to learn their second language the same way. They assume that students will absorb grammar rules as they hear, read, and use the language in communication activities. This approach does not allow students to use one of the major tools they have as learners: their active understanding of what grammar is and how it works in the language they already know. But before going through the scientific process of language instruction, let's look at the differences and nature of language acquisition and language learning in detail.

### ***Using Games for Teaching Grammar***

There are a lot of definitions about what the game is. Everyone is able to imagine something when hearing the term "game" but to give a precise definition is difficult. The definition "Games are fun" is simple and exact. However, the game in education must be more than just fun; learners have to learn through playing games. Thornbury (2004) proclaims games as the way how to put language to work and supports this opinion with known long history of language play that is applicable so for the children and adults and some of them can be transferred from first language to second and foreign language.

Games provide language teachers with many advantages when they are used in classrooms. One of these advantages is that learners are motivated to learn the language when they are in games. For example, Khan (1991, p. 143) emphasizes usefulness of the game because of its motivating importance. "It is clear then that games-since children naturally want to play them-can be motivating." McCallum (1980, p. ix) emphasizes this point by suggesting that "games automatically stimulate student's interest, a properly introduced game can be one of the highest motivating techniques." Avedon (cited in Deesri, 2002, p. 2) further argues that "games spur motivation and students get very absorbed in the competitive aspects of the games; moreover, they try harder at games than in other courses". In other words, games stimulate students' interest in classroom activities and as a result, students become motivated and willing to learn.

Philips (1993) supports this opinion by her statement that enjoyable activity is memorable then and the possible success that the children could reach in language learning will develop motivation for their further learning.

### ***Advantages of Using Games in Language Teaching***

There is a misconception in most of the people involved in language teaching and learning that the learning must be a miserable process in nature, and that if a student has fun and there is laughter and happiness in the classroom, then the outcome surely won't be learning. But, this is wrong. One can learn a language and have fun as well. Today, in language classrooms there are different techniques and strategies to accelerate the learning process by having fun. One of the best ways of learning a new language is through games.

Lindsay and Knight (2010) see the games beneficial in language classrooms because games can accelerate the process of learning. McCallum (1980) also highlights the informal atmosphere as one of the advantages of using game when he says: "Students, in the informal atmosphere of game play, are less self-conscious and therefore more apt to experiment and freely participate in using the foreign language" (p.9).

Also games decrease the level of anxiety toward language learning. In language classes, learners usually feel stressful as the process of language learning seems frightening to them. In other words, they don't know where the destination is. Besides, children become anxious about being mocked or criticized in classrooms when they make a mistake. At this point, games are advantageous, because they reduce anxiety, increase positive feelings, facilitate the process of learning, and improve self-confidence as learners do not afraid of punishment or criticism while practicing the target language freely.

Games are student-focused activities requiring active involvement of learners. In Crookal's (1990) opinion, learners and teachers change their roles and relations through games and learners are encouraged to take an active role in their

learning process. As a result, games provide learners with a chance to direct their own learning. From an instructional view point, creating a meaningful context for language use is another advantage that games present. Meanwhile, Cross (2000, p. 153) states that by using games, teachers can create contexts which enable unconscious learning because learners' attention is on the message, not on the language. Therefore, when they completely focus on a game as an activity, students acquire language in the same way that they acquire their mother tongue, that is, without being aware of it.

Games bring real-life situations to the confinement of the classroom which provides learners with an opportunity to use the language. To state this differently, by putting learners in real life situations, games make a connection with the real usage of language. Games could be used individually, in peer and pair classroom activities. The current games in teaching grammar are Movement Games (Lewis & Bedson, 1999), board games, matching games, card games, desk games, role-play games, task-based games, computer games to name a few.

### **THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

Considering the purpose of the study and based on the problem specified above, the following research question is raised as:

To what extent does using games have any significant effect on the second language grammar development of Iranian young learners?

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Design***

The design of this study was a quasi-experimental design, as random selection of the participants was not possible. The study consisted of two groups, namely an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group experienced 24 sessions of grammar treatment via game-based instruction controlled by the researchers and performed by the members of the group, while the learners in the control group dealt with the ordinary program of the classroom. The participants' development in the grammar knowledge was considered as the dependent variable, and the game-based instruction was considered as the independent variable.

#### ***Participants***

The participants of the study were 40 female students studying at the second grade of Adab junior high school in Khorramabad, Iran. They were selected based on the results of a standard version of Young Learners English Starter Test (YLE) developed by UCLES (2013), as a language vocabulary test out of a total number of 60 students. The participants took an YLE test as their homogeneity-test prior to the experiment. This ensured that the learners selected for the main study were almost at the same level of language proficiency prior to the treatment. Based on the results of the YLE test the learners whose scores fell one standard deviation (SD) above and below the mean were selected for the main study and shaped the two control and experimental groups. The researchers were not allowed to confine the classes to the learners passing the criteria, as the educational department was very conservative on the issue. Therefore, the instruction was presented to all the learners, meanwhile in the final analysis only the learners who had passed the criteria were considered in the study. Each group hence could be claimed to have included 20 learners. The control group was taught based on the suggested method of the course book (Right Path to English, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade), which, as the book claims, is mainly an audio lingual oriented type. The experimental group, on the other hand received treatment based on working with different games for teaching grammar, though they also received the materials mentioned in the course book.

#### ***Instrumentation***

In order to carry out this study the instruments such as pre and post-testd were employed. Before commencing the experiment, the experimental group's participants, and their parents were briefed about the study so as to minimize any misunderstanding pertained to the study throughout the research. This was in line with the ethic issues.

#### ***Homogeneity-test***

Language proficiency test: A standard version of YLE test which was released by the ESOL center of Cambridge university press in 2012, with the license number of T306 was obtained and put into a pilot study of 20 learners with the same age and level of the main participants of the study. The test was a standard one meanwhile it was firstly piloted and modified through NRT item analysis and reliability estimation. The test included 50 items 20 of which pertained to listening comprehension, 25 items related to reading and writing skills, and 5 items pertained to speaking ability.

Pre and Post-test: A teacher-made grammar test was also used both as the pre and post-tests. After construction, the test was examined by three experts for its content validity. Subsequently, the test was modified and piloted via being administered to 20 students who were at the same level of the participants of the study. The reliability index estimated through KR-21 formula was .74.

### ***Materials***

The main text used for both experimental groups and the control group was the 2nd grade English, namely Right Path to English, developed by Iranian authors in the ministry of education and used nationwide. The book consists of 10 units (lessons), the second five units of which had to be covered in each semester. The package includes the main course book, embedded work book, and audio tapes. Lesson Units 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 of the book were taught in the very semester in which the research was being conducted.

### ***Procedure***

In the first step a language proficiency test (YET) released by the ESOL center of Cambridge university press consisting of 50 items: 20 listening comprehension, 25 items related to reading and writing skills, and 5 items pertained to speaking ability was administered for the purpose of validation. Sixty female EFL learners at junior high school level received the test and according to the results of the test 40 learners whose scores fell within one standard deviation below and above the mean were selected to shape the two control and experimental groups for the purpose of the study. Then a piloted teacher-made grammar test which comprised of 30 items was administered as the pretest. Nevertheless, the two groups were statistically compared via the results of the grammar pretest to make sure if they were eligible to take part in this study and enjoyed similar grammatical knowledge. The pretest checked the participants' knowledge of grammar in both groups with respect to the grammatical points which were going to be presented in 24 sessions of the classroom (three months, 12 weeks, and each week two 1.30 '–sessions). The significance of the difference between the obtained means of the two groups in the pretest was determined through a t-test.

The learners in both groups received the same materials and underwent the same time of the teaching for each session of the classroom except that the students in the experimental group who worked with games each and every session of the classroom. The experimental group received various games which fitted the grammatical issues of each lesson taught based on the course book. The experimental group went through the activities and games as follows: (a) the teacher provided the learners with instructions related to each game in Persian; (b) the learners were informed of the way(s) they were going to be involved in the games and purposes of each game; (c) the learners were trained how to take turns, correct each other, and continue the game(s); (d) the learners were trained to encourage cooperation among themselves and enjoy learning as they were developing their knowledge and ability in the classroom. The games presented were thematically related to the grammatical topics selected and taught each session and were in line with the units of their lessons from the book. (e) The learners' participation in the classroom activities were taken into consideration and the teacher presented each and every learner with the feedback required via employing recast, correction, restatement, and the like to emphasize learner's miss-production. The learners in the experimental group were trained to listen to their own recorded voices when they were at home; they were encouraged to listen to the recorded materials and pay attention to the teacher's comments concerning each person's mis-productions. The teacher provided them with new comments, in turn. This gradually helped the learners to improve their abilities in the foreign language development while having fun.

The control group, on the other hand, was engaged in the ordinary program of the classroom. The grammar issues were both implicitly and explicitly taught throughout the course book and explicit grammar experiences were also touched upon in the lessons presented. Both the control and the experimental groups listened to the conversations, worked with dialogues, covered the short texts given in the book, discussed the new points in the class, took part in the Question and Answer activities, individual and group writing developments, and developed conversations based on the new topics given in each section of the course book. Students in both groups worked on grammar exercises in their course book as well.

The instruction consisted of 24 sessions spread out over twelve weeks. Each class session was 90 minutes held two times a week. The participants in both groups were taught by the same the researchers. Following 24 sessions of treatment via employing games, the post-test was administered. The results of both pre and post-tests were analyzed and compared through SPSS version 19.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Homogeneity Test**

An Independent Samples *t*-test was run to compare the experimental and control groups' mean scores on the YLE test (Young Learners English Starter Test) in order to prove that the two groups enjoyed the same level of general language prior to the main study. As displayed in Table 1 the mean scores for experimental and control groups on the YLE were 41.10 and 40.90 respectively.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics YLE

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	20	41.10	2.751	.615
Control	20	40.90	2.936	.657

The

results of the Independent Samples *t*-test indicated that there was not any significant difference between experimental and control groups on the homogeneity test. Table 2 shows whether the difference between the groups is significant.

Table 2: Independent Samples *t*-test YLE Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	<i>T</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.037	.848	.222	38	.825	.200	.900	-1.621	2.021
Equal variances not assumed			.222	37.840	.825	.200	.900	-1.622	2.022

It should be noted that the assumption of homogeneity of variances is met (Levene's  $F = .037$ ,  $P = .848 > .05$ ).

**Pre-test of Grammar**

An Independent Samples *t*-test was run to compare the experimental and control groups' mean scores on the pre-test of grammar in order to prove that the two groups enjoyed the same level of grammatical knowledge prior to the main study.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Grammar (Pre-test)

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	20	32.00	4.713	1.054
Control	20	33.50	4.007	.896

As displayed in Table 4 the mean scores for experimental and control groups on the pre-test of grammar are 32 and 33.50 respectively.

Table 4: Independent Samples *t*-test of Grammar (Pre-test)

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	<i>T</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.667	.419	1.084	38	.285	1.500	1.383	-1.300	4.300
Equal variances not assumed			1.084	37.041	.285	1.500	1.383	-1.302	4.302

The results of the independent Samples *t*-test indicate that there was not any significant difference between experimental and control groups on pretest of grammar test. Thus it can be concluded that the two groups enjoyed the same level of grammatical knowledge prior to the main study.

### ***Post-test of Grammar***

An independent Samples *t*-test was run to compare the experimental and control groups' mean scores on the post-test of grammar in order to probe the effect of using games on the second language grammar development of Iranian young learners.

*Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Grammar (Post-test)*

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Experimental	20	39.90	2.360	.528
Control	20	36.45	2.188	.489

As displayed in Table 5, the mean scores for experimental and control groups on the post-test of grammar are 39.90 and 36.45 respectively.

*Table 6: Independent Samples t-test of Grammar (Post-test)*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	<i>T</i>	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.013	.911	4.795	38	.000	3.450	.720	1.993	4.907
Equal variances not assumed			4.795	37.785	.000	3.450	.720	1.993	4.907

The results of the independent Samples *t*-test indicated that there was a significant difference between experimental and control groups on posttest of grammar test. Thus it can be concluded that the null-hypothesis as using games does not have any significant effect on the second language grammar development of Iranian young learners was rejected.

### ***Discussion***

The findings of the present study revealed that firstly using games could prove effective in the development of English grammar of the EFL young learners in the Iranian context, and secondly using games has significantly motivated students to learn the second language better. Dolati and Mikaili (2011) employed instructional games as facilitating learning factors to improve various language skills and components of EFL learners and came up with rewarding results. Winter and Conner (1989) proved the effectiveness of games in the improvement of EFL learners' listening comprehension, while Lee (1995) considered teaching vocabulary through games highly motivating and energizing for the learners.

McCallum (1980) considered games as a classroom method which might help the learners develop their second language and consciously try to solve their problems. Widodo (2006) considered instructional games as a vehicle servicing conscious learning of grammar rules. Clarke (2009) argued that "teachers and students using games in speaking classes derive language and affective benefits similar to those from real language situations" (p.91). In addition, Winter and Conner (1989) proposed that the using games also provide good listening and speaking practice for the student, individual coaching on grammar and pronunciation errors, opportunity to discuss cross-cultural issues, and a record of student progress. Thornbury (2004) implied that employing games could be employed to correct the learners' errors. This could be done via using the correct grammatical forms and structures modeled in the course of the interaction. Hedge (2000, p.1) came to a conclusion that "learning through games could encourage the



operation of certain psychological and intellectual factors which could facilitate communication heightened self-esteem, motivation and spontaneity, reinforcing learning, improving intonation and building confidence."

Some experts have also figured out characteristics of games that make developing grammar learning more effectively: Lee (1995, p.35) lists several main advantages when games are used in the classroom, including "a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class", "motivating and challenging" "effort of learning", and "language practice in the various skills." Lindsay and Knight (2010) presented games as highly appreciated thanks to their amusement and interest. Lindsay and Knight (2010) noted that "Teachers can use games to help their students practice more their skills of communication" (p. 21). In addition, Uberman (1998) also affirmed the helpful role of games in teaching second language grammar: From her own teaching experiences, Uberman observed the enthusiasm of her students in learning through games. She considered games a way to help students not only enjoy and entertain with the language they learn, but also practice it incidentally. In summary, games were useful and effective tools that should be applied in language classes. The use of games as a way to make the lessons more interesting, enjoyable and effective has been vastly advised in ELT literature (e.g., Lewis & Bedson, 1999; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; MacWhinney, 2010; Mahdinejad, Hasanzadeh, Mirzaian, & Ebrahimi, 2012).

The findings of the study are in line with the research conducted in various domains of ELT and SLA, specifically when combined with notable assumptions such as activating learners' awareness towards learning such as "focus on form" (Doughty, 2001), "focus on meaning" (Long & Robinson, 1998), "consciousness-raising" (Ellis, 2002), and "explicit and implicit" (Schmidt, 1990; 1994) issues in teaching grammar. Theoretically speaking, games could be employed as one of the means in the development of ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978). The effect of peer correction, teacher correction, and self correction could be well pursued in the implication of games in the general language awareness of the learners: As Clarke (2009) presented grammar consciousness-raising could be redeveloped via employing games and As Ur (1988) implied classroom games could be taken as a supportive factor in the development of second language among the learners as they energize the teacher's feedback in the classroom.

Concerning the practical measures in close connection with employing games in EFL/ESL classes in order to energize and motivate the learners, one could refer to the impact of presence of games in the development of language skills and components in a less stressful, more tangible, and more humanistic atmosphere. Mahdinejad *et al* (2012) presented that a statistically significant and positive relationship existed between intrinsic motivation and students' English language learning in the Iranian context.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the research revealed that employing games in teaching grammar to the young learners not only can play a positive role in the development of grammar knowledge of the learners in the language classes but also it can pave the way for language development of the learners in a less stressed situation, motivating the learners to improve their own abilities in various aspects of second language development.

The statistical analysis revealed that the first null-hypothesis was rejected. That is to say, employing games surely had significant effects on the improvement of the grammatical knowledge of the young Iranian EFL learners. The null hypothesis was rejected on the ground that following an independent t-test run to compare the mean scores of the game-based teaching of grammar and conventional group on the post-test of grammar. Results indicated that there existed a significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the posttest of grammar. That is to say, employing games surely has motivated the young Iranian EFL learners to learn the second language better.

Though the main focus of the present study was on the junior high school students at schools, it seems that the different levels of EFL learners, especially upper intermediate and advanced learners who have developed better language abilities and enjoy more advanced language skills could be better benefitted from using more complicated and instructional games in their classes.

The findings of the present study could be used to improve the "grammar knowledge" of Iranian young learners via using "instructional games". The outcomes of the study could be helpful in designing materials for the EFL learners in the Iranian context. The results also could be employed in teaching meaningful grammar to the Iranian EFL learners. The findings of the study might be intriguing enough to pave the way for researchers to investigate the application of games in other areas and components of the English language pedagogy. The present research focused on the effect of using games in the development of grammar among Intermediate EFL learners. Grammar knowledge of lower and/or higher levels could be taken into consideration in new researches. The effect of game-based teaching of grammar and development of cultural issues could also be a new concept to work out. The present research was

not conducted in the English language institutes. Another research of the same type could be an attempt to investigate the game-based teaching impacts on the development of grammatical knowledge in the English language institutes. The present study did not focus on the learners' individual differences. Another research could probably concentrate on this issue and its relationship with learning grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, etc. Only female students could take part on the study because of the limitations set by the institutes' rules and regulations. Another research could concentrate on the male students.

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THE EFFECT OF CLASSROOM STRUCTURE ON SPEAKING SKILLS OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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**ABSTRACT**

The present study investigated the possible effects of classroom structure on the speaking skills of Iranian English as foreign language (EFL) learners. A further concern of this study has been on whether learners perform better in competitive, co-operative or individualistic environments. In order to arrive at a logical answer to the research questions, a sample population of 160 male pre-university students majoring in mathematics was selected. 120 participants were selected and randomly divided into four homogeneous groups, including three experimental groups and one control group, each including 30 participants. All the three experimental groups were taught English for general purposes (EGP) regarding the various classroom structures, while the control group received the conventional and common practice in a speaking classroom environment. The participants took a pre-test on speaking skills at the beginning of the course. Then a post-test of speaking was run after the sessions. The data were analyzed through One-way ANOVA. The findings revealed that the treatment groups performed significantly better than control group, so the classroom structure affected speaking skills ( $p < 0.05$ ). Following the One-way ANOVA the post-hoc Scheffe test was run to determine the effects of each classroom structure in teaching speaking skills among the groups, and the results showed that there were no significant differences among the individualistic, competitive, co-operative and the control groups.

**KEYWORDS:** Individualistic, Competitive, Co-operative, Classroom Structure, Speaking Skills

**INTRODUCTION**

When teachers set the stage for learning in their classrooms, they use one or a combination of three basic goal structures: cooperative, competitive, and individualistic. Although the concept of “goal structures” is used most often in formal classroom learning, it is also a viable concept for working with youth in informal settings. In informal situations, youth may learn life skills and subject matter through a variety of educational activities or experiences. The main debate has been on whether learners learn better in competitive, co-operative or individualistic structures environments (Williams & Burden, 2002).

An excellent overview and analysis of this debate is provided by Carole Ames (1984), who asks which kind of structure leads to greater achievement. It should also investigate the meaning of success and failure of learners within different kinds of structures. An analysis of what is a common form of school and classroom organization, one which is largely based on competitive reward structures, makes it clear that competition is only helpful to those who do well. The success of one person or group must always work to the detriment of the others, a situation which is exacerbated if rewards are only given for right answers (Ames, 1984).

Within co-operative structures the learners become dependent upon each other in order to achieve success. Ways of organizing group work in class vary enormously, but are generally based upon the five key principles of positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face positive interaction, the development of social skills, and regular group processing. Within individualized or master-based structures where rewards are based on self-improvement, the emphasis is not on comparing oneself with others, but instead of comparing one's present level of performance with previous achievements are independent of each other, everyone has an equal opportunity of gaining a reward of some kind. In such circumstances, success or failure is more likely to be attributed to effort. Another benefit of individualized learning is that it makes it possible to concentrate upon the learning process and to identify personal strategies that are likely to lead to successful learning of the language (Ames, 1984).

### ***Statement of the Problem***

Every child is an individual, developing at his/her own pace and differing in needs, abilities, interests, cultural influence, learning patterns, and behaviors. Some children are primarily visual learners, whereas others are auditory learners. Some prefer individualistic learning, whereas others learn best in groups. In addition, different and provides practical suggestions for their implementation in the classroom. Learning styles and strategies are exhibited at different ages, when learning different subjects, or when confronted with different kinds of problems. These differences, therefore, must be taken into account in choosing appropriate teaching methods and activities in the classroom (Johnson & Johnson, 1989).

One of the basic problems in foreign language teaching is to prepare learners to be able to use the language. How this preparation is done, and how successful it is, depends very much on how we as teachers understand our aims. For instance, it is obvious that in order to be able to speak a foreign language one needs to know how to articulate sounds in a comprehensible manner, have an adequate vocabulary, and also gain the mastery of syntax in order to be able to speak in another language. These various elements add up to linguistic competence. However, while linguistic competence is necessary, it is not sufficient for someone who wants to communicate effectively in another language, therefore, communicative competence includes linguistic competence and a range of other sociolinguistic and conversational skills that enable the speaker to know how to say what to say and when (Nunan, 1999). According to these mentioned issues, the present study investigates the effect of classroom structure as an aspect of learning environment on Iranian EFL learners. Specifically, this study researches the effect of three different classroom structures on learners speaking skills. The main debate will be on whether competitive, co-operative or individualistic structures have influence on learners speaking skills.

Students must be taught the social skills required for high quality collaboration and be motivated to use them if cooperative groups are to be productive. Although almost any learning situation can be adapted to be cooperative, competitive or individualistic, the teacher needs to select a place to start with cooperation, the purpose of cooperative learning groups is to make each member a stronger individual in his or her own right, in addition, they have learned to be more careful in setting up appropriate individualistic and competitive learning situations (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

An understanding of the ways in which aspects of the environment affect learning is particularly important for language teachers and learners. At the broadest level, it is clear that national and cultural differences have a profound influence upon the development of the language and the way it is used. One of the primary functions of a language is to describe our environment so that we can form an image of ourselves in relation to it. At another level, a country's educational system will affect the learning environment. There are clearly vast differences between the avowed aims of the educational systems of such countries as China, Japan, the UK and the USA. Even within such countries there is not necessarily a universally recognized set of educational policies about how such aims should be achieved. At the school level, the ethos that exists within a school will affect the type of learning that goes on in that school. At an even more basic level, the immediate physical environment of the classroom and the nature of the personal interactions which occur within it have a profound influence Upon whether, what and how any individual learns a language.

Chastain (1988) stated that like any language skill, foreign language learners need explicit instructions in speaking. Teachers and students come to language classrooms with conscious or subconscious attitudes, expectations, interests, and needs. Language students need to learn to speak the language in order to communicate with each other. This interaction with classmates provides enough practice in changing thoughts to speech. Talking with classmates gives students opportunities to become familiar with each other. Speaking supplies a change of pace in the classroom routine. She continuous that having opportunities to speak the language motivates students to learn during listening and reading activities in order to learn those language elements which they may need to communicate orally Chastain (1988).

Speaking is the performance of the speaker's competence. Speaking requires language students to activate their knowledge to produce a message. Listening and reading facilitates speaking in the sense that they must learn to comprehend oral and written messages before they can produce them. They must learn to process language at a rate above that of the other productive skill and to maintain that speed without lengthy pauses. Bygate (2001) believed that speaking in a foreign language involves the development of a particular type of communication skill. Oral



language differs from other skills in its typical grammatical, lexical and discourse patterns. The processes involved in speaking also differ from those involved in other skills like reading or writing.

For most people the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication. In spite of this fact only in the last two decades, it has begun to appear as a branch of teaching, learning, and testing in its own right. There are three main reasons for this. The first is tradition: the influence of grammar-translation method to language teaching which communication skills have been neglected. The second is technology: only after the 1970s, tape-recording was cheap and practical to enable the widespread study of talk. Since the study of talk was difficult, it was easier for teachers to focus on written language than spoken language. The third reason is exploitation: most approaches to language teaching except grammar-translation method (the Direct method, the Audio-lingual approach) as well as other approaches (such as Silent Way, Community Language Learning and Suggestopedia) used oral communication as part of their methodology not as a discourse skill in its own right, but rather as a special medium for providing language input, memorization practice and habit-formation. Most of the focus in teaching oral skills was limited to pronunciation. It was necessary for the learners that pronounce correctly before moving on to texts (Bygate, 2001, pp.14-15).

There are considerable researches and writing has addressed the relationship between the classroom learning environment and student goal orientation, creative production and learning (Demirdjian, 2003). However, to the best of my knowledge, very few, if any of them have been oriented to investigated the so called relationship between classroom structure and language learning skills, specifically speaking skills. One currently available, structured method of identifying teacher and parental preferences for different kind of classroom structures emanates from Australia. Learning Preference scales (Owens & Barnes, 1992) are easy to read, complete and score, and, though as yet not widely used, they are beginning to provide interesting data on differences between learning structure preference of males and females, and junior and secondary teachers (Owens, 1985).

Fassinger (1997) has conducted a research study on the impact of student groups on learning from sociological perspective. One of the observations made in this study was that an instructor could influence class dynamics materially by molding his or her class structure. Structure included things such as an instructor's "guidelines" for class behavior, and class's exercises. Furthermore, Fassinger (1997) pointed out that an instructor's interpersonal style may not be as significant as students' learning and to encourage interaction. Although an instructor's style may have a great influence on students' evaluation, the point here is that not on the students' learning. It is important to note that Fassinger's (1997) study focused on the impact of groups on learning, but did not test the effect of classroom structure on learning per se.

Research by Johnson and Johnson (1989) indicates that cooperation, compared with competitive and individualistic efforts, typically results in (a) higher achievement and greater productivity, (b) more caring, supportive, and committed relationships, and (c) greater psychological, health, social competence, and self-esteem. Opponents of cooperative learning often point to problems related to vague objectives and poor expectations for accountability. Randall (1999) who has taught elementary, high school, and college level students, cautions against abuse and overuse of cooperative learning. She says that making members of the group responsible for each other's learning can place too great a burden on some students and that cooperative learning encourages only lower level thinking and ignores the strategies necessary for the inclusion of critical or higher level thinking.

Kolawole (2008) posited that cooperative learning strategy was more effective than competitive learning strategy in teaching of Mathematics at secondary school level. Ojo and Egbon, (2005) were of the view that the cooperative learning environment was found to be more conducive to learning than the competitive setting. Okebukola and Ogunniyi (1984) opined that the cooperative arrangement was better for promoting achievement while the competitive arrangement was better for practical skills. Okediji, Anene and Afolabi (2006) found that cooperative learning strategy groups in Mathematics performed significantly better than their non-cooperative counterparts, but found no significant difference in performance between competitive and noncompetitive learning strategy groups. There was also no significant interaction effect of cooperation and competition.

In a cooperative learning environment, however, students are positively interdependent on one another and are therefore encouraged to assist one another such that one student's success positively influences the results for group members (Johnson & Johnson, 1989). Research consistently demonstrates that cooperative learning produces positive effects for learners of all ages, in all content areas, on a wide variety of tasks (e.g., Slavin, 1990). Researchers have well-documented evidence of the positive outcomes of cooperative learning, including increased achievement,



retention, reasoning, perspective taking, on-task behavior, intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, attitudes, social support, and positive adjustment.

There are numerous published research studies suggesting the causal mechanisms through which various interdependent classroom structures may influence student achievement outcomes, self-esteem, positive peer relationships, and liking for specific subject areas. Despite this vast collection of research on the effects of cooperative learning, there still remains disagreement on which types of cooperative learning techniques or structures lead to the greatest outcome gains (Sharan, 1990).

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research questions to be discussed in this study are as follows:

RQ1. To what extent do classroom structures affect Iranian EFL learners' speaking skills?

RQ2. Is there any significant difference between Individualistic, Competitive and Co-operative classroom structure in developing Iranian EFL learners' speaking skills?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The participants in this study were pre-university male students majoring in mathematics with the mean age of 18.5 who were studying in Izeh, Iran in 2013. The number of participants who took part in this study was 120. They were selected out of 160 students who took part in a TOEFL test of reading proficiency. The rationale behind selecting participants suitable for this study was to select homogeneous participants regarding their language reading proficiency and to control for extraneous variables that may jeopardize internal validity. To do so, the participants with scores  $\pm 1$  standard deviation (SD) were selected. These participants were randomly assigned into four equal groups. Three experimental groups: individualistic, co-operative, competitive and a control group.

### *Instrumentation*

The following research instruments were implemented in the study:

- A TOEFL proficiency test developed by Sharpe (2005) was utilized for assessing the proficiency level of the participants.
- An oral interview based on IELTS pre- test and post-test of speaking (Ramezane, 2004) through which the students' interviews were recorded and scored.
- An Assessment of Speaking and Listening Skills in English (ACTFL proficiency guidelines, developed by Hudson (1985).
- An MP3 player/ recorder to record the oral interviews of participants so as to validate and make the test reliable and fair.

### *Procedure*

This study employed a pre and post-test design. The pre-test was administered four days prior to the instructional treatment and the post-test one week after the treatment. In the first session, a 50-item paper-based TOEFL proficiency test on reading skill developed by Sharpe (2005) was distributed among the participants. The allowed time for this test was 50 minutes. The exam papers were scored and ranged from 38 to 90 marks out of 100. Their mean score was 58, and standard deviation was 13. Those participants whose scores were one SD above and one SD below the mean were chosen. Therefore, 120 students were selected as participants of this study. In the second session, the selected participants were randomly divided into four classrooms: individualistic, co-operative, competitive, and control group. A pre-test containing an oral interview conducted face to face interaction in an isolated situation to minimize the degree of interference coming from unknown sources (i.e., interruption, making noise by other students, etc.). The allowed time for each interview was 5 minutes. Each participant was asked to talk about a given topic, and then the interviews were tape-recorded, and scored by the researcher and his colleague to meet the inter-reliability index of scoring. The reliability coefficient of pre-test and post-test were met as ( $r=0.865$  and  $r=0.920$  respectively).

The second phase of the study was the treatment. The three groups of participants took part in three types of English language classes, and the control group the conventional and common practice in a speaking classroom environment. Each teaching session for the three experimental groups lasted 90 minutes. The sessions occurred biweekly for six weeks. The first treatment session highlighted the importance of this study and what the participants were expected

to do during the research period. In the remaining sessions of the treatment, the researchers planned different speaking instruction techniques through different topics to present them to the participants.

The speaking procedures for three treatment groups and control group are:

1. Individualistic structure: Participants were made to use the speaking package individually without competition and cooperation with or from any of the group members
2. Competitive structure: Participants were made to treat the speaking skills topics competitively using the speaking package. Members were made to strive against each other for goal object, the best grade for which a prize was attached, a prize that only one member will eventually get.
3. Co-operative structure: Participants were divided into six small groups, and they were made to treat the speaking skill topics cooperatively using the speaking package. They could strive with group members for a goal object-a high grade. They were allowed to discuss, argue, and share opinions and position on the various issues raised in the package. They were told the grade obtained by one member is affected by and will affect other members' grades, such that a low

grade by any member will, by an undisclosed fraction, reduce other member's grades.

4. Control group: The control group used the text book only to treat the speaking skill topics covered by the speaking package. They were equally not in cooperative nor competitive spirit. They were under the supervision of a different trained teacher, engaged by the research for that purpose while the researchers went round to ensure that the right thing was done.

The delayed post-test was the final phase of investigation. Oral interview was conducted, and the interviews were recorded, and scored by two raters based on The Assessment of Speaking and Listening.

### ***Data Analysis***

The raw scores of the interviews in pre and post-test were computed through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 17 for data analysis. Two statistical analyses were used:

- a) One-way ANOVA was performed to determine whether there were any statistically any significant differences in test score means, and to discover whether classroom structure affect speaking skills of Iranian EFL language learners.
- b) The post-hoc Scheffe test was run in order to see where the differences among the groups were lie, and to determine the effectiveness of each classroom structure in teaching speaking among the groups.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to the data obtained after the post-test was administered. The mean score of the experimental group was slightly greater than of the control group. However, in order to compare the mean scores, the statistical post-hoc Scheffe was run. Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics applied to the data.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (pre-test)

Table 1 provides the descriptive statistic of the pre-test speaking test in terms of the number of items and the number of participants (n), means, standard deviation (SD). Standard Error of Measurement, 95% confidence interval for

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation n	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Individualistic	30	9.43	2.079	.379	8.65	10.207	5.00	13.00
Competitive	30	9.23	1.941	.354	8.50	9.958	5.00	13.00
Co-operative	30	9.50	1.925	.351	8.78	10.218	6.00	13.00
Control	30	8.66	1.728	.315	8.02	9.312	5.00	13.00
Total	120	9.20	1.926	.175	8.86	9.556	5.00	13.00

Mean in lower bound and upper bound, Minimum scores and Maximum scores. As shown in Table 1, 30 male students participated in each group of this research. In individualistic structure their speaking scores ranged from 5 to 13 out of 20. The mean score of this group was 9.43 and the standard deviation was 2.07. In competitive structure their speaking scores ranged from 5 to 13 out of 20. The mean score was 9.23 and the standard deviation was 1.94. The SEM was 0.354. In co-operative structure their speaking scores ranged from 6 to 13 out of 20. The mean score was 9.50 and the standard deviation was 1.92. The SEM was 0.351.

In Control group their speaking scores ranged from 5 to 13 out of 20. The mean score was 8.66 and the standard deviation was 1.72. The SEM was 0.315. As shown in Table 1 the total number of students participated in this research were 120. Their speaking scores ranged from 5 to 13 out of 20. The mean score was 9.20 and the standard deviation was 1.92. The SEM was 0.175. Table 2 shows the results of the study through One-way ANOVA in pre-test speaking scores.

Table 2: One-way ANOVA (Pre-test)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.892	3	4.297	1.162	.327
Within Groups	428.900	116	3.697		
Total	441.792	119			

One-way ANOVA was run on the pre-test speaking scores of the three classroom structures and control group to assure no significant differences between them prior to the experimental sessions. This would assure any changes in speaking scores on post-test analysis would be due to the experimental session. The results of the post-test are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics (Post-test)

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation n	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Individualistic	30	10.000	1.508	.275	9.436	10.563	6.00	12.00
Competitive	30	9.800	1.323	.241	9.305	10.294	6.00	12.00
Co-operative	30	10.833	1.555	.283	10.252	11.414	8.00	14.00
Control	30	8.533	1.455	.265	7.989	9.077	5.00	12.00
Total	120	9.791	1.664	.151	9.490	10.092	5.00	14.00

Table 3 provides the descriptive statistic of the pre-test speaking test in terms of the number of items and the number of participants (n), means, standard deviation (SD). Standard Error of Measurement, 95% confidence interval for Mean in lower bound and upper bound, Minimum scores and Maximum scores. As shown in Table 1, 30 male students participated in each group of this research. In individualistic structure their speaking scores ranged from 6 to 12 out of 20. The mean score of this group was 10 and the standard deviation was 1.5. The standard error of measurement was 0.275. In competitive structure their speaking scores ranged from 6 to 12 out of 20. The mean score was 9.8 and the standard deviation was 1.32. the SEM was 0.241. In co-operative structure their speaking scores ranged from 8 to 14 out of 20. The mean score was 10.83 and the standard deviation was 1.55. The SEM was 0.265.

In control group their speaking scores ranged from 5 to 12 out of 20. The mean score was 8.53 and the standard deviation was 1.45. The SEM was 0.265. As shown in Table 1 the total number of students participated in this research were 120. Their speaking scores ranged from 5 to 14 out of 20. The mean score was 9.79 and the standard deviation was 1.66. The SEM was 0.151. To determine there were any statistically significant differences in test scores means, One-way ANOVA was performed on the post-test scores. Table 4 shows the result of the study through One-way ANOVA in post-test.

Table 4: One-way ANOVA (Post-test)

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	81.358	3	27.119	12.663	.000
Within Groups	248.433	116	2.142		
Total	329.792	119			

One-way ANOVA was run on the post-test speaking scores of four groups, and as it is shown in Table 4 considering the obvious differences among the four groups, post-test scores, F (12.66),  $p=0.00$ , the results revealed statistically significant differences ( $p<0.05$ ). So the first null hypothesis of this research indicating that classroom structure does not affect speaking skills of Iranian EFL learners was strongly rejected ( $p<0.05$ ). These results showed that the participants in different classroom structures performed significantly better than those of control group. So classroom structure affects Iranian EFL speaking skills. A Post-hoc Scheffe test of Multiple Comparison was run to determine the significant difference among the four groups and it is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Post-hoc Scheffe test of Multiple Comparisons (Post-test)

(I)	(J)	Mean	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
VAR0000	VAR0000	Difference (I-J)			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
2	2					
1.00	2.00	.20000	.37786	.964	-.8720	1.2720
	3.00	-.83333	.37786	.188	-1.9053	.2386
	4.00	1.46667*	.37786	.003	.3947	2.5386
2.00	1.00	-.20000	.37786	.964	-1.2720	.8720
	3.00	-1.03333	.37786	.064	-2.1053	.0386
	4.00	1.26667*	.37786	.013	.1947	2.3386
3.00	1.00	.83333	.37786	.188	-.2386	1.9053
	2.00	1.03333	.37786	.064	-.0386	2.1053
	4.00	2.30000*	.37786	.000	1.2280	3.3720
4.00	1.00	-1.46667*	.37786	.003	-2.5386	-.3947
	2.00	-1.26667*	.37786	.013	-2.3386	-.1947
	3.00	-2.30000*	.37786	.000	-3.3720	-1.2280

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

In order to see where the differences in different classroom structures lie, the post-hoc Schaffer test was conducted. As it is shown in Table 4.6, the results of Scheffe test from both experimental groups and control group revealed the following contrasts: The three treatment groups (individualistic, competitive, and co-operative) performed significantly better than the control group; and there were no significant differences among the individualistic, competitive, and co-operative groups.

### ***Discussion***

The purpose of this research was to examine the effects of the three classroom structures used in higher education on speaking skills of Iranian EFL learners. The analyses examined the extent to which cooperative, individualistic, and competitive learning conditions influence speaking skills. In addition, the research findings provide support for social learning theories. The Discussion section provides a summary and discussion of the major findings from the data analysis presented in this section and comparisons with previous analyses, possible limitations of this study, and suggested priorities for future research by direct reference to the questions raised in the study.

Research Question 1: To what extent do classroom structures affect Iranian EFL learners' speaking skills?

To answer the first question of the study, which dealt with speaking skills change during the treatment sessions, the obtained data were analyzed. The results of this study indicated that classroom structure led to promoting the speaking skills of the participants. The speaking skills of the experimental groups who were instructed on the use of different techniques surpassed that of the control group. Thus, the results of the comparison of the mean scores of the four groups showed that the three experimental groups for whom different classroom structures were conducted performed significantly better than the conducted groups for whom classroom structures was not conducted. Therefore, with respect to the first null hypothesis the study showed the effect of classroom structures on speaking skills.

Taking into account the results of the studies carried out in this regard, the findings of this study partly confirmed the theories proposed by some scholars (e. g., Kolawole, 2008; Okebukola & Ogunniyi, 1984; Sharan & Sharan, 1992; Slavin, 1990) who claim that on the effectiveness of a competitive and cooperative on the comprehension of a cognitive task, they stated that the students in the cooperative learning environment perform better than they did in a competitive environment. A great deal of research indicates that the appropriate use of cooperative, competitive, and individualistic goal structures is not only an important instructional strategy, it may be the most powerful in terms of affecting both cognitive and affective learning outcomes (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). As mentioned above, the results of this study showed that the classroom structure had significant effect on speaking skills of Iranian EFL learners. So the first null hypothesis was strongly rejected.

Research Question 2: Is there any significant difference between Individualistic, Competitive and Co-operative classroom structure in developing Iranian EFL learners' speaking skills?

In order to arrive at a logical answer to the second research question, the obtained data were analyzed through post-hoc Scheffe, and the results demonstrated that although the mean score in co-operative structure was better than of the Individualistic and competitive structures it didn't make any significant differences among the three treatment groups. Results are in line with suggestions made by Randall's (1999) who has taught elementary, high school, and college level students, cautions against abuse and overuse of cooperative learning. She says that making members of the group responsible for each other's learning can place too great a burden on some students and that cooperative learning encourages only lower level thinking and ignores the strategies necessary for the inclusion of critical or higher level thinking.

Previous studies have shown that participants in co-operative structure outperformed from Individualistic and competitive structures. Taking into account the results of the studies carried out in this regard, the findings of this study do not support the theories proposed by some scholars (e.g., Bossert, 1988; Cohen, 1994 ; Dowell, 1975; Esan, 1999; Johnson & Johnson, 1989, Kolawole, 2008; Okebukola & Ogunniyi, 1984; Sharan & Sharan, 1992); Slavin, 1990) who claim that on the effectiveness of a competitive and cooperative on the comprehension of a cognitive task, they stated that the students in the cooperative learning environment perform better than they did in a competitive structure. As mentioned above, the results of this study showed that there were no significant differences among the performance of three experimental groups in different classroom structures, so the second null hypothesis was accepted.

The reason why three structures in this study did almost the same on their post-test is that the three groups had made use of classroom structure. What seems almost certain is the effectiveness of different classroom structures that we provided. It could be argued that two 90-minute treatments over six week period were not sufficient to reveal the effectiveness of different treatment conditions. However, other factors need to be considered for the effectiveness of these different classroom structures.

Moreover, the difficulties may stem from the previous experience in high school English classes that had some impact in shaping students learning practice. The use of mechanical activities in grammar and vocabulary instruction in high schools, activities that could promote creative expression was not reported as typical activities, and spoken skills were not assessed regally in class. Teachers also reported using Persian in the majority of class time, and focused on discrete grammar rather than connected discourse in their instruction.

Although the students provided positive comments on high school instruction (i.e., providing strong grammatical and vocabulary knowledge), they also felt that the translation habit discouraged them from expressing ideas in English spontaneously. When speaking, they experienced a difficulty in thinking in English and locating the right expressions to instructor's directions were too difficult to follow. In an English-medium environment, English is used as a tool to understand, discuss, and reflect on various issues in general and specialized subject areas. English is viewed as a means to achieve functions, providing students with ability to acquire knowledge, exchange ideas with peers to deepen the knowledge, and internalize through critical reflection and application. These views sharply contrast with how English is studied in high school. Because English is viewed as a subject that consists of discrete structures to memorize, not as a set of skills, and the high school did not seem to prepare students adequately for the types of skills they would need in the English medium environment.

The importance of making such an analysis of the underlying assumptions behind the different structures is that it sheds light on long-term motivational and attribution consequences for learners. Organizing learners into ability groupings in a language class or arranging a competitive learning atmosphere is likely to be effective in enabling some learners to pass examinations and achieve well. However, it will have the opposite effect on other learners and may also have negative long-term consequences for the high achievers. Co-operative group work, which is a popular way of working in language classes to allow learners to communicate, is likely to produce more positive general achievements across a broad range of learners but will not necessarily produce autonomous, self-directed learners. Individualized, 'mastery' learning structures which are used, for example, in self-access centers require a much greater knowledge and understanding by the teacher of every learner. A far greater amount of preparation and monitoring is required by the teacher, though learners should gradually take on both goal-setting and monitoring functions for themselves. A classroom which was run on totally individualized lines, however, would miss out on important aspects of social interaction and communication.

All three approaches have been employed effectively by language teachers. We would argue, however, that no one approach can ever be fully effective on its own. Each learner is an individual who must be helped to find his or her own way to become autonomous. They are also members of a social world and will need to be given opportunities to work co-operatively with other in order to be successful in such a world. At the same time, an element of healthy competition with oneself and between groups can be highly motivating in the short-term and can provide added zest to any classroom. The secret must surely be to find ways of providing a flexible structure in the language classroom which effectively incorporates all three forms of organization.

## **CONCLUSION**

Speaking seems to be the most desired but the least practiced skill in EFL contexts. There are a number of reasons why speaking does not receive the attention it deserves. The most important one might be the lack of enough opportunities for learners to speak outside the classroom. In addition to this limitation, the classroom structure as one aspect of learning environment has been ignored by teachers in the process of teaching and learning. This study aimed at understanding the extent that classroom structures affect speaking skills of Iranian EFL learners. A further concern of this study was on whether learners perform better in individualistic, co-operative or competitive structures. The results of this study showed that the classroom structure had a positive significant effect on the speaking skills of Iranian EFL learners. The results also showed that there were no significant differences among individualistic, co-operative and competitive structures although the mean score in co-operative was higher than the other two groups. Overall effective teaching requires structuring learning cooperatively the majority of the time. Yet there is an important place for competitive and individualistic goal structures within the classroom. The major problems with competition and individualistic efforts result from their being inappropriately and over used. In addition to cooperative skills, students need to learn how to compete for fun and enjoyment, win or lose, and how to work independently and follow through on a task until it is completed. The natural place for competitive and individualistic efforts is within the umbrella of cooperation. The predominant use of cooperation reduces the anxiety and evaluation apprehension associated with competition and allows for the use of individualistically structured learning activities as part of a division of labor within cooperative tasks. The relative importance of cooperative,



competitive, and individualistic goal structures and their relationship to one another can be summarized in one statement: Cooperation is the forest, competition and individualistic efforts are the trees.

### ***Pedagogical Implications***

The results of the present study have both theoretical and practical implications. In the light of these findings, some pedagogical implications may be proposed. First, the role of classroom structure on speaking skills is a beneficial aspect to be implemented in EFL classroom. This issue is especially relevant in EFL context like Iran where the lack of naturally exposures and limited class time available for teaching the target language make the speaking skills difficult. The finding may be generalized to other EFL context with similar situations. A second pedagogical implication is related to the use of appropriate tasks. Because it has been argued that learning is effective when the tasks employed in the class provide learners with the opportunity to compete and cooperate with other learners.

The findings of the present study have pedagogical implications for material designers, language teachers, and high school students. Material designers are advised to acquaint lower level language learners with the substance and merits of classroom structures. They ought to design the speaking tasks and activities that necessitate applying different classroom structures. The school can establish connections between their English teachers and publishers or bookstores so that the teachers receive updates of English books suitable for extensive reading. The teachers go through these books on a regular basis and compile a reading list of books appropriate for their students. Who will be not only encouraged but also rewarded to read them. Or alternatively, with funding if possible, teachers collaborate with one another, with the help of ELT experts, in writing story books for their students to read. Additionally, book writers and publishers should consult ELT experts, EFL teachers, and even learners regarding issues such as readability. Age-appropriateness, interestingness, range of topics, and so on when designing children literature, story books, and other books for entertainment reading and speaking in English. For the books that have been published, feedback from teachers and learners who have read them should be sought out so that they can be improved in later issues.

As for the language teachers, they are highly recommended to draw on and teach speaking skills through different classroom structures. In language classroom, it is suggested that language teachers familiarize their students with privileges of different classroom structures to make them enthusiastic so as to promote their speaking skills.

The present study is an initial investigation into the research of environmental effects, specifically classroom structure, on college student's creative productions. From this, further research is essential to address factors limited in this study. Further research into the effects of the classroom environment on language learning is clearly needed; however, this study has continued to expand the field into new dimensions. It has opened the doors in research for determining how different classroom structures may makes different effects in fostering or inhibiting student's creative products. The implications, from further research, for teachers and professors could be immense. Additional research with classroom settings will educate instructors to implement the classroom structures that work best for fostering creativity, which in turn, can help them to bring out the creative potential in their students. Treffinger, Ripple and Dacey (1968) reported that teachers agreed that there is a need to see examples of how research and theory could actually be implemented in the classroom. By defining exactly what part of each of these classroom environments aids in fostering learning, especially speaking skills, instructors can implement them into their classrooms. Students could also benefit from the research in a similar way, by learning how the environment affects their learning process, so they can adjust to the classroom situation Treffinger et al (1968).

Perhaps the best way to test the effect of classroom structure on learning would be a longitudinal study. Within two or three academic years, a large sample data could be collected by the researchers. Course content, lecturing style, exercises, term projects, examinations, etc. can all be held constant from semester to semester. The only variable to manipulate would be in terms of inclusion or exclusion of the predetermined policy statements which would constitute a classroom structure. In this way the effect of classroom structure on learning could be fairly well ascertained. Research does not stand still in education; the stakes are too high. Left unexplored further, the classroom structure paradigm may deprive the field of education of an approach which could most likely enhance students' learning. Besides, it would be interesting to see what sort of results one would get through its application over a period of time.

In today's social, political, and economic analysis and planning, educational issues are taking center stage. Effective methods of teaching are being emphasized with the objective of enhancing students' learning. The classroom structure may not be a panacea, but surely it shows some merit for its applicability for positive results. Any method that would yield an infinitesimally small improvement in students' learning would be worthy of further study for refinement in the quest for excellence in education.

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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EFL LEARNERS' CRITICAL THINKING, AND METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES

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### ABSTRACT

This study was an attempt to explore the relationship among English as a Foreign Language learners' critical thinking, and metacognitive strategies. Therefore, 135 participants (46 males and 89 females) majoring in English translation and literature and different ages (19 – 29) were selected non-randomly from Islamic Azad University of Karaj, Iran, and were asked to complete three questionnaires in 70 minutes. The instruments in this study included Peter Honey's (2005) Critical Thinking Questionnaire (consisting of 30 items), and Metacognitive Strategy Questionnaires (Metacognitive Strategy Questionnaire and Structured Retrospective Self-report Questionnaire). The relationship among critical thinking, and metacognitive strategies was investigated using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient, and non-parametric equivalent Spearman-Brown correlation. The obtained results confirmed that there is a significant and positive relationship between EFL learners' critical thinking and metacognitive strategies, self-report and metacognitive strategies. Considering the metacognitive strategies as the predicted variable, it was revealed that both critical thinking and self-report could significantly predict metacognitive strategies of the learners. However, it was observed that self-report makes the stronger contribution to predicting metacognitive strategies of the learners.

**KEYWORDS:** Critical Thinking, Metacognitive Strategies.

### INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, language learning as an essential issue in people's lives has been heavily considered by educational systems. It is worthy to mention that improvement in learning a foreign language is assumed as a dependent element on vital abilities. As stated by Schmitt (2002), "success in learning a foreign language depends on a host of factors such as length of course, appropriateness of teaching methodology, characteristics of language teacher, textbook, teaching material, teaching facilities and learners' characteristics" (p. 3). It is also notable that over the last decades most of the researchers have gradually moved from focusing on teaching paradigms toward exploring individual characteristics. Accordingly, individual differences have been the subject of many studies and this all suggest that there is a highly demanding need to expand studies in these lines. As Grenfell and Harris (1999) state, "methodology alone can never be a solution to language learning. Rather it is an aid and suggestion" (p.10). The different personal traits can also act together and cause more success in learning. Among the aforementioned personal factors, the present study mostly dealt with critical thinking, and metacognitive strategies.

Critical thinking as one of these individual elements, according to Cheung (2002), is an integration of being critical and the thinking process. It is obvious thinking critically might be helpful to cause invaluable changes in a routine life and challenge the common beliefs. By the same token, Howell and Kemp (2005) maintain "critical thinking is an individual's engagement in/deciding on/ responsibility for actions they deal with in daily life" (p.4). Moreover, Astleitner (2007) argues that critical thinking is a higher-order thinking skill which includes evaluating arguments, and is a purposeful, self-regulatory judgment which ends in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference. It is also worth to mention that critical thinking can correlate with other constructs including metacognitive strategies and affect thought and action; therefore they may act as determining factors of achievement in learning foreign languages.

Since the mid-1970s, learning strategies have been increasingly explored in L2 learning (Anderson, 2003; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990). Studying metacognitive strategies is highly involved in their relationship with learning (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002), and more importantly learning a second language (Zimmerman, 2000). Metacognitive strategies as executive skills that evaluate the success of a learning activity ((O'Malley & Chamot, 1990) include connecting new information to old, selecting deliberate thinking strategies, planning, monitoring, and evaluating thinking processes (Dirkes, 1985; Oxford, 2002).

Sinclair (2000) suggests that without an explicit and conscious awareness of the process involved in learning a language, learners will not be in a position to make informed decisions about their own learning and that such awareness involves “a high degree of experienced choice with respect to the initiation and regulation of one’s own behaviour” (p. 9). Further, using metacognitive strategies not only helps learners understand themselves and the task they engage in (Wenden, 1991), but also improves their thinking leading to higher learning and better performance (Anderson, 2003). However, it is believed that language learners in EFL classrooms have unique characteristics, cultural experiences and different learning strategies, while they are not mostly aware of their personality traits which need deep concentration to help them understand their differences and characteristics to keep up with the changes brought by different instructions and methodologies in these classrooms. They also sometimes find it difficult to follow their instructors’ teaching styles which do not match the learners’ personal characteristics while these difficulties might be easily improved with awareness and more consideration in both sides. The importance of critical thinking as one of these elements cannot be underestimated as it is the concern of both instructors and learners. Furthermore, Yuksel and Alc (2012) acknowledged that critical thinking is a good predictor of learners’ success; therefore, it can be stated that lack of critical thinking ability as an essential skill in education among EFL learners might cause a mismatch between what learners acquire and what instructors require.

On the other hand, Anderson (2003) believes that metacognitive strategies play a more significant role than other learning strategies in learning process because once a learner understands how to regulate his/her own learning through the use of strategies, language acquisition should precede at a faster rate. When mismatches exist between instructors’ preferred method of teaching and learners’ own characteristics including metacognitive strategies and critical thinking, it might make them not to pay attention carefully to the lessons which may lead them gradually to overall weakness and failure. Therefore, just as instructors, learners also need to be aware of learning strategies to make more advancements in learning.

Although large body of investigations have been conducted on these different variables which can affect learners’ performance, no studies to the knowledge of the researchers have been found that surveyed the probable relationship among these two constructs and research concerning this relationship is limited. Hence, in order to overcome the above-mentioned issues, this study aimed at revealing the relationship among these two variables at the same time.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This study aimed at investigating whether there was a significant relationship among EFL learners’ critical thinking, and metacognitive strategies. Like any research, it was essential to study previous researches in the literature on the issue first. In order to give readers some information about the underlying concepts and issues dealt with in this thesis, this chapter is devoted to discussing the history, and theoretical provenance and origin of the related variables.

### ***Critical Thinking***

The critical thinking philosophical frame traces its roots in analytic philosophy which dates back over 2,500 years, as pointed out by Paul, Elder, & Bartell (1997) that the rational roots of critical thinking are ancient and go back to the teaching practice and insight of Socrates who discovered a method of investigating and questioning that people could not logically give grounds for their assertions to knowledge and justify their responses. Socrates established the importance of asking deep questions and probe profoundly into deep thinking before we accept ideas as worthy of belief. According to Paul, Elder and Bartell (1997), Socrates’ method of questioning which is known as “Socratic Questioning”, is the best known critical thinking teaching strategy.

Over the last few decades, many definitions of critical thinking have been offered, but there is also no consensus on its definition. Historically, Dewey (1933) described critical thinking from a philosophical perspective whereby education was meant to provide conditions to cultivate habits or training of the mind. Later, Ennis (1987) asserted “critical thinking is a reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do”. Following these different insights, Beyer, (1995) concluded that critical thinking is knowing how to define problems and topics, using resources to solve them and revising one’s work. Additionally, Scriven and Paul (1996) stated that “critical thinking is in a family of interwoven modes of thinking, among them: scientific, mathematical, historical, anthropological, economics, moral, and philosophical thinking” (p.11). Moreover, they explain critical thinking as a process, not an end. Their list of sources of information/insight excludes explicit mention of experimental results and research, an omission that needs correction. Their “disciplined” requirement suggests that critical thinking is a

learned skill; it is methodical, and it is thought out, not random. However, Connolly (2000) stated that critical thinking is a familiar educational term to most, but it is worthwhile to investigate the various definitions of it.

#### *The Process of Critical Thinking*

Cottrell (2005) believes that critical thinking is a weighing process that involves a wide range of skills and attitudes. It includes:

- “Identifying other people’s positions, arguments, and conclusions;
- Evaluating the evidence for alternative points of views;
- Weighing up opposing arguments and evidence fairly;
- Being able to read between the lines, seeing behind surface, and identifying between false or unfair assumptions;
- Recognizing techniques used to make certain positions more appealing than others, such as false logic or persuasive devices;
- Reflecting on issues in a structured way, bringing logic and insights to bear;
- Drawing conclusions about whether arguments are valid or justifiable, based on good evidence and sensible assumptions;
- Presenting point of view in structured, clear, well-reasoned way that convinces others” (p. 2).

#### *Predictors of Critical Thinking*

A large body of empirical studies in higher education have tried to show which instructional and personal factors can improve critical thinking and also which elements can be influenced by critical thinking. . Among these studies, reference can be made to an investigation conducted by Marashi and Jafari (2012) who investigated the effects of critical thinking techniques, constructivist learning techniques, and a combination of critical thinking and constructivist learning techniques on the writing skill among Iranian EFL learners. The findings revealed that there was no significant difference among using critical thinking techniques, and constructivist learning techniques, and a combination of both techniques on EFL learners’ writing ability. In the area of critical thinking and language proficiency, Rashid and Hashim (2008) also aimed to investigate the relationship between critical thinking and language proficiency. They administered the Cornell Critical Thinking Test (CCTT) and English language proficiency test to 280 undergraduate students of University Utara Malaysia (UUM). The results indicated that there was a significant correlation between critical thinking ability of Malaysian students and their English language proficiency.

#### *Metacognitive Strategies*

Within the field of second/foreign language learning, Metacognitive strategies have been defined by many scholars. Early on, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) defined metacognitive strategies as “higher order executive skills that may entail planning for, monitoring, or evaluating the success of a learning activity” (p.135), which are considered as the most essential ones in developing learners’ skills ( Anderson, 1991). It is clear that metacognitive strategies have been considered as necessary, and main aspect of learning that may refer to learners’ awareness, which individuals use appropriate ones to define a problem and solve it attentively. The reason lies in the fact that metacognitive strategies enable learners to play active role in the process of learning, to manage and direct their own learning and eventually to find the best ways to practice and reinforce what they have learned (Chari et al., 2010). This puts them in a privileged position to process and store new information and leads to better test performance, learning outcome, and better achievement (Mokhtari et al., 2002; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001).

Similarly, Graham (1997) asserts that metacognitive strategies which allow students to plan, control and evaluate their learning have the most central role to play in improvement of learning and that students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction. In link with aforementioned definitions, according to Ridley et al. (1992), metacognitive strategies are sequential processes to control cognitive activities and to ensure that a cognitive goal is achieved. They help to regulate and oversee learning activities, such as taking conscious control of learning, planning and selecting strategies, monitoring the process of learning, correcting errors, analyzing the effectiveness of learning strategies, and changing learning behaviors and strategies when necessary. Goh (2002) emphasizes the importance of metacognitive strategies by arguing that learners’ metacognitive awareness is related to effective learning in all learning contexts.

According to Brezin (1980), metacognitive strategies can be divided into five classes of monitoring strategies: planning, attending, encoding, reviewing, and evaluating. Planning strategies include selecting, preparing, gauging, and estimating. Attending strategies contain focusing, searching, contrasting, and validating. Encoding strategies



include elaborating, and qualitatively relating. Reviewing strategies include confirming, repeating, and revising. Evaluating strategies include testing, and judging. To sum up, the goal of these metacognitive strategies is monitoring, and thinking about the learning process. Furthermore, according to Dirkes (1985, p. 96), the basic metacognitive strategies are:

- Connecting new information to the former knowledge
- Selecting thinking strategies deliberately
- Planning, monitoring, and evaluating thinking processes

Apparently, learners who own, and use metacognitive abilities have the following advantages over others who are not aware of the role metacognition plays in learning a foreign language:

1. They are more strategic learners.
2. Their rate of progress in learning as well as the quality and speed of their cognitive engagement is faster.
3. They are confident in abilities to learn.
4. They do not hesitate to obtain help from peers, teachers or family when needed.
5. They provide accurate assessments of why they are successful learners.
6. They think clearly about inaccuracies when failure occurs during and activity.
7. The tactics match the learning task, and adjustments are made to reflect changing circumstances.
8. They perceive themselves as continual learners, and can successfully cope with the new situations (Wenden, 1998).

The description of metacognitive strategies which can be simply defined as thinking about thinking comes from cognitive psychology which mainly refers to metacognition that according to Flavell (1976) has three necessary components including active monitoring, consequent regulation, and orchestration of these processes to achieve a goal. Anderson (2002) also believes that the use of metacognitive strategies can activate one's thinking, and lead to improved performance in learning generally. Accordingly, there is also empirical evidence in the literature which confirms that the employing these strategies cause better performance in language learning in different contexts.

#### *Metacognitive Strategies and Academic Performance*

Many research studies have focused on finding the role of metacognitive awareness in students' learning outcome and achievement in different school subjects. There is extensive evidence that learners' metacognition can directly affect the process and the outcome of their learning (Boekaerts, Pintrich, & Zeidner, 2000; Bolitho et al., 2003; Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002; Palmer & Goetz, 1988; Victori & Lockhart, 1995; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001). According to Flavell (1979), the effective role of metacognitive knowledge in many cognitive activities related to language use is conspicuous, e.g., oral communication of information, oral persuasion, oral comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing, to language acquisition, and to various types of self-instruction. In line with this, researchers have tried to specify the characteristics of good language learners and the type of strategies they use in a specific language task (Birjandi et al, 2006). Furthermore, in line with literature it has been noted that metacognitive knowledge enhances learning outcomes (Dickinson, 1995; Zimmerman, 1989; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994); improves the rate of progress in learning (Victori & Lockart, 1995) and the quality and speed of learners' cognitive engagement (Pintrich et al., 1993); facilitates information recall (Flavell as cited in Nickerson et al., 1985), comprehension of written texts (Brown et al., 1986), and the completion of new types of learning tasks (Vann & Abraham 1990). While some correlation studies show the use of metacognitive strategies to positively correspond with academic achievement (Zimmerman & Martinez-Pons, 1986; Pintrich, et al. 1993), conversely, other correlational empirical studies reveal notably weak or no significant relationships between the use of metacognitive strategies and academic achievement (Artelt, 2000; Sinkavich, 1994).

#### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Given the importance of cognitive and metacognitive skills as part of language learning by EFL learners, this study intended to answer the following questions:

1. Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners' critical thinking and their perceived use of metacognitive strategies?



2. Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners' perceived use of metacognitive strategies and their self-report on them?
3. Is there any difference between the predictability of EFL learners' critical thinking, and self-report about their perceived use of metacognitive strategies?

## METHODOLOGY

A thorough description of the participants, instrumentation, and procedure carried out for this study are presented in this section.

### *Participants*

In order to investigate the probable relationship and to answer the research questions of this study, the researcher chose 135 male and female participants non-randomly among Iranian undergraduate university students majoring in English translation and literature in Islamic Azad University of Karaj. The participants were chosen from senior students to make sure they were proficient enough to read and comprehend the original version of the questionnaires. The number of male and female participants was not equal (89 female and 46 male). The students ranged in age from 19 to 29.

### *Instrumentation*

In order to obtain measurable data to conduct this descriptive research, a number of instruments were utilized:

Honey (2005) Critical Thinking Questionnaire: The Critical Thinking Questionnaire intends to explore what a person might or might not do when thinking critically about a subject. Developed by Honey (2000), the questionnaire aims at evaluating the three main skills of comprehension, analysis, and evaluation of participants. In a study conducted by Nosratinia and Abbasi (in press) on EFL learners, the reliability of this questionnaire was estimated to be 0.79 using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient. It is a Likert-type questionnaire with 30 items that is reliable and valid, ranging from never (1 point), seldom (2 points), sometimes (3 points), often (4 points), to always (5 points). The scores were ranged within 30 to 150. It allows the researchers to investigate the learners' ability in note-taking, summarizing, questioning, paraphrasing, researching, inferencing, discussing, classifying, outlining, comparing and contrasting, distinguishing, synthesizing, inductive and deductive reasoning. In this study, the Persian version of this questionnaire was employed which has been translated and validated by Naeini (2005). The participants were asked to rate the frequency of each category they use on a 5-point Likert-scale in 20 minutes.

Metacognitive Strategy Questionnaires (MSQ) includes two parts: 1. Metacognitive Strategy Questionnaires by Item Type: Metacognitive Strategy Questionnaire by Item Type (MSQIT) which has been designed by Purpura (1999), consists of 40 strategy items that each of which belongs theoretically to one strategy use, however, the items have basically been classified into three broad categories of metacognitive strategies: planning, monitoring, and evaluation. In other words, items 1-21, 22-30 and 31-40 represent planning, monitoring, and evaluation, respectively (Birjandi, et.al 2006; Esmaili, 2010). It is characterized by six scales from never to always. The data were converted into numerical value based on Likert Scale; ranging from zero-to-five equal to never to always scales. On the other hand, the data on each item explored strategy out of the tri-fold strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating. Thus, the average of all the items representing each of the strategies was computed. Thirty minutes were allocated for this test. 2. Wenden's Structured Retrospective Self –Report: This questionnaire (Questionnaire for a Good Language Learner) is a questionnaire, composed of 20 items, which explores the strategies used by a good language learner. The questionnaire reveals best language learner or in other words, best strategy user (Wenden, 1991, p.123). Items characterized by six scales similar to MSQIT. Fifteen minutes were allocated for this test.

### *Procedure*

In order to study the null hypotheses of this research study, and to investigate any significant relationship among the aforementioned variables, the present study was conducted in Azad University of Karaj. Since allocating 65 minutes was enough for answering the questionnaires, the researchers limited the total time of subjects' participation to one session in order to avoid the probability of losing some of the participants in later sessions. Therefore, in order to accomplish this research, the following steps were carried out. First, in order to determine the participants' ability to comprehend the items included in questionnaires, the researchers selected randomly nine students from this university to answer the questions, and then asked them some questions like: how did you choose the answers, or why did you choose agree or strongly disagree? And checked them qualitatively to make sure with English version questionnaires were comprehensible.

Before the actual administration, the researchers also explained briefly in Persian about the questionnaires and the process of choosing answers and talked about the importance and purpose of the research with providing enough information and stating that their correct responses would be very important and fundamental to the study. The researchers also assured the students that the results would have no effect on their final scores of their university and no one except the researcher would have access to the results. They were also informed that the information which they were going to provide in the questionnaire would be just for categorization of the data. Respectively, in order to motivate the participants the researchers stated that the results would be provided to them if they require them. In the next stage, Honey's (2005) Critical Thinking Questionnaire, and Metacognitive Strategy Questionnaires (Metacognitive Strategy Questionnaire and Structured Retrospective Self-report Questionnaire) were distributed to 135 participants personally by the researchers. All of the participants showed that they were eager and willing to participate in the study. The researchers also attended to provide any necessary clarifications to the respondents while they were answering. It should be added that 65 minutes were devoted to administering these questionnaires. It is worthy to mention that out of that number, 120 sets of questionnaires were filled out accurately and completely which were used for scoring and analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the data was gathered and scored, in order to test the hypotheses, a series of pertinent calculations and statistical routines were conducted. The data analysis and the related results are provided and discussed comprehensively beside checking the assumptions of the linear correlation and testing the research hypotheses. Finally, to conclude the chapter, a discussion of the obtained results is presented. To calculate the correlation among the variables in this study, the normality assumption for the four sets of scores was checked. The following table shows the result:

*Table 1: Tests of Normality*

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Critical thinking	.074	120	.155	.982	120	.106
Metacognitive Strategies	.064	120	.200*	.986	120	.252
Self-Report	.089	120	.022	.966	120	.004

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

As it is revealed in the above table, distribution of the scores on self-report was not normal as the sig values on both Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were less than .05 significance level. But, the other two sets of scores were normally distributed.

### *Research question 1*

The first research question concerned the relationship between EFL learners' critical thinking and their perceived use of metacognitive strategies. To this end, first the linearity of the relationship was checked through the following scatterplot:

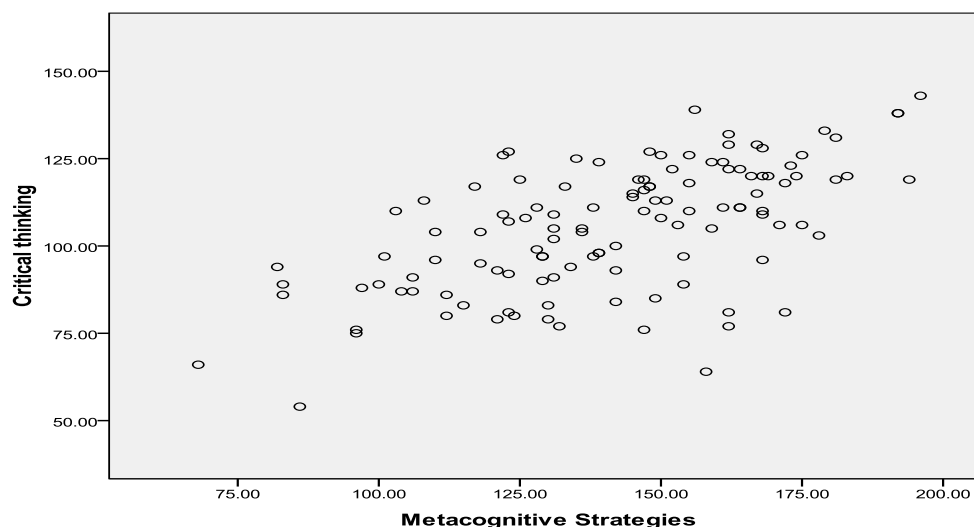


Figure 1: Scatter plot of the scores on critical thinking and metacognitive strategies

As shown above, all the values are scattered along a diagonal line and almost equally distributed at both ends. Hence, both linearity and homoscedasticity assumptions for these two variables were met. The following table shows the result of the parametric Pearson Correlation test, as both sets of scores were shown above to be normally distributed.

Table 2: Correlation between Critical Thinking and Metacognitive Strategies

		Critical thinking	Metacognitive Strategies
Critical thinking	Pearson Correlation	1	.597**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Metacognitive Strategies	Pearson Correlation	.597**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

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

As displayed above, the correlation between the two variables turned out to be positive and significant ( $r=.59$ ,  $p=.000<.05$ ). The strength of the relationship (R squared value) is 0.34. In other words, the two variables had 34 percent of variance in common, which is the medium size. Therefore, the second null hypothesis was rejected.

### Research question 2

The second research question explored the relationship between EFL learners' perceived use of metacognitive strategies and their self-report on them. Therefore, the same procedure as above was undergone. The linearity of the relationship between metacognitive strategies and self-reported strategies and the homoscedasticity of the variables were checked visually through the scatter-plot that appears below:

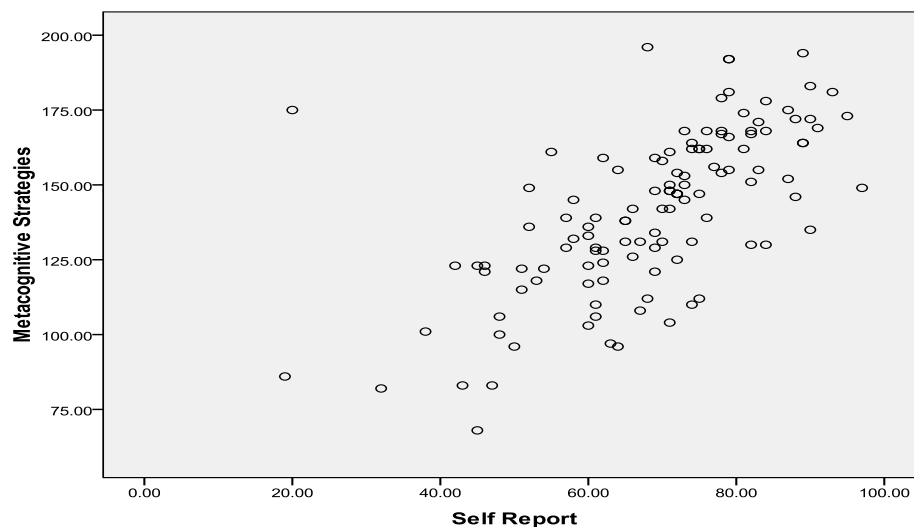


Figure 2: Scatter plot of the scores on self-report and metacognitive strategies

As illustrated in the above scatterplot, all the values cluster around a straight line, and approximately spread equally across the distribution. Hence, linearity and homoscedasticity were not violated for these two variables. As the scores on the self-report measure were not normally distributed, as shown above, the Spearman correlation was conducted as the non-parametric correlation equivalent for the Pearson formula.

Table 3: Correlation between Metacognitive Strategies and Self-Report

			Metacognitive Strategies	Self-Report
Spearman's rho	Metacognitive Strategies	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.709**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	120	120
	Self-Report	Correlation Coefficient	.709**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	120	120

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

As revealed above, the correlation between the two variables turned out to be significant ( $r=.709$ ,  $p=.000<.05$ ) and positive. The strength of the correlation was also as high as .49, which is considered to be medium size. Therefore, the fourth null hypothesis was rejected.

### Research question 3

The third question aimed to explore any difference between the predictability of EFL learners' critical thinking, and self-report about their perceived use of metacognitive strategies. Accordingly, a multiple regression analysis had to be performed. As such, the predictability of the two variables critical thinking and self-report about metacognitive strategies was measured. First, the assumptions were checked: 1) the assumption of multicollinearity. The following table shows the result:

Table 4: Correlation between Metacognitive Strategies and Critical Thinking

		Metacognitive Strategies	Critical thinking	Self-Report
Pearson Correlation	Metacognitive Strategies	1.000	.597	.657
	Critical thinking	.597	1.000	.400
	Self-Report	.657	.400	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	Metacognitive Strategies	.	.000	.000
	Critical thinking	.000	.	.000
	Self-Report	.000	.000	.
N	Metacognitive Strategies	120	120	120
	Critical thinking	120	120	120
	Self-Report	120	120	120

As the above table shows, the correlation between each of the independent variables (critical thinking and self-report) and the dependent variable (metacognitive strategies) is acceptable ( $0.65$  and  $0.59 > 0.3$ ). Also, the correlation between the two independent variables is not very high ( $0.4 < 0.7$ ) which is an acceptable coefficient. Therefore, the assumption of multicollinearity was met.

2. The assumption of normality. The following graph visually checks normality.

#### Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual

Dependent Variable: Metacognitive Strategies

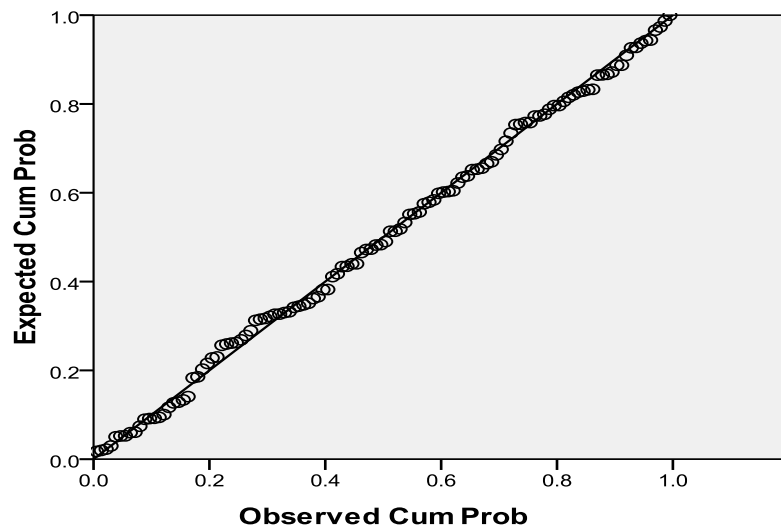


Figure 3: Scatterplot representing the normality of the distribution of the IDV scores

As shown above, all the points lie in a straight diagonal line from the bottom left to the top right. It suggests no major deviation from normality.

3. Homoscedasticity. This assumption was checked visually through the following graph:

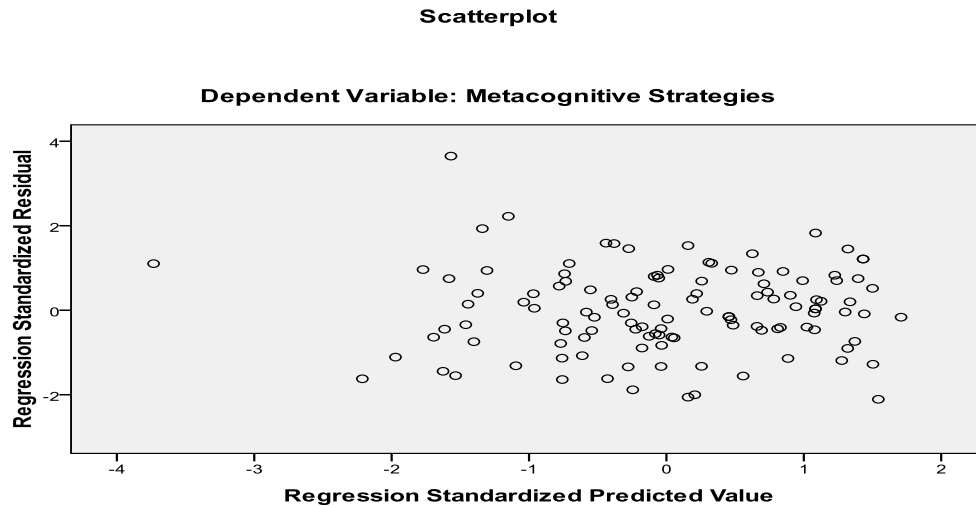


Figure 4: Scatterplot representing the distribution of the residuals

As illustrated above, the residuals are roughly rectangularly distributed with most of the scores concentrated in the center, hence homoscedasticity, i.e., the variance of the residual about predicted DV scores should be the same for all the obtained predicted scores.

4. Outliers. The following table shows the result:

Table 5: Residuals Statistics<sup>a</sup>

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	66.3314	175.9418	141.5333	20.14700	120
Std. Predicted Value	-3.733	1.708	.000	1.000	120
Standard Error of Predicted Value	1.630	7.126	2.685	.865	120
Adjusted Predicted Value	63.5032	176.0520	141.3953	20.37868	120
Residual	-37.60891	65.06390	.00000	17.68576	120
Std. Residual	-2.109	3.648	.000	.992	120
Stud. Residual	-2.140	3.979	.004	1.015	120
Deleted Residual	-38.72205	77.42017	.13802	18.56812	120
Stud. Deleted Residual	-2.173	4.261	.006	1.030	120
Mahal. Distance	.003	18.001	1.983	2.357	120
Cook's Distance	.000	1.002	.017	.092	120
Centered Leverage Value	.000	.151	.017	.020	120

a. Dependent Variable: Metacognitive Strategies

The maximum value across Mahal Distance turned out to be 18.001 which is larger than 13.82 critical value (Palant, 2007). By sorting the data through data editor facility of SPSS, it was revealed that only two outliers existed, and given the data size, the researchers considered the very few outliers as not unusual and decided to carry on the regression analysis:

Table 6: Regression Model Summary<sup>b</sup>

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.752 <sup>a</sup>	.565	.557	17.83628



- a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Report, Critical thinking  
b. Dependent Variable: Metacognitive Strategies

In the above table, the R square value suggests that 56.5 percent of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the model which is rather a considerable amount. The following ANOVA table shows the result statistically:

Table 7: ANOVA<sup>b</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	48302.310	2	24151.155	75.915	.000 <sup>a</sup>
	Residual	37221.556	117	318.133		
	Total	85523.867	119			

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Report, Critical thinking  
b. Dependent Variable: Metacognitive Strategies

The above table shows that the model was significant ( $p=.000<.05$ ).

Table 8: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations			Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	17.133	10.537		1.626	.107	-3.735	38.002					
Critical thinking	.593	.099	.398	5.988	.000	.397	.789	.597	.484	.365	.840	1.190
Self-Report	.904	.121	.498	7.477	.000	.664	1.143	.657	.569	.456	.840	1.190

- a. Dependent Variable: Metacognitive Strategies

As shown above, by virtue of the Beta sig values for both variables which were less than .05, it is concluded that both independent variables contributed significantly in the regression model. In other words, both critical thinking and self-report could significantly predict metacognitive strategies of the learners. However, the larger Beta value of the self-report (.498) indicates that this variable makes the stronger contribution to explaining the dependent variable. Therefore the fifth hypothesis is rejected.

### Discussion

As for the investigation of relationships among the variables, the findings seem to corroborate with the reviewed studies revealing that there was a positive correlation between EFL learners' critical thinking, and their use of metacognitive strategies. This significant correlation was not unexpected since critical thinking can influence different aspects of students' characteristics regarding using especial strategies in learning a language. This result also supports previous findings that explain the connection of metacognition and critical thinking (Halpern 1998; Nickerson 1994). The findings also accord with that of Choy and Cheah (2009) which revealed a more apparent connection between metacognition and critical thinking. Using a qualitative approach, they found that critical thinking is encouraged inside the classroom among the students when the teacher provides guidelines for such metacognition to learn materials effectively. In addition, they also found that structuring a more conducive environment can help facilitate critical thinking. These cognitive strategies and environmental structuring taught to students are specific metacognitive skills that are used to develop critical thinking. They concluded in their study that critical thinking requires higher level of cognitive skills in processing information such as metacognition.

Moreover, the investigation of the relationship between conceived use of metacognitive strategies, and self-report proved that this correlation was significantly positive. It was hardly surprising since self-report shows the strategies which are used by a good language learner, and its goal is in line with that of metacognitive strategies. It was also

studied and suggested by some researchers who acknowledge that self-report deals with best strategy user (best strategy user (Wenden, as cited in Birjandi, et.al, 2006; Esmaili Fard, 2010).

The results of regression also revealed that both predictor variables could significantly predict metacognitive strategies of the learners. In other words, both critical thinking and self-report contributed significantly in the regression model which is in parallel with some researches that revealed good critical thinkers are engaged in more metacognitive activities, especially high-level planning and high-level evaluating strategies (Ku & Ho, 2010; Magno, 2010). Moreover, it was showed that self-report makes the stronger statistically significant unique contribution to explaining metacognitive strategies. Simplistically, self-report is a better predictor of independent variable.

Regarding the results of this study, working in language teaching setting requires both teachers and learners discovering the characteristics and understanding the strategies to tackle in order to transfer and deliver the knowledge more successfully, as Zhang and Goh (2006) suggest, “when learners are equipped with this knowledge, they will understand their own thinking and learning process and accordingly, they are more likely to oversee the choice and application of learning strategies, plan how to proceed with a learning task, monitor their own performance on an ongoing basis, find solutions to problems encountered, and evaluate themselves upon task completion” (p. 11).

Overall, the abovementioned results indicate that critical thinking significantly contribute to metacognitive strategies which is an essential and fundamental part of successful language learning process that its paramount importance should be taken into consideration.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study attempted to explore the possible relationship among EFL learners' Critical Thinking, and Metacognitive Strategies. Respectively, based on the results obtained, it was observed that there is a significant relationship among the variables which was positive and significant. It indicates that these two mental constructs are closely related which was highly supported by previous studies (Anderson, 2002; Flavel, 1976; Ku and Ho, 2010; Magno, 2010; Pintrich et al., 1993).

Driven from the outcomes of statistical analyses, it was also confirmed that the relation between metacognitive strategies and self-report was positively significant which is in parallel with other findings (Wenden, as cited in Birjandi, et.al, 2006; Esmaili Fard, 2010) that suggest self-report deals with best strategy user.

This study also attempted to compare predictability of critical thinking and self-report about metacognitive strategies of EFL learners. It was concluded finally that both critical thinking and self-report contributed significantly to the prediction of metacognitive strategies of the EFL learners which was in line with previous findings (Ku and Ho, 2010; Magno, 2010). However, it was showed that self-report is a better predictor and makes the stronger statistically significant unique contribution to explaining metacognitive strategies. Overall, these two variables (critical thinking and metacognitive strategies) are significantly interconnected. Moreover, between critical thinking, and self-report (which its questionnaire was used as a complementary part to metacognitive strategies), self-report was a better predictor of metacognitive strategies among EFL learners.

## **Limitations**

Due to the nature of the study, a number of limitations were imposed upon the research. These limitations imposed to the present study were as follows:

1. The researcher did not have access to equal number of male and female learners, as the number of female EFL learners usually exceeds that of the male learners. As a result, the number of male and female participants was not equal in this study; therefore gender may act as an intervening factor.
2. This study was just run only on undergraduate learners, as the researcher did not have access to the postgraduate learners.
3. The Persian translated and validated version of metacognitive strategies questionnaires was not available, so they were administered in the original forms while the Persian translated version of CT questionnaire was used.
4. Among graduate and undergraduate students, this research was limited deliberately to undergraduate learners to minimize the probability of their eventual knowledge and probable awareness of the nature and content of the questionnaires and the way they are scored which may influence the reliability of the results.

### Delimitations

At the same time, the researchers deemed it necessary to place some delimitation to narrow down the scope of the study and increase the generalizability as much as possible. These delimitations that may place restrictions on the conclusion of the study include:

1. In this study, only senior students of university majoring at English were chosen because it was assumed that participants of this level own good command of English, and have enough knowledge to use metacognitive strategies in their learning process. As Camahalan (2006) indicated that young children do not learn strategies or skills as readily as do adult learners, because young learners have less ability to organize material, in other words metacognitive strategies appear to be less developed in young children. Although young learners use cognitive strategies, they are not aware of these strategies, do not apply them deliberately, and are also unlikely to monitor, direct, and evaluate their own learning. Metacognitive strategies and skills develop at a later stage of one's learning experiences (Cantrell et al., 2010).
2. According to Lemaire (2010) young and old individuals differ in how they approach cognitive tasks and analyze information, therefore only adult learners (19-29) were chosen in this study so other age groups are not included.

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THE EFFECT OF SPEED READING ON IELTS EFL LEARNERS' READING COMPREHENSION  
ABILITY

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**ABSTRACT**

This investigation intends to seek into the possible effect of factor namely, speed reading on reading comprehension ability and also the effect of gender of Iranian International English Language Testing System (IELTS) candidates in reading comprehension ability so as to perceive if there is any positive advantage for those who do speed reading well in reading section of the test. The participants of the study were selected according to their proficiency level using Nelson proficiency test. To this aim, the Nelson proficiency test was given to the 120 students from six institutes in Iran. Some information about the level of the subjects was elicited. Nelson proficiency test was employed to make sure of the participants' homogeneity in terms of their proficiency level. Then pretest was given to the experimental and control groups and information was obtained. The experimental group was taught speed techniques through 8 sessions. Then post test was given to groups and the results were compared. The results suggested first null hypothesis which predicted that speed reading does not affect reading comprehension ability of IELTS candidates was rejected. Thus, with high degree of confidence it can be claimed that speed reading affects reading comprehension ability of IELTS students. Additionally, the second null hypothesis which predicted that gender of Iranian IELTS students does not affect their speed in reading comprehension ability was not rejected.

**KEYWORDS:** reading, speed reading, skimming, scanning and IELTS test

**INTRODUCTION**

This research centers around testing two variables namely speed reading and reading comprehension ability and discovering the possible effect of speed reading on reading comprehension in IELTS students. To do so, a brief explanation of each would be effective and it can pave the way for elucidating the complications of the trend. By definition, speed reading is a method of improving a reader's reading ability, improving both the speed at which a text can be assimilated, and the level of understanding of the material. While the reading and studying skills you've developed over time may have worked well enough to get you into college, they may not prepare you for the kind of complex, lengthy assignments you will face in the years ahead. To keep up with the sheer volume of material and to grasp what it all means, you need skills that improve your comprehension and pace. The material in this chapter will present active learning techniques to increase comprehension and build vocabulary while boosting speed in IELTS students. You may even experience an unexpected, pleasurable benefit enjoying what you read. Most students lead busy lives, carrying heavy academic loads while perhaps working or even caring for a family. With so much to do in so little time, it is often difficult to finish reading assignments on schedule. The workplace has similar pressures. This necessitates the need for becoming familiar with the concept of speed reading a bit more.

On the other hand, there is the matter of dealing with reading comprehension ability while increasing the speed of reading. Reading is a process that requires you, the reader, to make meaning from written words that is, to master concepts in a personal way. Your familiarity with a subject, your background and life experiences, and even your personal interpretation of words and phrases affect understanding. Because these factors are different for everyone, reading experiences are unique. If, for example, your family owns a hardware store where you worked during summers, you will read a retailing chapter in a business text in the context of your background. While you are comparing text concepts to your family's business practices, most of your classmates are reading for basic

vocabulary and concepts. The goal of reading comprehension is complete understanding. This is a crucial skill in college, where you are asked to master material on your own and use what you learn as a foundation in upper-level courses. When you struggle through and master concepts that you considered impossible the first time you read them, you'll be proud of your ability to overcome obstacles and not give up. This pride will motivate you every time you read. Whether you have good comprehension depends on whether you can extract and retain the important ideas of reading, not on how fast you read. If you can do this, you can also increase speed reading. If you "clutch up" when trying to read fast or skim and worry about comprehension, it will drop because the mind is occupied with your fears and you are not paying attention to the ideas that you are reading. If you concentrate on the purpose of reading (locating main ideas, and the details, and force yourself to stick to the task of finding them quickly) your speed and comprehension should increase. Your concern should be not with how fast you can get through a chapter, but with how quickly you can locate the facts and ideas that you need.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In accordance with the objectives of the study, the following research questions are formulated:

Q1: "Does speed in reading comprehension affect the degree of comprehension in Iranian EFL IELTS students?"

Q2: "Does the gender of Iranian EFL learners' affect their speed in reading comprehension skill?"

Align with the research purposes and questions, the following null hypothesis are formed:

H1: "The speed in reading comprehension does not affect the degree of comprehension in Iranian EFL IELTS students."

H2: "The gender of Iranian EFL learners' does not affect their speed in reading comprehension skill."

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Subjects***

To accomplish the purpose of the study and to verify the hypothesis, 120 students of Tehran IELTS Institute, 58 females and 62 males, aged 25-32, were selected as subjects of this study. The NELSON proficiency test, including 50 items with different language skills, was utilized in order to homogenize the selected students. Based on the results of the test, only 82 students who were at upper intermediate level qualified for further stages of the study. Applying a mock IELTS test as the pretest, the subjects were divided into two groups one of which, experimental group, went under treatment for a few weeks. A post test comprised of only the reading part of IELTS was administered to evaluate the subjects' knowledge of reading after the treatment.

### ***Materials***

The current study employed the following instruments:

#### ***General English proficiency test (Nelson, series 300 D)***

This test incorporated four parts: Reading comprehension, cloze passage, vocabulary, and pronunciation. All parts were in the form of multiple-choice questions. There were 50 items and the time allotted was 45 minutes to homogenize the subjects.

#### ***Reading part of IELTS test as a pre test***

In order to collect information about the knowledge and speed of the participants, the researcher administered a sample of reading part of IELTS as a pre test. It contained 40 reading items which had to be answered in 60 minutes.

#### ***Reading part of IELTS test as a post test***

After giving treatment and teaching speed techniques to the experimental group in 8 sessions, the researcher took the students a post test. It was a sample of reading part of IELTS test.

### ***Procedure***

To accomplish the purpose of the study and to verify the hypothesis, 120 students of Tehran IELTS Institute, 58 females and 62 males, aged 25-32, were selected as subjects of this study. To ensure the homogeneity of the two groups, the Nelson Proficiency Test was administered among 120 EFL learners. Those students (N = 82) whose scores fell within the range of one standard deviation above and below the mean (scores from 26 to 38) were chosen



as homogeneous participants for this study. Based on the results of the test, only 82 students (who were at upper intermediate level) qualified for further stages of the study. Applying a mock IELTS test as the pretest, the subjects were divided into two groups one of which, experimental group, went under treatment for a few weeks. A post test comprised of only the reading part of IELTS was administered to evaluate the subjects' knowledge of reading after the treatment.

To determine the effects of the speed reading strategies, the students' scores on the posttest receiving the speed reading skills were compared to the scores of control group. In addition, to determine the students' reading comprehension development, according to their gender. During the experiment, the students in the control group had the conventional learning but the researcher hold eight extra speed reading classes for the experimental group.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To ensure the homogeneity of the two groups, the Nelson Proficiency Test was administered among 120 EFL learners. Those students (N = 82) whose scores fell within the range of one standard deviation above and below the mean (scores from 26 to 38) were chosen as homogeneous participants for this study. Descriptive statistics for this homogeneity test is represented in Table 1.

Table1: Descriptive Statistics of Nelson Proficiency Test

N	Range	Min.	Max.	Mean	Median	Mode	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
120	26	20	46	32.27	32.00	30	.558	6.109

The mean score of participants was 32.27 with standard deviation of 6.109. The min of students was 20 and the median of the group was 32.00.

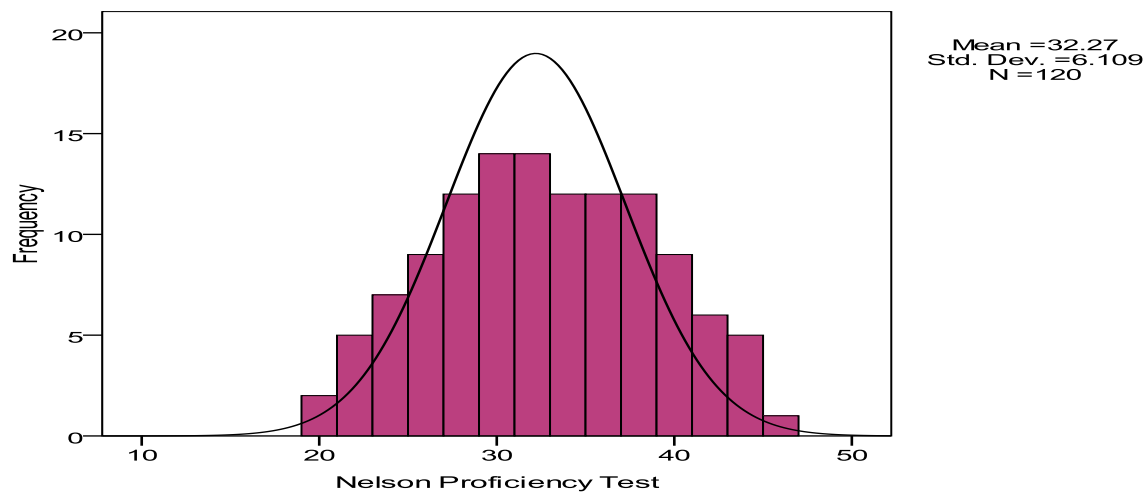


Figure 1: Nelson Proficiency Test Scores

## Pretest

Table 2: Between-Subjects Factors

		Value Label	N
Group	1	Control	42
	2	Experimental	40
Gender	1	Male	45
	2	Female	37

Table 3: Reliability of pre-test

Reliability of Pretest	Valid	Number of Students	%	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
	Excluded	0	0	30	.89
	Total	18	100.0		

The mean score of participants in control group for men was 19.61 with standard deviation of 5.639 and mean for female was 19.47 with standard deviation of 6.177, for experimental group the mean score of male participants was 18.45 with standard deviation of 5.096 and for female the mean was 19.28 with standard deviation of 5.410.

Table 4: Dependent Variable: Reading at Pretest

Group	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Control	Male	19.61	5.639	23
	Female	19.47	6.177	19
	Total	19.55	5.815	42
Experimental	Male	18.45	5.096	22
	Female	19.28	5.410	18
	Total	18.83	5.188	40
Total	Male	19.04	5.351	45
	Female	19.38	5.737	37
	Total	19.20	5.496	82

Table 5: Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances

F	df1	df2	Sig.
.057	3	78	.962

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances demonstrates that the hypothesis of equal of variances was supported because Sig. was .96 at pretest, which is greater than the .05 significance level for this study ( $p > \alpha$ ). Therefore it was concluded that four sets of scores (control & experimental, male and female) have equal variances and therefore are homogeneous at pretest.

Table 6: Two-way ANOVA

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	17.597	3	5.866	.188	.904	.007
Intercept	29933.545	1	29933.545	961.114	.000	.925
Group	9.246	1	9.246	.297	.587	.004
Gender	2.403	1	2.403	.077	.782	.001
Group * Gender	4.658	1	4.658	.150	.700	.002
Error	2429.281	78	31.145			
Total	32660.000	82				
Corrected Total	2446.878	81				

ANOVA failed to detect a statistically significant effect for group, ( $F = .29$ ,  $p = .58$ ,  $p > .05$ , Effect size = .004). Moreover, ANOVA results found no statistically significant effect for gender ( $F = .07$ ,  $p = .78$ ,  $p > .05$ , Effect size = .001). Accordingly, there was no significant difference between the reading comprehension ability of participants in control and experimental groups, and also between male and female participants before facing any treatment. Also, the interaction effect of Group \* Gender was not significant ( $F = .15$ ,  $p = .70$ ,  $p > .05$ , Effect size = .002).

**Post-test***Table 7: Between-Subjects Factors*

		Value Label	N
Group	1	Control	42
	2	Experimental	40
Gender	1	Male	45
	2	Female	37

The mean score of participants in control group for men was 21.00 with standard deviation of 5.143 and mean for female was 21.32 with standard deviation of 5.850 for experimental group the mean score of male participants was 25.64 with standard deviation of 5.619 and for female the mean was 24.39 with standard deviation of 6.307.

*Table 8: Descriptive Statistics, Dependent Variable: Reading at Posttest*

Group	Gender	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Control	Male	21.00	5.143	23
	Female	21.32	5.850	19
	Total	21.14	5.408	42
Experimental	Male	25.64	5.619	22
	Female	24.39	6.307	18
	Total	25.08	5.894	40
Total	Male	23.27	5.813	45
	Female	22.81	6.191	37
	Total	23.06	5.953	82

*Table 9: Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances*

F	df1	df2	Sig.
.345	3	78	.793

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances manifests that the hypothesis of equal of variances was proved since Sig. was .79 at posttest, which is greater than the .05 significance level for this study ( $p > \alpha$ ). As a result it was concluded that four sets of scores (control & experimental, male and female) have equal variances and therefore are homogeneous at posttest.

*Table 10: Two-way ANOVA*

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	333.221	3	111.074	3.414	.021	.116
Intercept	43257.257	1	43257.257	1329.695	.000	.945
Group	301.521	1	301.521	9.269	.003	.106
Gender	4.404	1	4.404	.135	.714	.002
Group * Gender	12.398	1	12.398	.381	.539	.005
Error	2537.474	78	32.532			
Total	46479.000	82				
Corrected Total	2870.695	81				

In order to find out the normal speed of reading comprehension for the subjects of this study, the mean time of submission of earliest and latest students in pilot test was considered as the normal speed: +1SD above the mean time was considered as low speed and -1SD below the mean time of the subjects' submission was considered as high speed.

**A) Null Hypothesis One**

ANOVA detected a statistically significant effect for group, i.e. speed in reading ( $F = 9.26$   $p = .003$ ,  $p < .05$ , Effect size = .10). Accordingly, the first null hypothesis which predicted that speed reading does not affect reading comprehension ability of IELTS EFL learners' was rejected. Thus with high degree of confidence it can be claimed that speed reading affects reading comprehension ability of IELTS EFL learners'.

**B) Null Hypothesis two**

Additionally, ANOVA results revealed no statistically significant effect for gender ( $F = .13$   $p = .71$ ,  $p > .05$ , Effect size = .002). Accordingly, the second null hypothesis which predicted that gender of Iranian IELTS students does not affect their speed in reading comprehension ability was not rejected. Also, the interaction of Group \* Gender was not significant ( $F = .38$ ,  $p = .53$ ,  $p > .05$ , Effect size = .005)

The result of survey of Sweet & Snow (2009) also suggested that if students try to develop their speed during reading, they will be more successful in their reading comprehension ability. Kirsch et al., (2002) also claimed that gender does not affect the adult language learning ability.

**CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

This study has tried to investigate the effects of speed reading on IELTS EFL learners' reading comprehension. The speed reading treatment was given to experimental group of participant to see whether it would be effective in improving their results or not. This study also has tried to investigate the effect of gender in success of IELTS EFL learners' reading comprehension ability.

According to the results obtained through the survey, the first null hypothesis which says speed reading does not affect reading comprehension ability of IELTS EFL learners' was rejected. Thus with high degree of confidence it can be claimed that speed reading affects reading comprehension ability of IELTS EFL learners. Additionally, ANOVA results revealed no statistically significant effect for gender ( $F = .13$   $p = .71$ ,  $p > .05$ , Effect size = .002). Accordingly, the second null hypothesis which predicted that gender of Iranian IELTS students does not affect their speed in reading comprehension ability was not rejected. Also, the interaction of Group \* Gender was not significant. The findings of the study revealed that if the institutes add the speed reading classes in their education programs, the IELTS students would be more successful. In other words, the students improved highly in reading part of IELTS when they use speed techniques. In other word, this study showed that the students reading comprehension ability is not affected by their gender and IELTS EFL learners' gender is not an important factor in success in reading part. Men and women do the same in reading part.

The results obtained through the study can be used in many different ways. It can be used to give suitable instructions to the students with weaknesses diagnosed in the related areas and finally to increase their reading efficiency. Apparently, discovering the relations underlying between these factors will be of great help and importance to both teachers and students and also to education programmers within the framework of the whole society. Another dimension can further be added to the use of the results. Some unknown answer to the questions of the newly-formed phenomenon (speed reading) can be supplied for the researchers to take some big step to better organize their later studies. Students have a problem to answer to all questions in reading part but if we teach them the skills of the speed reading then they have enough time to cover all questions. It is noticeable that students could transfer their reading strategy knowledge from L1 to L2. In fact, this awareness of reading strategies will help students know how to read a text believing that reading is rule-based and reading comprehension does not occur haphazardly. They will also learn how to deal with reading difficulties while reading a text, no matter in L1 or L2, and not to get dazed during reading by the text. This research can help IELTS professors to know the importance of the speed in this international test and they should teach that there is a difference between speed test and power test.

In our educational system in Iran, IELTS EFL learners are expected to read efficiently but the fact is that they do not still know the importance or even the nature of reading strategies and techniques. They do not know that reading is not something done haphazardly. That is why most of the students do not know what strategies are useful for, cannot create appropriate strategies for themselves, cannot read autonomously, and are not self-dependent while reading. They must be trained to understand the importance of applying strategies in order to use them effectively. With

respect to the findings of the present study, it would be the job of material designers to design speed course to the IELTS EFL learners' instructions

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## INDIVIDUAL SELF-MONITORING AND PEER-MONITORING IN ONE CLASSROOM IN WRITING ACTIVITIES: WHO IS AT DISADVANTAGE?

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### ABSTRACT

Writing is an important experience through which we are able to share ideas, arouse feelings, persuade and convince other people (White & Arndt, 1991). It is important to view writing not solely as the product of an individual, but as a cognitive, social and cultural act. Writing is an act that takes place within a context, that accomplishes a particular purpose and that is appropriately shaped for its intended audience (Hamplones & Condon, 1989). The present research considered the significance effects of two important independent variables self-monitoring and peer-monitoring in writing activities on Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. In this research we were supposed to investigate self-monitoring & peer-monitoring effects on 173 male and female learners' writing activities whose age ranged between the 16-27, and they had a composing description writing paragraph as pre & post test in the same conditions. Although many studies have been conducted on the effects of self-monitoring with a variety of students across a variety of settings (Amato-Zech, Hoff, & Doepke, 2006; Cooper et al., 2007; Dunlap, Dunlap, Koegel, & Koegel 1991). This research studied about self-monitoring and peer-monitoring techniques which has been included new findings on learners' written tasks.

**KEYWORDS:** Self- monitoring, Peer-monitoring, Feedback and Composing description

### INTRODUCTION

Writing is an important task in school (Ballard & Glynn, 1975; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997). Students write to communicate, demonstrate their knowledge of skills and the curriculum, as well as express their beliefs (Graham, 1982). Written language enables children to communicate across both time and space (Swedlow, 1999). It is useful for studying and learning content material (Durst & Newell, 1989). Journal writing, poetry, stories and plays allow students to express their feelings and provide mechanisms for creative expression (Durst & Newell, 1989). Thus, writing is crucial for communication, learning, and expression, making it a critical component of modern education (Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997).

Meyers (2006) stated writing is a kind of communication that somebody cannot hear you right now; it is a talent skill for conveying your idea to other people that improves your writing process. It is an action that you put your idea on paper, reshaping and revising them in clear sentences that are called composing. You communicate for many reasons, because you want to share an idea, supply information, express a greeting, state an opinion, or send a warning. In short, you communicate because you have:

1. A set of circumstances for saying something: an occasion
2. Something to say: a subject
3. A reason for saying it: a purpose
4. Someone to say it: an audience

Arnaudet and Barret (1990) mentioned that writing is a skill that you can say your idea briefly, and brilliant without any fear from face to face conversation or worry to say something frankly. It's a process that helps you to sharp your thoughts for the exact purpose of your idea, and it gives you opportunity to repair damage, to share information, to



acknowledge somebody, to change another idea about something, to provide a good state for your confidence to write clearly. Therefore, by composing some paragraphs and essays, you will achieve above goals by your writing. In this study, writing paragraphs are the salience parts of research, so it is essential to take a look at different parts of writing paragraphs (introduction- body- conclusion). Moreover, there is needed to define some lines about paragraph; a paragraph is a group of sentences which develop one central idea and the central idea is usually stated in a topic sentence. If a paragraph announces its main idea in the topic sentence, and if all the supporting sentences contribute to the reader's understanding of the main idea, we say that a paragraph is unified or it has unity. In writing, you cannot make use of these auditory and visual aids, so you must think and plan carefully what you're going to write to ensure that your reader knows exactly what you mean. When the order in which things happen, or a time sequence, is used to develop a paragraph, this is called chronological order.

County (2007) defines description as: A paragraph developed by detail, the topic sentence is supported by factual material, either sense impressions or conceptual facts. Almost all writing has some detail in it. The descriptive mode takes the whole (relationship, place, process, etc.), breaks or divides it into parts or events, and treats each separately. The basic objective of descriptive writing is the depiction of the appearance of people, places, and things. The writer helps recreate for the reader sense impressions (sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste) that have been experienced or observed by the writer. Keep in mind that the purpose of the writing and the audience must be determined: to focus on the writer's experiences is the expressive aim, to inform or explain information is the expository aim, and to persuade or argue the reader to one side of an issue is the persuasive aim.

Myles (2002) says academic writing requires conscious effort and much practice in composing, developing, and analyzing ideas. Students writing in a second language are also faced with social and cognitive challenges related to second language acquisition. L1 models of writing instruction and research on composing processes have been the theoretical basis for using the process approach in L2 writing pedagogy. However, language proficiency and competence underlies the ability to write in the L2 in a fundamental way. Therefore, L2 writing instructors should take into account both strategy development and language skill development when working with students.

The present research discussed the theoretical rational aspects of academically effects of self-monitoring and peer-monitoring on learners especially in their writing activities. Anne Moran (2004) indicates that self-monitoring is defined as a complex task utilized to inform students of their progress (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998; Zimmerman, 2000). Students use information from self-monitoring to adjust strategies, behavior, and their environment as necessary for success (Schunk & Zimmerman, 1998; Zimmerman, 2000). Ineffective students do not monitor their progress systematically, but rely instead on their general awareness of progress which is often an inaccurate measure of performance (Zimmerman, 1998).

Xiang (2004) has said the positive point by using self-monitoring strategy; he mentioned the technique of self-monitoring, by giving students control over the feedback they receive, enables teachers to provide effective feedback. Self-monitoring is an effective way for students to improve the organization of their compositions and especially helpful to higher proficiency learners. Charls (1990) proposed a self-monitoring technique, whereby students annotate their text with any doubts they have during the writing process, so that the teacher can give feedback not only on the finished draft, but also on the queries which emerged during the writing process. Charls (1992:292) claims that self-monitoring makes it easy for students to express uncertainty about any part of their text, and to receive direct answers to their queries, and encourages students to look critically and analytically at their writing and to place themselves in the position of the reader.

Cresswell (2000) describes another advantage of using self-monitoring technique; the student self-monitoring technique increases autonomy in the learning of writing by giving learners control over the initiation of feedback. In practical terms, this means that students write marginal annotations about problems in their evolving compositions, to which the teacher responds (also in writing).

As Money et al. (2011) stated peer-monitoring will provide experiential learning, social support and self-empowerment for learners. This leads to the ability of a peer to share first-hand knowledge of coping with the problems. If peers did not willingly share their own experiences with participants, through individual choice or program design, the peer-to-peer program would lack this experiential learning benefit. Participating in a peer-to-peer program broadens an individual's support network.<sup>6</sup> Individuals may develop friendships with other participants that expand beyond the formal program. These relationships provide additional sources of support in times of need for physical assistance or emotional assistance.

Newhall et al. (2011) pointed out peer-monitoring is designed to run on a general purpose networked system where users can log into any node at any time and run any mix of parallel and sequential programs, and batch and

interactive applications. The three main goals in designing Peer-monitoring are: to efficiently provide, in real-time, system resource usage information; to scale to large-sized systems; and to be fault tolerant. The system also needs to be flexible enough to allow nodes to easily enter and leave the peer to peer network.

Peer-monitoring is an action that individuals respond to their peers' behavior or performance, it allows them to encourage their peers to perform well, and deters inappropriate behavior by increasing the chances that it would be detected. Here, we can classify peer-monitoring in two subcategory; first is direct peer-monitoring, that it occurs when participants or students understand their peers' behavior result and they respond in forthright way, second is indirect peer-monitoring that it occurs when the students avoid to monitor poorly performance of peers.

Cho, Cho and Hacker (2007) said although participating in self- and peer-evaluation of writing is expected to improve self-monitoring skills and writing quality (Cho, Schunn, & Carney, 2006; Herrington & Gadman, 1991; Marcoulides & Simkin, 1991; Shaw, 2002), a reasonable concern is that students may not be accurate self-monitors of their writing. Indeed, Hayes and Flower (1980) found that inaccurate monitoring might undermine its positive role in writing improvement. When student writers overestimate or underestimate their writing quality, their inaccurate monitoring may hinder them from setting realistic goals and from using appropriate writing strategies. In their co-regulation model, McCaslin and Hickey (2001) emphasized the importance of consistency of self-monitoring results between self- and peer-evaluations. According to them, if students over- or under-estimate their learning in comparison to how others estimate their learning, it can lead to inappropriate use of strategies and to less skillful self-regulation. Thus, self-monitoring of writing processes may be fine-tuned with explicit comparisons between self- and peer evaluations.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The present dissertation set out to find answers to the following research questions:

- 1-Do self-monitoring and peer-monitoring affect the Iranian EFL learner's writing ability differently?
- 2- Is there any correlation between type of monitoring and Iranian EFL learners' gender in their writing skill?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

Totally 173 students including 41 male learners and 132 female learners in the age range of 15 to 27 at the intermediate level were asked to participate in this study. Subjects were homogenous in methodology used at school, type of school attended by each group, numbers of hours devoting to the teaching of English, level of language proficiency and their age.

### ***Instruments***

The following instruments were used for this study:

1. **A General English Proficiency Test Nelson** which determines the proficiency level of the subjects in English.
2. **Composing a Description Paragraphs Test** which determines the idea of study whether self-monitoring or peer-monitoring is good by following topics:

A-It's better to see a movie or read a book version of a film.

B-Which transportation do you prefer to travel and why? Traveling by plane, train or bus.

### ***Procedures***

To achieve the objective of this study the following procedures were taken by the researchers:

First a group of learners in English language department was randomly selected, and then they were given General Proficiency Test Nelson to determine their proficiency level. Then, two composing description topics were given to them, both topics were selected from the book Ready for FCE by Roy Norris (2011) after that they wrote three paragraphs (introduction- body- conclusion) about 120-180 words in their pre-tests. After finishing writing, students have been evaluated their own writing by themselves, to monitor their own strengths, and weaknesses, the learners found errors and mistakes of themselves, then peers have been evaluated each other's writing paper by different color, and monitored peers' strengths, and weaknesses. All writing papers were also scored by the researcher, and another two raters, so each learner had 5scores for his or her pre-test papers out of 45 points. After scoring papers they were given treatment to those students who were not able to write a good paragraph, or they need their teacher's

help to follow up a plan how to continue their writing, then the teacher taught them to write well-organized paragraphs and told them about their mistakes, grammatical points such as: tenses, passive & active sentences, punctuation, accurate use of expression, appropriate words, and everything related to a well-organized paragraph. In this study was observed the learners how they were cooperated, and how they have been followed the procedure exactly, and some of them were very serious about this part, and they didn't want to lose anything, they eagerly needed their teacher help whether they found the other classmate correctly or not. But the time for treatment was not enough, and they had basically problems with their selecting good expression, or appropriate words. Some of them asked the teacher for more times. The researcher noted some points relating to learners' behaviors. After treatment a post-test was given at the same condition of their pre-test, they were given a writing composition description paper including two similar topics; they had to choose one topic, and writing description paragraphs about 120-180 words; they monitored themselves by blue pen to clarify their own strengths, and weaknesses, then peers checked each other's mistakes to monitor each other's strengths, and weaknesses by red pen. All post-test writing papers were scored by present researcher, and another two raters of the same level, so all learners had 5 scores for their post-test. The researcher has been considered two independent variables self-monitoring, peer-monitoring for scoring their writing composing description. Totally, each learner had 10 marks for both pre & post test except language proficiency test. Both self and peers gave their classmates one mark for pre-test and one mark for classmates' post test.

### **Scoring method**

According to Khalaf Ibnian (2011) in table 1.1 considered all characteristics for writing a good paragraph. Total score was out of 45 points. Each learner had 10 scores except proficiency test. They were included 5 scores for their pre-test and 5 scores for learners' post test. In both pre & posttest, 5 scores were including researcher- first rater- second rater- student self & peers' mark.

*Table 1: Scoring Method*

	<b>The Criterion</b>	<b>Related Skills</b>	<b>Pionts</b>
1			
		1- Clarity of ideas	3
		2- Relevant supporting details	3
		3- Dividing the essay into introduction, body and conclusion	3
		4- Moving smoothly from introduction to body to conclusion	3
		5- Well-organized paragraph	3
		6- Logically sequenced ideas	3
2	<b>Mechanics of writing</b>		
		1- Punctuation	3
		2- Spelling	3
		3- Grammar	3
3	<b>Language use</b>		
		1- Appropriate choice of words	3
		2- Accurate use of expression	3
4	<b>Creative abilities</b>		
	(Fluency)	1- Many ideas	3
	(Flexibility)	2- Varied ideas and points of view	3
	(Originality)	3- Unique titles and ideas	3
	(Elaboration)	4- Embellishing ideas with details	3
	<b>Total Points</b>		<b>45</b>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 is a cross table of two genders who acted in proficiency test. As it was shown by Pie graphs 1 and 2, learners with strong, medium, and weak proficiency levels were distinguished according to their genders. It was indicated that male learners outperformed their peers, females, in proficiency

Table 2: Gender and Proficiency Cross tabulation

		Proficiency												Total
		8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
gender	male	0	0	0	7	3	1	2	6	3	4	7	8	41
	female	13	11	17	19	8	18	9	11	6	15	5	0	132
Total		13	11	17	26	11	19	11	17	9	19	12	8	173

### Phase one

To refresh the readers' minds, it is worth mentioning the hypotheses again.

H1- Self monitoring and peer monitoring affect the Iranian EFL learners' writing ability differently.

There was a significant and positive relationship between self-monitoring and peer-monitoring; because both of them were useful for pro-social life of learners' writing activities and could help to improve their writing abilities.

Table 3: Comparison Means preself & prepeer

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Preself	31.14	173	6.023	.458
	PrePeer	29.64	173	6.100	.464

Table 4: Comparison Means preself & prepeer in T-Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Preself PrePeer	1.497	2.528	.192	1.118	1.876	7.789	172	.000

Using paired samples test, as you see in tables 3 & 4, we had comparison means between pre-test self-monitoring & pre-test peer-monitoring that their means were between 29-31, and they were differ just in 2 points. In table 4 Sig.(2-tailed) was (.000), and it was lower than 5%, the difference was significant, their means were not equal, so there was a significant difference between pre-test self-monitoring scores & pre-test peer-monitoring scores.

Table 6: Comparison Means Postself & Postpeer

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Postself	31.34	173	6.184	.470
	Postpeer	30.45	173	6.317	.480

Table 7: Comparison Means Postself & Postpeer in T-Test

Table 7: Comparison Means Posttest & Postpeer in T-Test							
Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
			Lower	Upper			

Pair 1	Postself Postpeer	.890	2.642	.201	.494	1.287	4.431	172	.000
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By considering tables 7 & 8; it was obviously shown that the difference between pre & posttest was significant.

Table 8: Comparison Means in Independent Samples T-Test

		Leven's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Error of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Proficiency Test	Equal Variances Assumed	.021	.884	5.841	171	.000	3.106	.532	2.057	4.156
	Equal Variances Not Assumed			5.910	67.992	.000	3.106	.526	2.058	4.155

### Phase two

2- There is a positive correlation between type of monitoring and Iranian EFL learners' gender in their writing skill.

Table 9 is an independent sample T-test; by considering two types equal variances hypothesis, and inequality variances; the degree of significance was lower than 5%. Sig.(2-tailed) was .000, the difference was significant. Statistically, mean scores between boys and girls were not equal in writing activities. So, there was a significance difference relation in boys & girls writing activities.

Table 9: Comparison Means in T-Test

			Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
			Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
						Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pretesters Posttesters	-	- 3.76686	5.71120	.43421	-4.62393	-2.90978	- 8.675	172	.000
Pair 2	Preself PrePeer	-	1.497	2.528	.192	1.118	1.876	7.789	172	.000
Pair 3	Postself Postpeer	-	.890	2.642	.201	.494	1.287	4.431	172	.000

Regarding the result of table 10, the researcher could say that there was significance difference between pre-test raters scores, and post-test raters scores; it was meant that post-test raters scores were higher than pre-test raters scores; but there was no significant difference between the means of pre & post-test peer-monitoring, and self-monitoring scores. We concluded that statistically, there was no significant difference between the mean score of pre & post-test self-monitoring, and also pre & post-test peer-monitoring; it was meant that the perform composing description test on learners didn't have any significant effect on the result. There was no statistically bias on the response patterns of learners.

Although both of them were useful for providing challengeable students, and became useful for prosocial life, but self-monitoring helped them more to become aware of their weaknesses and strengths for increasing a useful way toward the quality and quantity of their written task, and peer-monitoring was occurred when the students achieved the recognition to evaluate the other peers' behavior, and it was obviously understood that it needed more training time to arrive at the level of recognition of each others' behavior. Self-monitoring had more effect than peer-monitoring on EFL Iranian learners in their writing activities.

Firstly, the researcher put the first question into investigation:

1-Do self-monitoring and peer- monitoring affect the Iranian EFL learner's writing ability differently?

It was clear from table 10, it was meant that positive self-monitoring coefficient (.203) was higher than liner absolute regression peer-monitoring coefficient (-0.31), so we concluded that there was positive, and significant direct relationship between self-monitoring & peer-monitoring in academic, and occupational learners' writing activities. Whenever self-monitoring went up, peer-monitoring was also increased; whenever self-monitoring has been decreased, peer-monitoring was also decreased, but in this research self-monitoring had more effect on learners' writing activities in comparing with peer-monitoring negative coefficient(-.031).

*Table 10: Coefficients a Postself & Postpeer*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.773	1.219		6.378	.000
	Postself	.203	.092	.387	2.210	.028
	Postpeer	-.031	.090	-.061	-.349	.727

2- Is there any correlation between type of monitoring and Iranian EFL learners' gender in their writing skill?

By applying regression it was indicated as table 16.

*Table 11: Pearson Correlations Postself & Postpeer & Proficiency*

		Postself	Postpeer	Proficiency
Postself	Pearson Correlation	1	.911**	.332**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	173	173	173
Postpeer	Pearson Correlation	.911**	1	.292**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	173	173	173
Proficiency	Pearson Correlation	.332**	.292**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	173	173	173

As you can see in table 12, Pearson correlation coefficient of writing skill in self-monitoring was higher than peer-monitoring, it was indicated that peer-monitoring had less effect than self-monitoring. Once, we have been considered dependent variable as proficiency test, we considered predictors as post-test self-monitoring & post-test peer-monitoring as follow:

*Table 12: Model Summary*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
						R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change
1	.333 <sup>a</sup>	.111	.100		3.081	.111	10.574	2	170	.000

*Table 13: ANOVA*

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	200.771	2	100.385	10.574	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1613.934	170	9.494		
	Total	1814.705	172			



Table 14: Correlation coefficient between Postself &amp; Postpeer

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	7.773	1.219		6.378	.000
	Postself	.203	.092	.387	2.210	.028
	Postpeer	-.031	.090	-.061	-.349	.727

Of course, adjusted R square model did not explain the effects very well. We had a model summary in table 12; and table 13, ANOVA statistically was shown this model. In table 14 liner regression, peer-monitoring coefficient was negative (-.031) and absolute value was less than self-monitoring coefficient (.203), so we have been induced that self-monitoring relation had more effect, and power than peer-monitoring. Then, we calculated the exact above relation again, this time we considered post testers as dependent variable and we considered predictors as post-test self-monitoring & post-test peer-monitoring as follow:

In table 15, self- monitoring variable coefficient (0.732) was more than peer-monitoring variable, and the difference was significant. By considering the degree of significance 0.123 which was referred to post-test peer-monitoring variable, it was shown that there was no significant relation, and peer-monitoring coefficient 0.165 was less than self-monitoring coefficient 0.732; it was proved that self-monitoring had more effect in comparing with peer-monitoring, we came to this conclusion that self-monitoring relationship was more significant, and it had more effect than peer-monitoring.

There was more significant relation between self-monitoring and peer-monitoring.

Table 15: Correlation coefficient between Postself &amp; Postpeer

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.325	1.436		.923	.357
	Postself	.732	.108	.689	6.747	.000
	Postpeer	.165	.106	.158	1.552	.123

In pre-test:

In table 16 showed, Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.913. Pearson correlation coefficient between two variables was close to +1 it was meant that there was thoroughly positive and direct relation between two variables.

Table 16: Pearson Correlations Preself &amp; Prepeer

		Preself	PrePeer
Preself	Pearson Correlation	1	.913**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	173	173
PrePeer	Pearson Correlation	.913**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	173	173

In post-test:

Table 17 showed that there was also a positive and direct relation between two variables, but less strong than in pre-test, because correlation coefficient was 0.911, and it was lower than pre-test 0.913.

Table 17: Pearson Correlations Postself & Postpeer

		Postself	Postpeer
Postself	Pearson Correlation	1	.911**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	173	173
Postpeer	Pearson Correlation	.911**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	173	173

Table 18: Comparison Means Postself & Postpeer in T- Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Postself - Postpeer	.890	2.642	.201	.494	1.287	4.431	172	.000

In table 18, because the degree of significance was lower than 5%, Sig.(2-tailed) was 0.000 , so the difference was significant, and the means of two scores were not equal. Of course, there was a positive relation between them; it was meant that whenever self-monitoring scores were high, peer-monitoring scores were also high both in pre & post-test.

In this study, self-monitoring had positive and important role to improve writing activities in English classroom, and it was dominated all the tasks that were covered by the teacher in class, and provided feedback for teachers to have beneficial recognition of learners to make good lesson plan, and it was facilitated learning writing tasks, how to be a professional writer. The role of goal setting and corrective feedback in writing activities were very important for learners who have been acted by self & peer-monitoring techniques. But, self-monitoring was much more considerable in this study than peer-monitoring, furthermore there was direct and positive relationship between these two techniques, whenever self-monitoring acted better, there was a good shape of peer-monitoring, and finally they could help learners to have a wide view of developing good paragraph writers in learning English as a second language for foreigners. We also faced to some good attitudes of learners for providing appropriate behaviors to inform them about their strengths and weaknesses in writing activities, especially in composing description paragraphs. Self-monitoring, and peer-monitoring techniques were facilitators' devices for learners which were emphasized in this study upon 173 EFL Iranian learners in Rashed English language Institute to show how important it was to be a good and skillful writer in English language both for teachers, and students. As you have seen before, there was no bias upon strong learners patterns to use peer-monitoring, because the test could not change the result of pre & post test. In this study, there was not so much significant difference among strong learners in their posttest. But their self-monitoring technique was increased that was related to their motivation through using the strategy. Goal setting was another important issue which helped learners during their writing tasks to follow an effective and direct method by using self & peer-monitoring strategies.

Cho et al. (2013) stated peer review interventions have not all produced positive results. Students can have considerable difficulty understanding the rationale behind peer feedback, judging the relative worth of peer evaluations, or knowing how the feedback, if implemented, will improve their writing (Hull, 1987). Students can receive feedback from peers, but without deeper understanding of what is contributing to the feedback or knowing whether the suggested changes are necessary; students may be led to making revisions to their writing that actually decrease writing quality. Therefore, knowing why nearly one-half of our participants did not improve their self-monitoring in response to peer feedback is critical. Students may better benefit from self-monitoring when they are aware of the role of self-monitoring in learning to write. Relatedly, explicit comparisons between self- and peer evaluation on self-writing that were not provided for students would help them reflect upon the gaps between the evaluations. Second, although students were provided with the self-monitoring interfaces, how the students used the

interfaces was not examined. How students used information would allow researchers to look into self-monitoring behaviors at a more detailed level. The results would reveal how students use the system for their self-monitoring. This information also would be important to design self-monitoring support because students in the computer environment are less likely to activate self-regulated learning strategies than those in the human-agent environment (Azevedo, 2005). Finally, qualitative analysis on reviews might reveal how feedback quality influences self-monitoring in learning to write. Students who receive quality feedback from peers may be more apt to accept suggestions and self-regulate to bridge the gap between self-evaluation and peer evaluation. By contrast, students who receive low quality feedback from peers may ignore suggestions and make less effort to bridge the gap between self- and other evaluation.

During observation, the learners were sensitive to their errors, and they received feedback from teacher, and the teacher sometimes helped them to monitor in right position, of course, few learners were worried about their mistakes and errors to detect by another classmate, they did not want to cooperate with another, but some of them were very active in cooperative tasks, so they eagerly asked for result of their writing by another peers.

In this study it was obviously understood that peer-monitoring among strong learners did not have any changes in their writing activities, with or without treatment it was something unnecessary to do, they needed some circumstances to know what exactly to do, and how they could use it in the system of writing procedure. Such techniques were needed a lot time and energy to know more about the learners to guide them according to their needs respectively in academic and social situation.

Self & peer-monitoring strategies were beneficial techniques in writing process on EFL Iranian learners who have been learning English language as a second language. By applying these two techniques in writing class activities, teachers could help them by receiving feedback from learners; different kinds of feedback would have been provided to improve the writing process in systematic way. Goal setting was another important issue to follow up the exact procedure for writing activities. Goal setting could help to find out learners' real needs to give them appropriate tasks. By conducting this research, we have been understood there was positive and direct relationship between self& peer-monitoring and they were complementary strategies which could be used at the same time in writing class activities.

## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

To make self-monitoring most effective, strategies should be used constantly and overtly at first and then faded to less frequent use and more subtle use across time (Stainback & Stainback, 1980). It is also important to ensure that students have learned the skills and behaviors that teachers want them to perform as they are using the self-monitoring strategies. To help maintain and generalize positive behavioral changes, self-monitoring should be combined with methods that allow students to evaluate themselves against their earlier performance and to reinforce themselves for their successes (Goldstein, Harootunian, & Conoley, 1994; Hallahan & Kauffman, 2000; Porter, 2002; Schunk, 1997; Smith, 2002; Stainback & Stainback, 1980; Vaughn, Bos, & Schumm, 2000).

The present research should be mentioned here that a particular plan was needed according to learners' needs, age, and level for providing goal, when it was possible for learners to set the goal at first stage of using self-monitoring and peer-monitoring strategies, then specified tasks were given, so they would have better motivation to participate in learning writing process. By defining them a goal setting, they have been cooperated in learning and they would have been arrived at the level of recognition to recognize their strengths and weaknesses. Of course, recognition level was not clearly manifested and we could not test it exactly weather the learners would have been achieved this level or not, but to some extent it could have been follow up by specified tasks. There have been lots of writing activities that were helpful for learners and they have been free to write, and to express their ideas, and feelings, so written tasks have been provided a good challenge among learners to monitor their own mistakes to follow a corrective feedback for their next writing part.

One of the pedagogical implications was that when self-monitoring, and peer-monitoring strategies were given during their learning writing task; they have been asked that they should be able to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses or to be able to evaluate the other peers' behaviors. Both strategies were useful for prosocial life that they wanted to exist in an environment in learning second language like English that was more important for them in any field such as their jobs or education.

The two questions in this study have been answered by analyzing data which were collected from further research by two options that one of them was enough cooperative activities, and the other one was required self-evaluation to monitor learners' own behavior.

Finally, we concluded that self-monitoring has been manifested as a strategy that was related to oneself, so the learners should have been acquired some knowledge by recognition level of themselves, much more reading tasks would be helpful for them to improve their writing, to write a good description paragraph, and to be a skillful person in this field. Both self & peer monitoring were important and significant strategies for learners in writing domain, It was discovered that achieving the level of recognition was very considerable to give them written appropriate tasks, because they should gather more information about themselves, and know each other to give a hand for their strengths and remove their weaknesses. Such implications have been needed to set the goals for learners, how and why the goals have been set in writing activities. It was also important to give them awareness about the target of written task, so learners could have been achieved a better understanding toward the goal and they could have been managed their behavior according to the purpose of written task, then the result would have been accepted. There was also significant and positive relationship between two Meta cognitive strategies self & peer monitoring that were shown to be useful methods for improving writing skill in any situation. The current research hopes that the result of this study will open new window for teachers, learners, and all staffs who are involved in teaching English as a second language to cover academic and social needs of learners and to answer how to be a good writer.

As Peterson (2010) mentioned Students feel a greater commitment to improving their writing when they have the autonomy to decide whether or not to incorporate the feedback in subsequent drafts. Students should always feel that they may use the feedback in their own way that the feedback is suggestive, rather than prescriptive. Feedback on writing is most valuable to students' writing development when it takes place at the beginning and middle stages of the writing process. This is the time when students can use the feedback to revise and edit their writing.

The researcher come to this conclusion that all teachers can identify their tasks according to learners' real needs and follow up some extra activities such as group working or cooperative tasks that feedback them appropriately in students. Although errors are inevitable, those learners who are involved with their real need task, it may help a lot to give them a corrective feedback. There is always no need to make them a draft or sample to do their writing task, of course, they need some rules to adopt their behavior to recognize their right or wrong behavior of learning, we can specify one appropriate strategy such as self-monitoring or peer- working, then it will clearly manage their needs, and writing process will facilitate better than the previous time, we can observe the results of our tasks sooner according to their needs. Aside from all techniques which we use in class, as I've observed in all my classes, learners who monitor themselves are good followers of system in writing process, and they will soon be a skillful person in their learning task.

### ***Limitation of the Study***

For using peer-monitoring strategy in writing classroom, we faced to some limitation that we should have been aware of recognition term which was necessary for peers, because they should have been arrived at the level of recognition, and it has been taken so much time for preparing the peers for the level of recognition to be able to evaluate the other peers according to specific evaluation area, and specific evaluation criteria that was identified by teacher in classroom, and we were not sure about them for the exact purpose of peer-monitoring in one classroom, because there was not any testable accurate way. So, before using this strategy, we should teach them how peers could evaluate their classmate's performance according to specific criteria that they recognized how to evaluate the peer's performance and they should have been arrived at the level of recognition.

Another limitation in this study was training. Training was a critical aspect of ensuring consistency and confidence in peer supporters. Essential specific training should have been developed in association with the defined role of the peer supporter within the peer-to-peer program. Some programs have been developed or have been adapted their own training program while others used external training programs.

By the learners performing It was critical to collect data on the effectiveness of the program and the peer supporter. If neither of them had performed effectively, it would be necessary to determine whether the cause is systemic or is related to the individual peer supporter. We have also understood that direct peer-monitoring had a very useful control mechanism which helped them to know how the learners perform and behave. On the other hand, indirect peer monitoring didn't have a good control mechanism because it was not interesting for organizing the programs.

One obvious problem was that it didn't account for the fact that some groups were generally more cooperative than the others. Thus, in some groups there might have been more needs to monitor than the others.

Another limitation of this study was the time of preparing learners for self & peer monitoring, and the time was not enough to show the real similarities, and differences between two important strategies.

The last limitation was teacher's feedback, which was very important for learners who needed the teacher's feedback on their writing task, effectiveness of two strategies self & peer- monitoring has been dependent on teacher's feedback that supported them during writing activities to follow up a real situation according to their needs.

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## **Appendix**

### *General English Proficiency Test Nelson*

**Name of the student:**.....

**Name of the school:**.....

**(Allotted time: 25 min )**



**Part one: Select the best answer.**

- 1- Alicia, .....the window please.  
a) opens                      b) open                      c) opened                      d) will open
- 2- The movie was.....the book.  
a) as good                      b) good                      c) good as                      d) as good as
- 3-Mery's hobbies include jogging, swimming, and .....  
a) to climb the mountain                      b) climb mountain  
c) to climb                      d) climbing mountains
- 4-Who is .....Marina or Sachiko?  
a) tallest                      b) tall                      c) taller                      d) the tallest
- 5- The concert will begin.....fifteen minutes.  
a) in                      b) on                      c) with                      d) about
- 6-I have only a .....Christmas cards left to write.  
a) few                      b) fewer                      c) less                      d) little
- 7-Each of the Olympic athletes.....for months, even years.  
a) have been training                      b) were training                      c) has been training                      d) train
- 8-You were..... the New York office before 2 p.m.

a) supposed call    b) supposed to call    c) supposed calling    d) suppose to call

9- If you're a good boy, we will let you ..... the TV tonight

a) to watch                      b) watch                      c) watching                      d) that you watch

**Part 2: Select the one underlined word or a phrase that is incorrect.**

- 10-I heard the front doorto be opened and my wife came in.  
a) heard                      b)front door                      c) to be opened                      d) came in
- 11- "She should have goneshopping," I thought, but after waiting for ten minutes, I telephoned her mother.  
a) should have gone                      b) shopping                      c) waiting                      d) telephoned
- 12-Mr. Olsen is telephoning a American Red Cross for help.  
a)is                      b)a                      c) Red                      d) for
- 13- "You should have left me a note," I said. "If you had, I would have known where you were."  
a) have left                      b) a note                      c) had                      d) were
- 14-Petra intends to starting her own software business in a few years.  
a) intends                      b) starting                      c) software                      d) few
- 15-Each day after school, John run five miles.  
a) each                      b)after                      c) run                      d)miles
- 16-He goes never to the company softballgames.  
a)never                      b)the                      c)softball                      d) games
- 17-Do you know the student who books were stolen?  
a) do                      b)know                      c)who                      d) were
- 18-Jennifer will spend her vacation either in Singapore nor India.  
a) will                      b) her                      c) in                      d) nor
- 19- I told the salesman that I was not interesting in buying the latest model.  
a)told                      b) that                      c)interesting                      d) buying
- 20- Fredrick used work for a multinational corporation when he lived in Malaysia.  
a) used work                      b)multinational                      c) when                      d) lived

**Part 3: Select the best answer (vocabulary)**

- 21-Many cultures have special ceremonies to celebrate a person's .....of ..... passage into adulthood.  
a) write                      b) right                      c) writ                      d) rite
- 22- Do you .....where the nearest grocery store is?  
a)know                      b)no                      c) now                      d) not
- 23-Peter says he can't.....our invitation to dinner tonight.  
a) accept                      b)except                      c) expect                      d)accent
- 24-Smoking is dangerous for your health, try to.....it.  
a) quite                      b)quit                      c) quiet                      d)quick
- 25-He doesn't work but he gets a good..... from his investments.  
a) wage                      b) earning                      c) income                      d) salary



## INFLUENTIAL SITUATIONAL FACTORS ON ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES READING MOTIVATION

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### ABSTRACT

The study intended to examine the conditions under which Iranian students were more motivated to engage in English for academic purposes (EAP) reading activities and identify possible factors underlying learners' indicated motivation for EAP reading. To this end, five student informants were asked to talk about their own EAP reading experiences and discuss their reading preferences in light of pedagogical issues. Based on interviews with the student informants; a questionnaire containing 18 statements describing various situations was constructed and distributed to 422 medical students. The findings indicate that learners were more willing to read when there were no translated versions of the textbooks available; Special terminologies were explained; and English vocabulary was taught. Also, Text facilitation and Reading requirements and teacher facilitation were identified as factors underlying students' EAP reading motivation. Significant differences were found for male and female participants. The research may be an aid to those teachers and instructors who wish to enhance their students' motivation to read.

**KEYWORDS:** English for academic purposes (EAP); EAP reading motivation; EFL reading

### INTRODUCTION

High school students are required to study English in almost all Iran's EFL academic or non-academic environments. The major goal of most teaching and learning is for students to pass the Konkoor (Iranian National University Entrance Examination) or succeed in exams administered to judge that people are qualified enough to take a job. reading comprehension, a sine qua non in such exams, is tested in passages usually no longer than a hundred words or so. Thus, teachers have no way of focusing on the capacities and strategies required for reading lengthier parts.

As students' enter university, the importance of English study may seem to gradually fade away in the syllabus. In fact, apart from English majors, most students attend a limited number of English courses, which in some majors continues as long as the freshman year. Despite the former assertions, English influences students' academic success even more critically in almost all other non-language related courses. The real situation is that in many specialized areas, books translated in to Persian are rare and university professors are obliged to use imported English textbooks designed for native English speakers accompanied by lectures and presentations in Persian. As a result of limited or no more required English courses after the first year in university, EFL teachers are usually not available to guide students over from a TALO (text as a linguistic object) to a TAVI (text as a vehicle of information) (Dudley-Evans and St. John, 1998) reading mode, leaving them to struggle on their own. Some of the highly motivated and more proficient EFL learners gradually develop advanced-level reading abilities despite the absence of fluency in their speech and writing. Others, at some point of their long and lonely journey, lose confidence, interest, and the momentum to keep up, and eventually turn to translated versions of their texts to survive exams and assignments. 'Their English proficiency therefore deteriorates, albeit part of the reason for content-area teachers to require students to read English texts is to improve their EFL reading ability as a byproduct' (Huang, 2006, p 272).

Based on the previously stated assertions; the present study was conducted to identify the conditions under which Iranian university students would be more willing to engage in spontaneous EAP reading (English for academic purposes). It is assumed that becoming aware of these conditions able us to provide pedagogical assistance and create a more positive learning environment, even when opportunities for formal classroom instruction are rare. In the following parts, some studies on EAP reading are presented. The focus is then directed to motivational studies in foreign/second language learning, and finally to the social-cultural influences of motivation on learning behaviors.

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### ***EAP Reading***

Skill development has received special attention in many classroom studies on reading and EAP reading. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) for example, recognized several macro- and micro-reading skills required for EAP students. The macro-skills include the ability to utilize learners' present knowledge to perceive new material and map this new knowledge onto their schema. Most notable among micro skills are: identifying logical relationships, definitions, generalizations, examples, explanations and predictions, and telling fact from opinion. Note that, developing these abilities does not happen overnight and requires a lot of practice, and in turn, high motivation to be sustained.

Another aspect of EAP reading, elaborated upon in the relevant literature, is the ease/difficulty of texts. Hauptman (2000) argues that the stance that holds language and text length as major determinants for the ease and difficulty of L2 reading texts is no longer tenable. Drawing on a schema theory framework, he asserts that the comprehensibility of L2 texts with background schemata, levels of text signaling, and the language are important factors, with the comprehensibility of L2 texts with background schemata factor; the most prominent. In a similar vein, Hauptman (2000) contended that readers with a sound background knowledge but low language ability were able to deduce needed information from texts. Signaling is the second factor that determines the accessibility of texts to a great extent. In this regard, Hauptman (2000) advised teachers to replace linguistically simplified texts with authentic ones that are sufficiently signaled. Highly signaled texts should contain both iconic signaling and non-iconic signaling. Hauptman (2000) believes that the amount of redundancy produced by the signaling available within the text should become the criterion for textbook selection.

We believe along with Huang (2006) that:

Most studies on the teaching and learning of L2 reading make one believe that, on the readers' part, handling the cognitive aspects of L2 reading should be the exclusive approach. Learner motivation may be a concern, but it seems to have only a minor peripheral role in the learning process. The implicit assumption behind the cognition-only approach is that whatever is taught will be learned. In reality, learners are seldom as ready to learn as most teachers expect them to be. Anticipated effects of teaching in terms of cognitive development cannot succeed in the absence of a willingness to read (p. 373).

It is fortunate that the topic of EAP reading motivation has not been totally neglected in the literature of applied linguistics. Dubin et al. (1986), before devoting an entire volume to discussing various cognitive issues, strongly stresses the importance of motivation in L2 EAP reading. According to Eskey (1986) we must give some thought to what motivates people to read, or not to read, anything. (p. 3). Despite the fact that very different reasons motivate learners to read, they may share similar learning needs at the learning situation level that should be satisfied in order to sustain the learning effort, i.e., reading. Regarding learners' perspectives, inquiring about how they thought they would be more willing to engage in EA reading, would be meaningful.

### ***L2 Motivation***

To many researchers motivation is a key determinant in second language learning (e.g., Gardner et al., 1997). A vast majority of L2 motivation studies before the 1990s were colored by Gardner's socio-educational theory (1985) and the distinction between integrative and instrumental orientation, with the former believed to be a more powerful indicator of L2 achievement. In the 1990s, scholars reached a consensus that motivation research in the field of applied linguistics need to take account of other social milieus besides situational characteristics pertinent to L2 classrooms (Crookes and Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994, 2001; Gardner and Tremblay, 1994; Oxford, 1994; Oxford and Shearin, 1994) so that theories may account for different social contexts and be more educationally friendly and meaningful to L2 classroom teachers. The following review of the literature will focus specifically on studies concerning these two aspects.

Following the socio-educational approach, Warden and Lin's (2000) surveyed over 2000 non-English-major college students in Taiwan and found that the learners possess instrumental motivation. Moreover, the researchers identified another type of motivation and termed it "required"; despite the findings, integrative motivation was absent. Warden and Lin's (2000) called for a better understanding of exactly what motivates EFL students.

Crookes and Schmidt (1991) are pioneers in respect to considerations of classroom characteristics related to L2 motivation. They introduced theories from educational psychology and analyzed learner motivation from the micro, classroom, syllabus, and the out-of-class, long-term levels. Likely, Dörnyei (1990, 1994) extended the concept of L2 motivation to include a learner level and a learning situation level. The extended perspectives brought more promise and new perspectives to motivation research.

Dörnyei and Otto (1998) argued that motivation is fluctuating and influenced by many internal and external forces. They speak of the Action Sequence and Motivational Influences as the two main dimensions in their process model. The former represents the process of motivation from goals to intentions, to actions, to accomplishment of the goals, and to final evaluation. The latter include "the energy sources and motivational forces that underlie and fuel the process" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 85).

Dörnyei and his colleagues (Dörnyei and Kormos, 2000; Dörnyei, 2002; Kormos and Dörnyei, 2004) investigated L2 motivation with regard to the task-based research paradigm. Unlike previous research which focus mostly on the relationship between measured L2 motivation and global L2 proficiency, Dörnyei et al.'s studies employed observable situated language behavior as criterion variables, thus more precisely capturing the effects of motivation in the "motivation-behavior-achievement" chain. Their findings (Dörnyei and Kormos, 2000) confirmed the assumption that situation-specific motives, rather than the general motives, have stronger impact on learners' task engagement.

### ***The social-cultural influence on motivation***

The effect on learning motivation of social and cultural issues has been examined in more detail outside the realm of applied linguistics. Pintrich (2003) and Jarvela (2001), for instance, pointed out the insufficiency of early motivational theories in taking the individual learner as the unit of analysis and in focusing mainly on the motivational operation from the inside out. They reminded us of the importance of contexts and cultures where the operation of motivation is from the outside in. Similarly, in the self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000), the focus is directed to examining the social-contextual conditions that elicit and sustain intrinsic motivation. Ryan and Deci (2000) hold that; extrinsic motivation may be transformed and become self-determined through internalization and integration, provided that learners' needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy are well satisfied.

A few studies carried out in Asian contexts stand in sharp contrast with those developed in Western ones. Littlewood's (1999) taxonomy of autonomy is most relevant here. He defines reactive autonomy, as opposed to traditional proactive autonomy, as one that enables learners to engage in learning activities autonomously once a direction has been initiated by an authoritative figure (e.g. the teacher). This kind of autonomy, although neglected by major motivation theories, has a special educational significance in social contexts where power and authority are highly valued. Similarly, Iyengar and Lepper (1999) compared the effect of choice on intrinsic motivation between Anglo and Asian American children. The findings indicate that personal choice was more conducive to enhancing motivation for the Anglo independent selves, whereas choices made by trusted authority figures worked best for the Asian interdependent selves.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Like any other activity, motivation is one of the most important factors in the process of learning to read and reading to learn since the lack of willingness to read makes any reading instruction far less effective. Although the more influential language-level and learner-level motivation is mostly pre-determined and less subject to change, there should be things a teacher can do at the learning situation level to support students in this process. The present study investigates learner perspectives on what situational factors may motivate them to read EAP texts. The areas of interest are associated with Dörnyei's (1994) learning situation level, and Crookes and Schmidt's (1991) micro and classroom levels. The former assertions are formulated in to the following research questions:

1. What are the conditions under which learners are most willing to read texts for EAP purposes?
2. Are there any commonalities underwriting learners' indicated motivation for EAP reading?
3. To what degree do male and females differ in terms of the factors?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Instruments*

Huang's questionnaire (2006) was used as basis for constructing the questionnaire in the present study. However, since the questionnaire was intended for the Taiwanese context, the researchers assumed it might be inappropriate to apply it to the Iranian context. As an alternative, the researchers repeated Huang's procedures in constructing the questionnaire and made the necessary modifications. The procedures (followed after Huang) and modifications are as follows: Five non English major students were asked to come in for semi-structured interviews and reflect on their EAP reading experiences. The participants were experienced in reading English content-area textbooks. The interviews were audio recorded and repeatedly listened to for information regarding what made the interviewees continue their efforts under pedagogical settings. Based on the obtained information, the researchers constructed 18 statements to describe learning situations in which learners might be more motivated to engage in EAP reading. The same five students then reviewed the questionnaire items and commented on the wordings. Based on the comments, the final version of the questionnaire was produced. The questionnaire was in the form of five point-Likert scale and required the learners to choose between Very Willing to Read (5) and Very Unwilling to Read (5). The final English version of the questionnaire is presented in the Appendix. Note that the original version was in the form of a seven point Likert scale which was reduced to a five point Likert scale in the present study. Moreover, the number of students who were invited to come in and talk about their reading experiences was increased to five. The reason of which is obtaining more detail.

### *Participants*

Four hundred and twenty two male (n=211) and female (n=211) students participated in the research project. The learners were sophomore volunteers from one of medical schools of the Iranian Azad universities (the name and location of the university is kept confidential on the request of the university authorities) who studied medicine.

### *Data collection procedure*

The participants replied to the items on the questionnaire while seated for their final exams. Caution was exercised to prevent the students from copying each other's answers. Later on, the data was subjected to SPSS analysis. Descriptive statistics and factor analysis was used to answer the research questions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 displays the mean and standard deviation for the 18 items. Five items, namely: 'There are no translated versions of the textbooks' (item 17); 'Special terminologies are explained'; (item 14); 'English vocabulary is taught' (item 9); 'reading skills and strategies are taught' (item 15); and 'the organization and structure of the articles are explained' (item 16) had the five highest average scores among the learners. In other words, the participants were more willing to read the English texts under these conditions. While, 'Teachers are available to answer my questions encountered in reading' (item1) had the lowest mean and highest standard deviation. Meaning that the average student expressed a lower than normal willingness to read without teacher assistance.

*Table 1: Descriptive statistics for the 18 statements*

Item	n	M	SD
1. Teachers are available to answer my questions encountered in reading	422	2.83	1.37
2. Key points are highlighted in the texts	422	3.29	1.21
3. I am required to do oral reports for my reading	422	3.17	1.20
4. I am required to participate in class discussion for the part I have to read	422		
3.14	1.16		
5. The teacher asks us to answer post-reading questions	422	3.17	1.11
6. I am required to do written reports for my reading	422	2.85	1.36
7. The organization and layout of the books are easy to follow	422	3.23	1.20
8. New vocabularies is limited in the texts	422	3.20	1.16
9. English vocabulary is taught	422	3.34	1.17
10. The books are written in simple grammar	422	3.28	1.18
11. The exams are directly based on the English reading	422	3.21	1.32
12. The sentence structures and grammar are explained	422	3.28	1.13
13. The weekly reading coverage is clearly assigned	422	3.29	1.14



14. Special terminologies are explained	422	3.37	1.13	
15. Reading skills and strategies are taught	422	3.32	1.17	
16. The organization and structure of the articles are explained	422	3.31	1.12	
17. Lack of translated versions of textbooks	422	3.44	1.14	
18. There are clear graphs, tables, and illustrations in the texts	422	3.23	1.15	

Note: Scores of variables ranged from 1 to 5.

However, high standard deviation indicates a high variation of perception on this issue among the learners. For some students, there was a higher probability of reading in English when there was teacher assistance. For others, teacher assistance may lower their motivation to read. The availability of teacher assistance may cause quite different reactions from students. This calls for more caution on the part of the teacher. Apart from item 1, the following items had the lowest means: 'I am required to do written reports for my reading' (item 6); 'I am required to participate in class discussion for the part I have to read' (item 4); 'I am required to do oral reports for my reading' (item 3) and 'The teacher asks us to answer post-reading questions' (item 5). Broadly speaking, students showed stronger motivation to read when there was no Persian translation of the book available and the learners were aided in the reading process. Compared to the various types of assistances provided to them; requirements, in the form of exams, quizzes, or reports, had the least effect in motivating students to read. However, all items except the one on teacher assistance and writing reports were rated relatively high between means of 3.44 and 3.14 out of the highest possible score of 5. These items were situation-specific and represented areas which teachers can work on. While these situation-specific items were not compared with the possibly stronger learner motivational dispositions, the findings relatively support Dörnyei and Kormos's (2000) assertion about the strong impact of situation-specific motives and give more promise to teacher intervention.

#### Factor analysis

In order to check the suitability of the data for factor analysis, the researcher assessed the Determinant of the R-matrix, Bartlett's test of sphericity (1954) and the Kaiser-Meyer-olikin (1970, 1974) value. Inspection of the determinant of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of the determinant value above 0.00001 ( $p=0.592$ ), Kaiser-Meyer-olikin value ( $p=.701$  &  $>.6$ ) exceeded the recommended value and Bartlett's test of sphericity reached statistical significance ( $p=.000$  &  $<0.05$ ), supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. Following pre-analysis, the 18-questionnaire items were subjected to a principle component factor analysis using a direct oblimin rotation procedure. On the bases of Kaiser's criterion, the scree plot, and parallel analysis, a two factor solution was selected. The pattern structure of the principle components analysis and the items loading on each factor are shown in table 2. As indicated in the table, items 10 and 7 with factor loadings above .40; load on factor one, based on the items, the first factor was labelled, *Text Facilitation*. The second factor contains three items with factor loadings above .40. The items are related to different forms of requirements given to students (items 9 and 12) and teacher facilitation (item 16); therefore the second factor was labelled '*reading requirements and teacher facilitation*'.

Table 2: Factor analysis of EAP reading motivation (N=18)

No	Items	F1	F2
Factor1: Text Facilitation			
7	The organization and layout of the books are easy to follow.	.529	-
18	There are clear graphs, tables, and illustrations in the texts.	.508	-
Factor2: Reading requirements and teacher facilitation			
9	English vocabulary is taught	-	.514
12	The sentence structures and grammar are explained	-	-.573
16	The organization and structure of the articles are explained	-	-.510

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for each factor

Factor	M
SD	
1- Text Facilitation (k=2)	
Male (N=211)	6.30
1.86	
Female (N=211)	5.05
2.14	
Total N=(422)	
5.68	2.10

2- Reading requirements and teacher facilitation ( $k=3$ )

Male (N=211)	9.88
1.94	
Female (N=211)	9.86
2.07	
Total N=(422)	9.87
2.00	

17% of the variance for the participants' EAP reading motivation is explained by the two factors. The findings indicate that Teacher Facilitation was the most important element. The items described the assistance learners need in the technical decoding of their texts. Lack of teacher presence in the learners' learning-to-read and reading-to-learn process made the EAP reading tasks seem unconquerable for a certain group of insecure readers. The need for language teachers' facilitation was evident from the results. This factor coincides with Dörnyei's (1994) teacher-specific motivational components of the learning situation level under his three-level motivation framework. Reading Requirements is a controversial issue in the motivation literature. Older motivation theories stress the role of choice and autonomy and assume that their absence may result demotivation. More recently, the role of choice and autonomy has been reevaluated by considering Asian social contexts and collectivist culture (Littlewood, 1999; Pintrich, 2003; Ryan and Deci, 2000). Iyengar and Lepper (1999) further provided empirical evidence for the motivational value of decisions made by trusted authoritative figures. The findings of the present study seem to support the more recent view with pieces of evidence from Asian students' reactive autonomy and their interdependent selves. Results obtained from research on "requirement motivation" (Warden and Lin, 2000) should be implemented in EFL teaching. However, since the "requirement"-related items were rated lower by participants, teachers should be cautious in maneuvering requirements together with other types of facilitations.

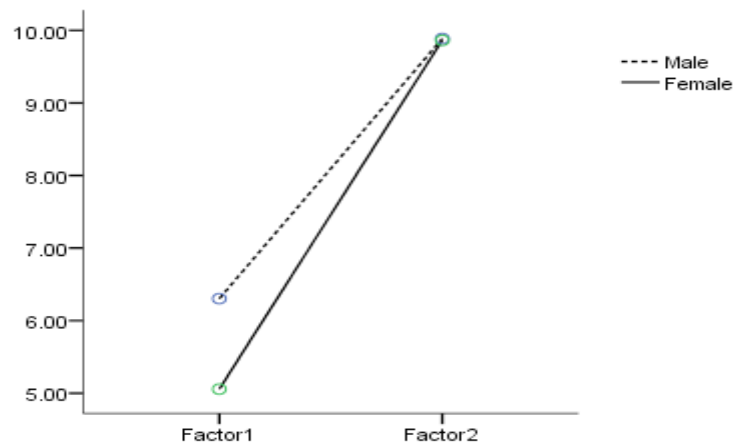
Although Text Facilitation is less prominent in learning motivation, it appeared to be an important factor in EAP reading motivation at the learning situation level. Texts that contain illustrations, highlights and signaling, accessible vocabulary and grammar, and clear organization, enhance the student's motivation to read. The findings accord with Hauptman's (2000) reading ease/difficulty conception and further indicate a new source of motivation from outside the learner, outside the immediate classroom and wider social contexts. Motivation may drive from the object of study in its format and/or reader friendliness. Taking the learners needs into account, such facilitative materials provide the initial confidence in readers which may trigger reading motivation (Huang, 2006).

It may be concluded from the findings that EFL teachers can implement means to enhance learners' motivation to read EAP texts. This requires assistance from both guiding teachers and illustrative reading texts that can help remove obstacles encountered in EAP reading as well as efforts to regulate the completion of the work. It is assumed that adjusting the environmental factors toward learner needs, better prepares and enhances students' willingness to engage in EAP reading.

***Differences in motivating EAP factors between male and female learners***

In order to determine whether the two factors differ between males and females, the extracted factors were subjected to a mixed between-within analysis of variance, with gender as between subjects factor and the mean score of the items loading on each factor as a within subject factor. Figure 1 illustrates the means of the two factors for males and females. The results indicate that a significant difference existed for the interaction effect of EAP motivating factors (Wilks Lambda = .95,  $F(1, 420) = 21.15$ ,  $p = .000$ , partial eta square = .048), the main effect of EAP motivating factors (Wilks Lambda = .297,  $F(1, 420) = 995.44$ ,  $p = .000$ , partial eta square = .703) and the main effect of groups ( $F(1, 420) = 19.53$ ,  $p = .000$ , partial eta square = .044). In other words, the results indicated that significant differences in profiles between groups existed; the entire sample shows differences across the two factors, and each group has different profiles.

The research favoured from two t-tests in order to assess the difference between male and female learners for each factor. The results of the analysis indicate a significant difference between more males and females for factor 1 ( $t(420) = 6.36$ ,  $P < .05$ ), and a non-significant difference for factor 2 ( $t(420) = .121$ ,  $P > .05$ ). In other words, 'Text Facilitation (factor 1), was a more motivating factor for male students. Descriptive statistics for the factors are presented in Figure 1.



## CONCLUSION

Text Facilitation and Reading requirements and teacher facilitation were factors underlying learners' indicated motivation for EAP reading. A significant difference was identified for factor1 between male and female students. The researchers suggest the following based on the findings of the study:

- 1- Contrary to Huang's (2006) term "one-to-one consultation" focuses on individual needs and could lead to more autonomous learning. It may be initiated by students, themselves and be tailored to meet their needs. There are times when dictionaries and other resources fail to help many EFL students fully understand what they are reading. As an alternative, learners need someone to resort to. In other words, "the provision of individual consultation gives students security and confidence" Huang (2006, p. 380).
- 2- Generally speaking, students are at times displeased about requirements, yet, they are usually a very powerful motivator in bringing students to action (Huang, 2006). For instance, encouraging students to use English texts but testing them merely on the bases of limited sources provided in the native language, lowers the incentive to read the original texts. Exam questions should be closely tied to the reading materials, making sure that reading the text itself is the road to exam success (Huang, 2006).
- 3- Students claim that they are more motivated to read when texts provide good non-linguistic facilitation through illustrations, having key points highlighted, limiting the amount of new vocabulary, using less complicated sentence structures, showing clear organization and layout. This could be used as bases for designing textbooks in simplified international edition and further modifying them to include the previously asserted language learning features.

## Limitations of the study

The present study focuses on Iranian medical students. Considering students from other majors and universities could have different results.

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### Appendix

If you are required to use only English textbooks in content areas, please indicate your willingness to read the English texts under the following situations between 1-VW=Very willing; 2-W=Willing; 3-N=Neutral; 4-UW=Unwilling; 5-VUW=Very unwilling

Item	VW	W	N	UW	VUW
1. Teachers are available to answer my questions encountered in reading					
2. Key points are highlighted in the texts					
3. I am required to do oral reports for my reading					
4. I am required to participate in class discussion for the part I have to read					
5. The teacher asks us to answer post-reading questions					
6. I am required to do written reports for my reading					
7. The organization and layout of the books are easy to follow					
8. New vocabularies is limited in the texts					
9. English vocabulary is taught					
10. The books are written in simple grammar					
11. The exams are directly based on the English reading					

12. The sentence structures and grammar are explained
  13. The weekly reading coverage is clearly assigned
  14. Special terminologies are explained
  15. Reading skills and strategies are taught
  16. The organization and structure of the articles are explained
  17. Lack of translated versions of textbooks
  18. There are clear graphs, tables, and illustrations in the texts
  - I. Please specify your gender
-

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHING CONVERSATION THROUGH ROLE PLAY AND THE  
STUDENTS' SPEAKING DEVELOPMENT

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**ABSTRACT**

Role-plays provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate how to use English in real life situations and make them focus more on communication than on grammar. Oral presentations like conversations are a great way for students to practice their English skills. Therefore, this paper makes an attempt to investigate whether teaching conversation through role play affects the students' speaking development. The participants were included 50 Iranian junior high students in Iran which were interviewed for data collection. In this experimental survey, the findings showed that participants who received the treatment demonstrated 21% improvement in speaking skill. Thus, the findings suggested that teaching conversation through role play is supposed to be an effective technique in promoting students' speaking ability.

**KEYWORDS:** role-play, conversation, speaking development, teaching, communicative needs

**INTRODUCTION**

Role-plays provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate how to use English in real life situations and make them focus more on communication than on grammar. Engaging the students in role-play teaching encourages them to take an active role in the process of learning (Enyedi & Medgyes, 1998). Also, it creates realistic learning environment in which the students can learn the materials better (Van Ments, 1989). As a matter of fact, role plays can be an effective tool for creating an active communication among people in an educational manner. They are ways for people to be empowered to express themselves in a safe and supportive setting (Bluebird, 2001). Role-playing may also refer to role training where people rehearse situations in preparation for a future performance and to improve their abilities within a role (Andrew Rilstone, 1994).

There are numerous definitions about role-play. Morris (1989) states that role-play is any speaking activity when you either put yourself into somebody else's shoes, or when you stay in your own shoes but put yourself into an imaginary situation! The definition used for this study is from Aronson and Carlsmith who "described the role playing study as 'an experiment in which the subject is asked to behave as if he [or she] were a particular person in a particular situation' (1968, p. 26).

According to Brown (2001), "role-play minimally involves (a) giving a role to one or more members of a group and (b) assigning an objective or purpose that participants must accomplish." Brown suggested that role-play can be conducted with a single person, in pairs or in groups, with each person assigned a role to accomplish an objective (p. 183).

Stern (1983) suggested "role playing helps the individual to become more flexible" and "develop a sense of mastery in many situations." (p. 213). Also, she claimed that through role play, L2 learners can experience many kinds of situations in which they will use the language; and as they develop a sense of mastery in them, they should be able to apply the language more easily to new situations (p.213).



Oral presentations like conversations are a great way for students to practice their English skills. The extra pressure of knowing they're going to be in front of the classroom provides students with some great extrinsic motivation for staying on task and learning the materials better. This study is started by going through presentation basics with the group, then assigning an oral presentation every week.

In this paper, it is decided to express the effect(s) of teaching dialogue by using role play technique. Also, the activities that involve the students in the learning process will be discussed. Thus, various effective activities will be used for teaching English real conversations to EFL students in order to not only teach the techniques effectively but also apply them practically.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the effect of using role play in Iranian ESL students at high school level to better communicate in second language. It was decided that the best method for this investigation is to adopt qualitative research design. Wallace (2008) identifies qualitative research as an investigative method for understanding a phenomenon that elicits human condition and social problem. In addition, the researcher is the main instrument of analyzing the data. Personally, the researcher is interested in this topic because he has been taught in an EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context where it was very difficult to gain access to a fluent communicative of English language.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to help students improve their speaking and overall communicative skills, some exercises are designed and conducted that include several role play activities for the students to practice and use English in a more meaningful way as a practical language. "Role-playing exercises come in many forms and educators should not be reluctant to experiment with their style and structure" (McDaniel, 2000). He also claims that there are four basic elements that are essential for the success of any role-playing activity. The first element is that the activity should build on knowledge the students already possess about a particular historical context. A teacher cannot expect students to role-play about something they have no prior knowledge. The second element is to design the roles to maximize students' involvement and conflict. This conflicting perspective would be considered an essential part of the students involving in the teaching process. The third element is to set up a specific situation. Do not let the students go without giving them a focal point for debate. The last element is the instructor's limited involvement and willingness to be flexible. The instructor needs to guide the students along, but not overbear the conversation and let the students take their own path to understanding (McDaniel, 2000, pp, 357-360). By following these four basic elements, the entire educators can have a successful role-playing activity during their teaching process.

Role-playing activities introduce "real-world" situations to the students (Oberle, 2004). Van Ments (1983) identified three general advantages to role-playing activities: first, they are positive and safe in dealing with attitudes and feelings; second, they provide a safe venue for expressing personal and sometimes unpopular attitudes and opinions; and third, "role-playing" is highly motivating as the majority of students enjoy these types of activities and become more inspired learners.

Ladousse (2004) indicated that "role play is one of a whole gamut of communicative techniques which develops fluency in language students, which promotes interaction in the classroom, and which increases motivation." (p.7) In addition, he pointed out that role play encourages peer learning and sharing the responsibility for learning between teacher and student. He suggested role play to be "perhaps the most flexible technique in the range" of communicative techniques, and with suitable and effective role-play exercises, teachers can meet an infinite variety of communicative needs. (Ladousse, 2004, p. 7)

Regarding the significance of these communicative needs that were discussed earlier made the researchers think of this issue as a critical and challenging topic. Considering the issue of the learners' development through teaching conversation by role play technique was such a new topic to discuss. The task of the teacher of foreign languages is to enable the students to progress gradually from teacher/course book controlled utterances to complete linguistic autonomy. So, the present study attempts to explore the use of role play technique as a teaching strategy in ESL students in Iranian junior highs.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

This study aims to answer the following question:

“Does teaching conversation through role play have any effect on the students’ speaking development in Iranian junior high students?”

According to the hypothesis, teaching conversation through role play affects positive on the students’ speaking development in Iranian junior high students.

## METHOD AND MATERIALS

### *The Design of the Study*

This is an experimental research, in which the respondents were divided into two groups of ‘experimental’ and ‘control’. For the experimental group, the students were taught the dialogue by using role-play while, in the control group, the students were taught the dialogue by using traditional method. After accomplishing the dialogue, a post-test was given to both groups in order to evaluate their progress.

### *The Participants of the Study*

There were two 25-student groups, naming groups A and B, participating in this study which all of them were chosen by making the best utilization of interview technique. The interviews were conducted individually with fifty students (twenty five males and twenty five females) who were asked to participate in the study ranging in age from 14 to 16 in order to gain a deep understanding of the subjects’ English background and the level of communicative fluency. Mostly, these students own similar English backgrounds; and, they were selected in this way in order to make the results of the study more reliable.

### *The Location of the Study*

This study was conducted in Iranian ORIAS (the organization of Islamic Azad University Schools named SAMA in Persian) and Private high schools. They are ranked among the best high schools according to The SCIENTIST magazine (translated as DANESHMAND in Persian) that are annually published in Iran.

### *The Data Collection Method*

As Merriam (1988) explained, interview utilization is one of the major sources to obtain qualitative data from subjects. Hence, the method of conducting an interview is one of the most popular means to investigate and inquire data from one phenomenon.

### *The Procedure of the Study*

In group A, that is our control group, a conversation, included in appendix I, is taught to the learners by utilizing traditional method of conversation. In group B, which is the experimental group, the same material is released to the learners by utilizing role play technique of teaching conversation. This difference between the teaching methods of these two groups is considered as the treatment. After teaching the conversation, a same test was administered among these two groups. This test includes both communicative and practical goals. Simple comparisons of the results show that group B had been succeeded more than group A that lacks treatment.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the authors are concerned with whether teaching conversation through role play differs from teaching conversation in traditional method in terms of the students’ speaking development. Having to say this, the researchers released a pre-test presenting the primary students speaking development scores.

*Table 1: the results of pre- and post-test regarding treatment*

N o	Group	Pre-test	Action taken (treatment)	Post-test	Differences
1	Control	69%	Teaching dialogue in traditional method	70%	1 %
2	Experimental	68%	Teaching dialogue through role-play	89%	21%

As the table 1 presents, both groups A and B acted rather similarly on the pre-test, containing some oral proficiency questions on the conversation, which groups A and B scored 69 percent and 68 percent, respectively. The treatment was supposed to cause the students’ speaking to be developed. Afterwards, the participants participated in the post-test, which comprises rather similar questions to the pre-test on the conversations comprehension with the goal of measuring speaking ability, in that as the table 1 manifested the experimental group (B) obtained an astonishing results (21 %).

The improvement of the students' speaking performance in this study might be due to some benefits of role-play technique and this result appeared to confirm the result of a previous studies. Furness (1976, in Huang, 2008) states that a student can enjoy and profit from a role play experience "in terms of improved communication skills, creativity, increased social awareness, independent thinking, verbalization of opinions, and development of values and appreciation of the art of drama". It is in line with the statement of Siwu (2005) that the implementation of the role-playing technique had improved the students' speaking skill. It is revealed through the improvement of the students' speaking performance and their self-confidence.

## CONCLUSION

All skills are equally important more so speaking skill as you have to communicate with people in person at your job and in your normal life. There are many more wonderful activities and suggestions for speaking development. Regarding the importance of speaking skill, the authors made an attempt to provide an academic research to promote this for EFL learners. The researchers tried to provide a significant teaching and learning framework for speaking development. Due to the mentioned reasons, and also the finding of this research, we concluded that teaching conversation through role-play, as just one of the numerous helpful techniques, is of utmost importance in speaking development.

Based on the findings of this study, the strengths, and the weaknesses of this technique, then the suggestions are made. Nevertheless, the English teachers should consider some aspects in implementing the technique. First, the English teachers should set the time as effective as possible by considering the length of time allotted in every activity. Second, the English teachers should deliver the explanation using clear voice, not too slowly and not too quickly. Third, the English teachers should use Indonesian language if the students find it hard to understand the explanation. Fourth, the English teachers should provide the students with lists of vocabulary or ask them to always bring dictionary since they still have poor vocabulary. Fifth, the English teachers should distribute high achiever students in each group that they can help their low achiever friends in their group. Sixth, the English teachers should approach and guide students when they work on their tasks. And seven, the English teachers should be patient since this technique employs a lot of time and activities at every stage.

## Study Limitations

This study is done in a context in which English is spoken as a foreign language. Seemingly, the authors do not believe whether the results of this paper could be generalized to other contexts or not. It must be noted that the study participants were the teenagers whom are considered English foreign language learners. Other groups of learners can be studied in the target situation as well. The teacher who teaches the conversation should be native or native-like. The conversation also must be a piece of an authentic text or context.

## Recommendations for Further Researche

The authors do recommend the following items for potentials for the other researches:

- Since speaking development has been lately considered as one those important issues in the scope of *Language Skills and Theories*, the effect of other speaking techniques like rotation technique, back-ward build-up drills, etc. on the speaking development could be investigated as well.
- The development of speaking skills on the other skills and components, or a blend of both, is also a matter of more study and investigations.
- Slang languages, street languages and colloquial conversations may be introduces as a new context for those who are interested in such co-texts since the conversation mentioned in the appendix uses a simple language.

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### **Appendix I**

**Thinh:** Hello.

**Jim:** Oh, hi there!

**Thinh:** Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Thinh Nguyen and this is my wife, Lan Quong.

**Jim:** Pleased to meet you. My name is Jim Peters. Did you just move in next door?

**Lan:** Yes, we did. Have you lived here long?

**Jim:** Me? I guess so. I've lived here for about 6 years now. Have you lived in America very long?

**Thinh:** No. Not really. When we left Vietnam and came to America we lived with a cousin in Dallas for 2 years. Where do you work, Jim?

**Jim:** I teach mathematics at Willow Springs community college. What do you do?

**Thinh:** I am a mechanic at Allied Diesel. I repair truck engines.

**Jim:** What about you, Lan?

**Lan:** I am a nurse's assistant at Whitfield County hospital.

**Jim:** Well, Thinh and Lan, it was good to meet you. I have to go now. I'm teaching a class this evening and I need to get to the college.

**Thinh:** It was good to meet you, too, Jim.

**Lan:** Yes, it was good to meet you.

**Jim:** See you around!

**Thinh and Lan:** Good-bye, Jim!

NARRATIVE DISCOURSE OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS IN *YOMIURI ONLINE*: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS STUDY

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper discusses the narrative discourse which is presented by Japanese online media, *Yomiuri Online*, in international news regarding disasters in other countries. *Yomiuri Online* is a high trust worthy online media because it is an online media which is made by one of the largest printed media in Japan, *Yomiuri Shimbun*, responding to news of foreign disasters. This paper uses qualitative method using critical discourse analysis approach by Teun van Dijk. The data is a narrative discourse taken from international news in *Yomiuri Online* concerning cold wave disaster in India, January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013. The result of this study is *Yomiuri Online* presented the international news in neutral side. In other words, *Yomiuri Online* did not show partiality neither into Indian government nor into the victims. Furthermore, it only delivers general information without informs actions or responses of the Indian government to overcome the victims of the disaster.

**KEYWORDS** : narrative discourse, Online media, *Yomiuri Online*, international news, critical discourse analysis, van dijk

**INTRODUCTION**

As the largest language unit in grammar study, in critical point of view, discourse is viewed as a linguistics practice which represents power or partiality of a person or institution. At the level of mass communication, obviously, mass media presents news that is also tied to the context of institutional ideology. Based on the discourse of news, it can be seen the partiality of mass media into the events.

News discourse as narrative discourse is a discourse that is retold (of the events) by the narrator (in this case, journalists as presenters of the mass media), of course, the journalists have the capacity and authority in presenting the news, the boundaries of news presentation, news which is given more detailed information than others, and news which are not overly exposed in detail. The presentation process, certainly, very committed to the ideology of mass media, because the presented discourse is a representation of ideology.

Van Dijk (1997:2) explains that discourse analysis is a form of language use which has several basic concepts namely who, how, why and when. He also notes that critical discourse analysis elaborates social cognition which means how the news text is produced and presented by journalists as a deliverer of information from a media agency. In his research, Van Djick describes three levels analysis those are at the text level, social cognition and context. In this study, the analysis is limited to the text level that includes macrostructure, superstructure and microstructure on narrative discourse which is taken from international news of *Yomiuri Online* regarding cold wave disaster that occurred in India, January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013.

As the result, the authors are interested in analysing how *Yomiuri Online*, an online media which published by the *Yomiuri Shimbun* which is one of the biggest media in Japan, responds to events or disasters that hit other countries. The data is taken from *Yomiuri Online* in international news column regarding catastrophic events of cold wave in India, January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013.

**THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

According to Eriyanto (2013:5), news as narrative discourse in mass media has three characteristics those are consisting of a series of events, following a certain logic and selecting of events. All of these characteristics cannot be separated from each other. A text can be called as a narrative if these three requisites are presented at once. Thus, the news text can be regarded as a narrative discourse because the presentation of the news also consists of a series of events which are rearranged by journalists to follow the plot of logic or strategy of journalists who may assume the overall presentation tied to the ideology of

mass media, which also represents how a partiality of media in presenting international news regarding the disaster that hit other countries.

Critical discourse analysis, as a tool to discover partiality of media, is also used in this study. The theory of critical discourse which is used in this study is Van Dijk's theory. According to this theory, in the following table, Eriyanto (2009:228) describes the details step of analysis.

*Table 1: Critical discourse analysis details step proposed by Eriyanto*

DISCOURSE STRUCTURE	DISCUSSION OF STUDY	ELEMENT
Macrostructure	THEMATIC Theme/topic in a news	Topic
Superstructure	SCHEMATIC A whole news text is presented so	Schema
Microstructure	SEMANTIC Emphasized meaning in news text	Setting, detail, intention, presupposition, nominalization
	SYNTAX Selection of sentences (form and structure)	Structure of sentence, coherence, pronoun
	STYLISTIC Selection of diction in news text	Lexicon
	RETHORIC Emphasizing in news text	Graphic, metaphor, expression

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

What extent is *Yomiuri Online* partial in presenting international news, especially regarding cold wave disaster that hit India in January 2013?

## METHODOLOGY AND TECHNIQUE

### *Method*

This study uses qualitative research method. According to Patilima (as cited in Suparlan, 2004:3), subject of the study of qualitative method is social life or society as a whole unit. This qualitative study is associated with interpretive epistemology that is usually used for collecting and analysing the data which recognizes to the understanding with emphasizing on the meanings.

### *Method and Technique of Collecting the Data*

In collecting the data, documentation method is used in this study. According to Arikunto (2006:231), documentation method is a method which is used for collecting the data by looking for data regarding things or variables consists of notes, transcripts, books, newspapers or magazines, inscription, minutes of meetings, agenda and so on. In this documentation method, the researcher holds a checklist to search for the specified variable. Variables specified in the selection of data taken from online media which is the primary source of data in this study namely *Yomiuri Online* in international news column about disaster news of cold wave that hit India, January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013. In addition, this study also uses observation method. According to Mahsun (2001:92), observation method is a method for obtaining data by listening to language use. It is not only associated with verbal language but also the use of language in writing. Furthermore, it is conducted note taking technique which is done in data card and continued by classifying the data.

### *Method of Analysing the Data*

Analysis of the data in this study uses critical discourse analysis method which is proposed by Teun Van Dijk. By using Van Dijk's model analysis (as cited in Eriyanto, 2009:221-281), the analysis will focus on aspects of linguistic those are macrostructure, microstructure and superstructure. Based on the analysis, it can be explored how the attitude *Yomiuri Online* in presenting the news of the disaster in other countries specifically about the cold wave that hit India in January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013.

### *Data Source*

The data is taken from one of the online media in Japan, *Yomiuri Online*, in column international news regarding the cold wave disaster in India, January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013.



## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### *Profile of Yomiuri Online*

*Yomiuri Online* is an online media which published by one of the largest printed media in Japan namely *Yomiuri Shimbun* (one of the largest newspaper with a circulation sales reached 10 million copies per day). Romli (2012:36) states that credibility of online media influences the trustworthiness of public to access the news. Regarding the high credibility of online media is generally owned by the online media managed by a press agency which also publishes the printed or electronic edition. In this regard, *Yomiuri Online* which is also published by the printed media has a fairly high credibility.

*Yomiuri Online* is one of the largest online news sites in Japan, approximately 500 million pages per month. *Yomiuri Online* (YOL) presents the most up - to-date news by news and web - magazine that covers topics such as IT, automotive, entertainment, travel, health, women lifestyle and many more. The site also offers variety of convenient interactive tools such as a search function, maps, and dictionaries for users. For advertisers, YOL offers a diverse variety of advertising options to deliver message including leader boards, rectangles and other efficient menus.

The frequency of YOL's visitor can be seen in the graph below:

Taken from [http://adv.Yomiuri.co.jp/m-data/english/mediadata/Yomiuri\\_online/index.html](http://adv.Yomiuri.co.jp/m-data/english/mediadata/Yomiuri_online/index.html)

The data which is used to be analysed, as follows:

インド、寒波で107人死亡...バングラは80人

【ニューデリー＝田原徳容】インド北部は昨年末から1月初旬にかけ、強い寒波に見舞われ、路上生活者らを中心に少なくとも107人が死亡した。

多くが凍死とみられる。国土の大半が熱帯気候の隣国バングラデシュでも10日、1971年の同国独立後の最低気温となる3度を記録するなど冷え込みが強まり、80人が死亡した。

インド政府などによると、近年、冬期間に激しい大気汚染のせいなどで濃霧がひどく、気温が上がらない傾向があるという。首都ニューデリーでは今月2日に最低気温が平年より3度低い4・8度、最高気温も10度低い9・8度となり、過去44年間で最も気温が上がらなかった。

'India, 107 people died due to cold wave ... while in Bangladesh 80 people died'

'[New Delhi = Economically Tahara] northern India, from late last year until early January, hit by a strong cold wave, killing at least 107 people mainly bum. Most victims froze to death. As India's neighbour, Bangladesh which is even a tropical country had been in the lowest temperature to 3 ° recorded after Independence Day in 1971 for 10 days. This incident caused the death of 80 people. According to the Indian government, in recent years, because of severe air pollution during the winter, a heavy fog worsened. Hence, there is a tendency of temperature did not increase. In the capital city New Delhi in 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2013, it occurred the lowest temperature until 3 ° compared with an average temperature of 4-8 °, even though the highest temperature changed from 10 ° into 9-8 °. During 44 years ago, its temperature does not rise.'

<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/world/news/20130101-OYT1T01294.htm> accessed on 01-01-2013 09:00

*Macro Structure:* Macro structure is general meaning of the text that may be identified or observed on the topics raised. *Thematic* Part of text which can be identified in macrostructure is from the thematic title of the article as the headline of an article. The title of article above is:

インド、寒波で107人死亡...

バングラは80人

'India, 107 people died due to cold wave ...

'while in Bangladesh 80 people died'

In the title above, there are two sentences namely 「インド、107人死亡寒波で」, and 「80 バングラは人」. In the second sentence there is particleは that functions as a benchmark for India regarding the death victims caused by the cold wave. Bangladesh is just as a comparison because the main topic which will be presented is India. In the thematic elements, the article above discovers the theme on international news concerning cold wave in India which led to death. Moreover, it also occurred in Bangladesh as neighbour of India. From the title above, the readers are invited to be neutral by not only refers to one country (India) but also other country as a comparison (Bangladesh).

### *Superstructures*

*Schema* Schema or plot representation of discourse narrative above, starting from explanation of the first paragraph regarding the occurrence of cold wave in India from the end of year until the beginning of January that killed 107 people mainly bum. In the second paragraph, there is an additional information to compare the condition between India and Bangladesh because the two countries both occurred cold wave disaster. The second paragraph explains that cold wave in Bangladesh, as a neighbour

country of India, caused 80 people. Furthermore, at the third paragraph, the closing statement of the article shows the response of the government of India regarding cold wave which occurred in India.

#### Micro Structure

*Semantics* Semantics is observed to overcome the suppression of an event, which can be observed in detail element (this element presents additional information that shows emphasis point of an event).

#### Detail

The following sentence is taken from the first paragraph.

「～昨年未から 1 月初旬にかけ、強い寒波に見舞われ…」

～ From the last year until early January, hit by a strong cold wave...

This sentence is one of detail elements which is presented regarding timescales of strong cold wave that occurred in northern India from the last year until early January (still in day quantification) shows the detail element. In this period, there was a strong cold wave which killed 107 Indian citizens. In this detail elements, it is emphasized that the wave was so strong in time span which is not too long, nevertheless, it can kill 107 people.

Furthermore, in second paragraph, there is a phrase:

「国土の大半が熱帯気候の隣国バングラデシュでも 10 日、～ 80 人が死亡した。」

'Bangladesh as a neighbouring tropical country even suffered for 10 days, ~ 80 people died.'

The detail element that is presented in the sentence above is 「国土の大半が熱帯気候の隣国バングラデシュ～」 as a neighbouring tropical country '. The function of the sentence is to strengthen the emphasis of the previous meaning (at first paragraph). This enormous cold wave also occurred even in Bangladesh as the neighbouring tropical country of India which killed 80 people. In other words, the phrase 「国土の大半が熱帯気候の隣国バングラデシュ～」 as a neighbouring tropical country 'is the textual evidence which shows the disaster (cold wave) is very enormous. In addition, the other textual evidence is in the second sentence of the second paragraph as follows:

「～ 1971 年の同国独立後の最低気温となる 3 度を記録するなど冷え込みが強まり、～」  
～ as the lowest temperature recorded after independence in 1971 to 3 ° increasingly cold, ~'

The	other	detail	element	is
「～ 1971 年の同国独立後の最低気温となる 3 度を記録するなど冷え込みが強まり、～」				
～ as the lowest temperature recorded after independence in 1971 to 3 ° increasingly cold, ~'				

During 44 years of Bangladesh's independence, the lowest temperature in this country is 3 °. It is explained that this is the most extreme temperature during the cold wave that is currently experienced. Third paragraph also emphasizes the same thing, this wave cold is the most extreme wave cold. It is supported by the sentence,

「首都ニューデリーでは今月 2 日に最低気温が平年より 3 度低い 4・8 度、  
最高気温も 10 度低い 9・8 度となり、～」

'In the capital city New Delhi in 2nd of this month had the lowest temperature 3 ° compared with an average temperature 4-8 °, the highest temperature changed from 10 ° into 9-8 °, ~'.

The last detail element is

「首都ニューデリーでは今月 2 日に最低気温が平年より 3 度低い 4・8 度、最高気温も 10 度低い 9・8 度となり、～」

'In the capital city New Delhi in 2nd of this month had the lowest temperature 3 ° compared with an average temperature 4-8 °, the highest temperature changed from 10 ° into 9-8 °, ~'.

This sentence adds information that the temperature in New Delhi is worse than the average temperature.

*Syntax* Syntax is one of the microstructure elements associated with a logical way of thinking, which are important parts that are placed at the beginning of which is further supported by other supporting statements. Eriyanto (2009:251) adds that such sentence structures relates to the presentation of text deductively or inductively. In deductive form, the emphasized aspect more apparent, while in inductive form, the core of sentence is placed as disguised or hidden. In these data, the form of the sentence is presented deductively, which describes the main topic at the beginning of the first paragraph namely emphasizing (most important thing) that the cold wave in India. Furthermore, it is punctuated with the other supporting statements in second paragraphs namely the same disaster which befell the neighbouring country, Bangladesh. Lastly, the third paragraph

concludes that the Indian government responded to the cold wave disaster by exposing the temperatures.

#### Coherence

Coherence is linked words or sentences in the text (Eriyanto, 2009:242). This relation is marked by conjunction. The relation can be shown by using causal relation or additional information which marks implicitly the event is bigger or not. The function of conjunction in the text is to link whether the different events are linked each other or not. Probably, there is no relation between two events. However, by using coherence those two events might have a relation, for example causal relation.

In the second paragraph, there is a sentence:

「多くが凍死とみられる。国土の大半が熱帯気候の隣国バングラデシュでも 10 日、1971 年の同国独立後の最低気温となる 3 度を記録するなど冷え込みが強まり、80 人が死亡した。」

'Most died due to cold weather. Bangladesh as a neighbouring tropical country of India **even** suffered for 10 days. It is recorded as the lowest temperature after independence in 1971 until 3 ° and 80 people died.'

In the sentence above, there is an exposure that most of the death victims due to the cold weather and the use of the conjunction 「～でも」 'even' provides additional information though Bangladesh has a tropical climate can experience the cold waves. The comparison between India and Bangladesh also provides a view that this disaster (cold wave) is not only afflicts India but also its neighbouring country, namely Bangladesh. Yomiuri positions toward this disaster as a deliverer of information which did not criticize the India government because this disaster befall other country namely Bangladesh.

This was confirmed in the next paragraph,

「インド政府などによると、近年、冬期間に激しい大気汚染のせいなどで濃霧がひどく、気温が上がらない傾向があるという。首都ニューデリーでは今月 2 日に最低気温が平年より 3 度低い 4・8 度、最高気温も 10 度低い 9・8 度となり、過去 44 年間で最も気温が上がらなかった。」

'According to the India government, in recent years, **there is a tendency that temperature does not rise because of severe air pollution during the winter and a heavy fog badly**. In the capital New Delhi on 2nd of this month, the lowest temperature was 3 ° compared with an average temperature 4-8 °, the highest temperature from 10 ° changed into 9-8 °. During the 44 years of the previous, its temperature does not rise.'

The using of conjunction 「～で」 'because of' shows causal relation when the occurrence of cold wave is because of severe air pollution during the winter and a heavy fog badly, thus, there is a tendency that temperature does not rise. The sentence above mentions the India government's opinion about the causal factor of the death victim of cold wave because of the nature condition. In other words, it only focus on the description of the nature condition, however, the action of the India government to overcome this problem, for instance program to prevent the worst condition that might be occur, is not presented. Hence, it can be concluded that *Yomiuri Online*'s partiality in presenting international news is delivered and limited by general information which did not reveal the real specific actions of the India government.

*Stylistic* Stylistic is the selection of a lexicon or vocabulary which being microstructure elements. It presents the choice of words that is presented in the text then represents the attitude of the media to an event.

At the first paragraph above, there is a word 「～路上生活者ら」 which means 'bum'. The word 'bum' is presented to add the detail information of the death victims. Stylistic element or the words choice is 「路上生活者ら」 *Rojo seikatsu - sha -ra*. Lexically, it means 'the people who live on the street' (more polite and subtle) associated with 'bum' which was chosen to reveal the word 'bum'. For example, word 「宿無し」 *yadonashi* which lexically means 'homeless; bum', which is directly reveals word homeless or bum is not be chosen. India, a country which is used as the topic above, is already known as one of the developing countries having a lot of bums. Here, it is implicitly revealed that there are many homeless people in India and it has become a general information. The presentation of a sentence using the word 'bum' implies that *Yomiuri Online* as an online media in Japan is neutral because it reveals general and reasonable information.

*Rhetoric* Graphic Van Dijk (1998:201) states that 'Graphical structure may have several cognitive, social and ideological function. Cognitively, they control attention and interest during comprehension, and indicate what information is important or interesting, or should be focus on for other reason, and may therefore be better understood and memorize.' Eriyanto (2009:257) adds that this element graphic is highlighted in detail in the text. The use of numbers in news are used to suggest the truth, accuracy and position of a report. Beside, Van Dijk in Eriyanto (2009:258) states that statistic measurement in the text not only part of the standard of journalism but also a suggestive precision.

There are several graphic elements which are figures appearance, for example, in the text appears 107 of the total victims in India and 80 in Bangladesh. The additional information is about temperature in each country. The lowest temperature in North India is 3 ° while the average temperature is 3 ° - 4 °. However, the highest temperature is 8 ° - 9 ° which changed from 10 °. Furthermore, in Bangladesh also informed the lowest temperature is 3 °. The appearance of the numbers in the data above is used to reflect the truth and accuracy of the news presentation. Hence, *Yomiuri Online* presents information by appearing the numbers as elements graphic to strengthen its position as a high credible Japanese online media.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the data that has been analysed, *Yomiuri Online* as a media online version of one of the printed media in Japan, which serves its international news especially from India (based on the observed data), positioned in neutral side and did not criticize the internal things of India policies. It is supported by the selection of title which generally presents a comparison of the cold wave conditions were also hit other country namely Bangladesh. The title gives the description to the readers to be neutral because the disaster (cold wave) occurred not only in India but also in Bangladesh. Moreover, from the plot of the presentation, it was presented in the form of deductive paragraph which is arranged from the most important thing then it is added by supporting sentences.

In addition, according to the data, the use of coherence is very important. The first coherence mark is conjunction 「～でも」 'even' (in the second paragraph) as additional information. The next coherence is conjunction 「～で」 'because of' (the third paragraph) as causal relation. These two conjunctions revealed the cold wave more detail. Meanwhile, the action of the India government is not presented. Furthermore, the choice of words or stylistic elements that is represented by 「～路上生活者ら」 'bum' in informing additional facts of the victims. This word indicates *Yomiuri Online* as Japanese media online is in neutral side because the word 「～路上生活者ら」 'bum' is more polite word to show the condition of India citizens. Actually, this information is a general facts since India is one of developing countries.

The last textual evidence is shown in graphic element. *Yomiuri Online* strengthens the enormous cold wave by showing numbers as a graphic elements to make *Yomiuri Online* more reliable online media in Japan.

## Limitations of the study

This paper analysed how online media in Japan, especially *Yomiuri Online*, presented the international news regarding disaster news based on critical discourse analysis point of view. This study is limited to *Yomiuri Online* concerning cold wave disaster in India, January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013. Furthermore, this study can be extended by the comparative study of the other Japanese online media focused on the different topic. As a result, it can be seen the different partiality of each online media in perceiving an event.

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## INVESTIGATING THE CONSTRUCT VALIDITY OF “STRUCTURE AND WRITTEN EXPRESSION” SECTION OF TOLIMO THROUGH FACTOR ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed at investigating the construct validity of a nationwide large-scale English proficiency test (TOLIMO: *The Test of Language by the Iranian Measurement Organization*) which has been developed and administered by the Ministry of Science, Research, and Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran: National Organization for Educational Testing (NOET). In this study, Factor Analysis was used to examine the construct validity of the test. To conduct the study, the performance of 154 examinees on 50 multiple-choice items of “structure and written expression” section of 77<sup>th</sup> administration of TOLIMO was examined. The data obtained from the “structure and written expression” section were subjected to an Exploratory Factor Analysis (FA). The results of FA revealed that eleven factors represent the underlying structure of TOLIMO. All in all, the results and findings of the study indicated that the “structure and expression” section of TOLIMO really measures what it supposed to measure and the scores of this section can be interpreted as real indicators of examinees’ ability level in structure and writing. The findings imply that the test demonstrated construct validity.

**KEYWORDS:** High-stakes Tests, Construct Validity, TOLIMO, Factor Analysis

### INTRODUCTION

Language testing was once a subfield of applied linguistics but now it is gaining more strength as newer theories, models and tools of language testing measurement are introduced. Indeed, testing has developed during the last two decades (Bachman, 1990).

Among different tests used for different purposes, proficiency tests have a wide range of applications in the world. For example, most universities use proficiency tests for admission purposes. In fact, proficiency tests as high stakes tests have major consequences or are the basis of a major decision (Torin, 2009). The results of these assessments play a vital role in examiners’ academic careers in many ways including their classification, assessment of their content knowledge, curriculum planning and graduation.

Actually, it can be stated that regarding proficiency tests, now one universally accepted fact is that they will undoubtedly have powerful effects on an examinee’s life. So, they must meet the test sine qua non—i.e., reliability and validity (Bachman, 1990; Walt & Steyn, 2008; Farhady, Jafarpur, & Birjandi, 2006). As Walt and Steyn (2008) assert, “validity has recently emerged as a most important consideration in developing and evaluating language tests” (p.191). Indeed, various types of validity have been introduced in the literature such as predictive validity, concurrent validity, content validity, and construct validity (see Bachman, 1990; William, 1995; Gipps, 2003). However, the current concept of validity derives from the work of the American psychologist Samuel Messick in the 1970s and 1980s at the American educational and measurement organization, Educational Testing Service, culminating in 1989 (Walt & Steyn, 2008). According to Messick (1989), validity is a unifying concept i.e., construct validity. According to Bachman (1990), construct validity is a form of validity which is based on the degree to which the items in a test reflect the essential aspects of the theory on which the test is based (the construct).



Messick (1989) believes that validity is a unifying concept. He means that score meaning embodied in construct validity underlies all score-based inferences. But, he asserts that, “for a fully unified view of validity, it must also be recognized that the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of score-based inferences depend as well on the social consequences of the testing” (p.19). Therefore, it follows from what Messick (1989) states that social values cannot be ignored in considerations of validity. There are, actually, different methods that can be used to collect evidence regarding the issue of construct validity. However, the present study uses FA (Factor Analysis). The advantages of choosing this method will be dealt with later.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Beside different methods used for estimating the test validity, Factor Analysis is also another method which will be introduced here. FA can also be used to collect evidence in the test validation process. According to Walt and Steyn (2008), “FA is often employed in construct validation studies and the aim is to establish whether a test measures the postulated factors or not” (p.200). Factor Analysis combines two or more variables into a single factor, and is done to see whether the various sections of, for example, an academic literacy test, which tests vocabulary, cohesion, comprehension, etc. in different sections, can be shown to test a single underlying factor, namely academic literacy (Walt & Steyn, 2008). It isolates the underlying factors or components that explain the data. Indeed, FA is a method that is mostly used to decide on the construct validity of a test. According to Richards, Platt, and Platt (1992), Factor Analysis is:

A statistical procedure that is used to determine which unobserved latent variables, called factors, account for correlations among different observed variables. For example, if we give a group of students tests in geometry, algebra, arithmetic, reading and writing, we can find out what underlying factors are common to results on all these tests by using FA. A FA might show that there are two factors in the tests, one related to mathematics and the other related to language proficiency. These factors may be interpreted as abilities or traits that these tests measure to differing degrees (pp.197-198).

According to Musavi (1999), the goal of Factor Analysis is to construct the underlying factors and decompose the score variance in terms of correlation of factors and the observed scores. Musavi (1999) reported that, “FA will give us the information underlying our tests by examining the common variance among items, common because they appear in more than one items” (p.125).

There are basically two types of FA: Exploratory and Confirmatory. Exploratory Factor Analysis, as its name indicates, is used to explore a group of observed variables and identify any underlying variables that might explain the relationships among the observed variables, whereas Confirmatory Factor Analysis, again as its name indicates, is used to test or confirm a hypothesized factor structure of a group of observed variables, specified a priori on the basis of some underlying theory or previous research, to see if the proposed factor structure is adequate to explain the relationships among the observed variables (Hatch and Farhady, 1982; Jafarpour, 1990).

### ***Applications of FA in testing***

Swinton and Powers (1980) introduced Factor Analysis as a general technique for investigating construct validity in the field of testing. According to Walt & Steyn (2008), “FA is often employed in construct validation studies and the aim is to establish whether a test measures the postulated factors or not” (p.200).

One of the first studies in this respect was conducted by Swinton and Powers (1980) whose factor analytic study of TOEFL intended to add to the knowledge of the test. Since TOEFL is by nature an international test administered to an extremely heterogeneous group of examinees, Swinton and Powers’ (1980) study seemed desirable to determine the extent to which the test measures the same constructs for various language groups. They thought that this assessment had important implications for the interpretation of the scores.

In another study, in 1991, DeAyala and Hertzog tried the usefulness of multi-dimensional scaling (MDS) for the determination of data sets’ dimensionality. They also compared MDS, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) in the assessment of one or two dimensionality generated data sets. It was reported that MDS and CFA were able to correctly identify the number of latent dimensions for all data sets. Goh and Aryadoust (2010) also tried to evaluate the construct validity of the Michigan English Language Assessment Battery (MELAB) listening test by investigating the underpinning structure of the test or construct map, possible construct underrepresentation and construct-irrelevant threats. In their study, they used Rasch one-parameter model



and Factor Analysis for the analysis of the data. The researchers sought evidence of construct validity primarily through correlated uniqueness models (CUM) and the Rasch model. A five factor CUM was fitted into the data but did not display acceptable measurement properties. The researchers then evaluated a three-trait Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) that fitted the data sufficiently. This fitting model was further evaluated with parcel items, which supported the proposed CFA model. Finally, the researchers propose this model as the tentative construct map of this form of the test. To investigate construct underrepresentation and construct-irrelevant threats, the Rasch model was used. This analysis showed that the test was relatively easy for the sample and the listening ability of several higher ability test takers were sufficiently tested by the items. Indeed, there is an important assumption in language testing and that is the test items or observable variables should tap the underlying latent traits hypothesized in the theoretical model or constructs governing the design of the testing instrument (Shin, 2005). Hence, researchers in the field of testing try to investigate whether the scores from the tests could be interpreted as true indicators of test takers' ability or not.

Along the same lines, Vafaei, Basheer, and Heitner (2012), in their study, investigated the extent to which scores from the grammar subtest of the Columbia University Community English Program (CEP) placement test could be interpreted as indicators of test takers' grammatical knowledge. The authors adopted Pupura's (2004) theoretical model of grammatical knowledge, which hypothesizes that grammatical knowledge consists of two underlying traits of form and meaning. To this end, the authors conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to investigate whether there is a match between the CEP grammar test data and the theoretical model as hypothesized. Finally, the findings of their study supported the interpretive argument presented for the construct validity of the CEP grammar test, and the appropriateness of the explanation of inference made based on this test's scores.

FA has also been used for evaluating construct validity in other fields of study. For instance, Delis (2004) utilized Factor Analysis in clinical studies. She used FA for evaluating construct validity and reported a high correlation between two memory test scores in a community sample but a low correlation between the same scores in a sample of people with Alzheimer's disease.

In another study, Chiu and Oliver (2006) used FA to describe the validity of a clinically-used test called Safety Assessment of Function and the Environment for Rehabilitation –Health Outcome Measurement and Evaluation (SAFER-HOME). Getting familiar with the importance of validity and the potential role of FA in investigating validity, this study tried to investigate the validity of a national high stakes test (TOLIMO) used as a measure of language proficiency.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The purpose of this study is to empirically assess what "structure and written expression" section of TOLIMO claims and whether this section matches or does not match the assumptions in Factor Analysis. In other words, it aims to find out if TOLIMO can be rightfully used to assess and evaluate L2 learners' performance. To do so, the present study concentrates on the FA evaluations of this high stakes test. The following question is to be answered through this study:

To what extent does the "structure and written expression" section of TOLIMO measure what it purports to measure?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

At first, the researcher asked Sanjesh Organization for the examinees' answer-sheets, and the information regarding their sex, age, and background on the 77<sup>th</sup> administration of TOLIMO. However, it was in vain. Unfortunately, researchers outside Sanjesh Organization are denied access to such information and no information about the participants' backgrounds and characteristics is released by the organization. Hence, in order to conduct the present study, 154 participants were recruited. Data were collected on the performance of these participants on the 50 items of the "structure and written expression" section of the 77<sup>th</sup> test of TOLIMO.

The 154 recruited participants were of different backgrounds and characteristics. They were male and female students at the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics of Shiraz University, Shiraz Azad University, University of Shiraz Medical School, Iran, and students majoring in other fields of study studying IELTS and TOEFL preparation classes at an accredited language institute in Shiraz, Iran. Ages of the participants ranged between 17 and 45 (age mean=29.67). Though participants were of different characteristics and backgrounds, this study, actually, was not to access the impact of examinees characteristics on their performance in the test. Because of the relatively large number of items and the relatively great amount of time needed to answer the items of the tests,

the selection of the participants was based on convenient sampling. In a word, the sample was chosen solely from participants who were conveniently available.

### ***Instruments***

A nationwide large scale English proficiency test has been developed and administered by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran: National Organization for Educational Testing (NOET). This test, which is called TOLIMO, is administered every month at 9 universities simultaneously and claims to assess the proficiency-level of examinees in English as a foreign language. To date, it has been administered 81 times.

TOLIMO consists of 150 multiple-choice items on three parts of structure and written expression, reading comprehension, and listening comprehension. Each section contains 50 items and must be answered within 40, 55, and 35 minutes, respectively. The scaling of scores on this test is modeled on TOEFL scaling procedures. The overall scores of the examinees are reported within a range of 340 to 677.

### ***Data Collection Procedures***

For the first step of the study, the “structure and written expression” section of TOLIMO was selected to collect the required data. Indeed, this choice made the study more practical both in terms of conducting the study and interpreting the results. Thus, the data on the performance of 154 examinees on the 50 multiple-choice items of “structure and written expression” section of the 77<sup>th</sup> TOLIMO English proficiency test were collected.

### ***Data Analysis Procedures***

After collecting data from the “structure and written expression” section of the test, the researcher attempted to conduct the Exploratory Factor Analysis in order to decide on the construct validity of the sub-test. Hence, SPSS was used to provide the appropriate information. The results of the above statistical analysis will be presented and discussed in the next section.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***The Factor Analysis of “structure and written expression” section of TOLIMO through SPSS***

The following tables give a summary of the information provided by FA. In the following table, the factorability of the intercorrelation matrix was measured by two tests: Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin test of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity.

*Table 1: KMO and Bartlett’s test results*

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.570
Approx. Chi-Square	2778.039
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Df	1225
Sig.	.000

The results obtained from the two tests reveal that the factor model was appropriate. KMO is an index which shows the quality of the FA measurement in the sample. According to Bayazidi (2009), the KMO over 0.5 indicates the acceptability of the FA measurement. Moreover, the significance of 0.00 resulted from Bartlett’s Test, shown in Table 1, is lower than 0.05 and reveals that the results of the test can be generalized to the population. After that, the construct validity of the “structure and written expression” section of TOLIMO was examined. The Principal Component Analysis extracted 11 factors. To save space, the rotation sums of squared loadings are presented here and the whole results have been put in the appendix A. Table 2 shows the results of factor extraction through the rotation sums of squared loadings.

Table 2: The results of factor extraction

Component	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.131	8.262	8.262
2	2.637	6.273	14.535
3	2.375	5.751	20.286
4	2.275	5.549	25.835
5	2.245	5.490	31.325
6	2.210	5.420	36.745
7	2.193	5.386	42.131
8	2.135	5.269	47.400
9	2.035	5.071	52.471
10	1.927	4.854	57.325
11	1.891	4.781	62.106

As Table 2 shows, approximately, 62% of the whole changes can be discussed within these 11 extracted factors (which according to Bayazidi, 2009 is an acceptable standard). Then, the orthogonal rotation was inspected. The result of Varimax with Kaiser Normalization was a rotated component matrix. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 3. For a better understanding of the items loading under each factor, a clear table is presented here. The complete rotated component matrix has been put in appendix B.

Table 3: Rotated Component Martix

	Component										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
q34	.626										
q12	.621										
q25	.589										
q13	-.553										
q35	.508										
q50	.411										
q8	.401										
q19	.397										
q32	.395										
q39		.627									
q11		.596									
q49		.554									
q10		-.420									
q6		.392									
q20		.367									
q22			.651								
q48			.595								
q14			.456								
q30			.420								
q27			-.391								
q7				-.653							
q18				.559							
q37				-.501							
q44				.445							
q38					.635						
q9					-.598						
q33					-.569						
q5					.397						
q26					-.324						
q31					.317						

q43						.670					
q1						.641					
q47						-.456					
q16							-.680				
q29							-.630				
q41							.465				
q15							.418				
q45								.623			
q21								-.586			
q40								-.500			
q36								-.463			
q3									.657		
q24									.626		
q2									-.491		
q4									.425		
q28										.664	
q42										.543	
q46										.502	
q23											-.667
q17											.493

Table 3 clearly shows which items have been loaded together under each factor.

If any conclusion is possible to draw from the tables and their related descriptions it is that, the “structure and written expression” section of TOLIMO is valid.

### **Discussion**

This paper tried to find out if the “structure and written expression” section of TOLIMO has construct validity. As Tables 1 to 3 revealed, the “structure and written expression” section of TOLIMO is valid and can measure the grammar and structure ability of the examinees. Moreover, FA was proved as a tool in construct validation studies.

Indeed, researchers in the field of testing try to investigate whether the scores from the tests could be interpreted as true indicators of test takers’ ability or not. In doing so, researchers used Factor Analysis as the most popular method for validation studies. For example, Swinton and Powers (1980), DeAyala and Hertzog (1991), Goh and Aryadoust (2010), Vafaei, Basheer, and Heitner (2012) in their works used FA to investigate the extent to which scores from different language tests used in their study could be interpreted as indicators of examinees’ knowledge. However, it should be noted that no study was found in which the construct validity of the Iranian test of TOLIMO was investigated through FA. Hence, the present study tried to conduct a validation study on TOLIMO to find out if the test items or observable variables could tap the underlying latent traits hypothesized in the theoretical model or constructs governing the design of the testing instrument.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

As stated before, validity consideration is always an important issue in test analysis. Adequacy, meaningfulness, and appropriateness of interpretation of measures as indicators of a construct or ability should always be established. As Weir (1990) pointed out, “we are obliged to investigate how adequate a test is in operation through available statistics” (p.24). By the same token, this study revealed that Factor Analysis, as an available modern measurement model, has a great potential role in language tests’ analysis and particularly in validation considerations. Taken together, this study attempted to shed light on the following question:

To what extent does the “structure and written expression” section of TOLIMO measure what it purports to measure?

If any conclusion is possible to draw from the tables and their related descriptions presented in Tables 1 to 3 it is that, the results of the Factor Analysis showed the construct validity of “structure and written expression” section of TOLIMO.

### **Limitations of the study**

As with any study, there were limitations in how the study was conducted.

As stated earlier, the researcher firstly asked Sanjesh Organization for the examinees' answer-sheets, and the information regarding their sex, age, and background on the 77<sup>th</sup> TOLIMO administration. However, it was in vain. Unfortunately, it should be noted that researchers outside the Sanjesh Organization are barred from access to such information and no information about the participants' backgrounds and characteristics is released by the organization. Hence, in order to conduct the present study, 154 participants were recruited. In other words, in this study, the data obtained from the performance of the participants on 77<sup>th</sup> administration of TOLIMO as a mock exam were the base of investigation. In fact, this lack of access to the real examinees on the 77<sup>th</sup> administration of TOLIMO was the principal limitation of the present study. Consequently, the other related validity issue is whether those participating in the study cooperated appropriately. If the students were not doing their best when they chose their responses, a flawed measurement of item difficulty could have resulted. This is while there was no way to determine from the data whether or not a score actually represents the best effort.

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## Appendix A

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.832	9.665	9.665	4.832	9.665	9.665	3.131	8.262	8.262
2	2.525	5.051	14.716	2.525	5.051	14.716	2.637	6.273	14.535
3	2.402	4.805	19.520	2.402	4.805	19.520	2.375	5.751	20.286

4	2.295	4.590	24.111	2.295	4.590	24.111	2.275	5.549	25.835
5	2.169	4.338	28.449	2.169	4.338	28.449	2.245	5.490	31.325
6	2.071	4.143	32.592	2.071	4.143	32.592	2.210	5.420	36.745
7	1.975	3.950	36.542	1.975	3.950	36.542	2.193	5.386	42.131
8	1.898	3.796	40.338	1.898	3.796	40.338	2.135	5.269	47.400
9	1.742	3.484	43.823	1.742	3.484	43.823	2.035	5.071	52.471
10	1.601	3.203	47.025	1.601	3.203	47.025	1.927	4.854	57.325
11	1.541	3.081	50.106	1.541	3.081	50.106	1.891	4.781	62.106
12	1.517	3.035	53.141						
13	1.503	3.006	56.147						
14	1.349	2.697	58.844						
15	1.310	2.619	61.464						
16	1.244	2.488	63.952						
17	1.191	2.383	66.334						
18	1.159	2.317	68.652						
19	1.136	2.273	70.924						
20	1.055	2.110	73.034						
21	1.010	2.020	75.055						
22	.908	1.815	76.870						
23	.877	1.754	78.624						
24	.826	1.652	80.276						
25	.803	1.606	81.882						
26	.751	1.502	83.384						
27	.737	1.474	84.859						
28	.700	1.400	86.258						
29	.621	1.241	87.500						
30	.565	1.129	88.629						
31	.540	1.081	89.709						
32	.488	.975	90.685						
33	.483	.966	91.651						
34	.470	.940	92.591						
35	.421	.842	93.433						
36	.395	.790	94.224						
37	.362	.724	94.948						
38	.341	.682	95.630						
39	.311	.621	96.251						
40	.283	.567	96.818						
41	.275	.550	97.368						
42	.255	.510	97.878						
43	.204	.408	98.285						
44	.189	.378	98.664						
45	.162	.324	98.988						
46	.140	.280	99.268						
47	.113	.226	99.494						
48	.103	.205	99.699						
49	.086	.173	99.872						
50	.064	.128	100.000						

### Appendix B

	Component										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
q34	.626	.320	.079	.018	-.050	.017	.195	-.127	-.103	.064	.090
q12	.621	-.084	.036	-.156	.042	.074	.148	.259	.074	-.005	.109
q25	.589	-.224	-.251	.057	-.076	-.113	-.212	.129	-.014	.135	.008



q13	-.553	.212	-.173	.119	.066	.027	.232	.041	.049	.187	.003
q35	.508	-.178	-.145	.003	.002	-.207	.140	.141	.137	.042	-.170
q50	.411	.030	-.021	.185	.151	-.072	.051	.284	-.118	-.242	-.320
q8	.401	-.083	.050	.180	.012	-.311	-.035	.002	-.186	-.102	.368
q19	.397	-.053	-.037	-.324	.369	.222	.026	.018	-.296	.027	.102
q32	.395	.019	-.296	-.045	.077	-.101	.216	.129	-.032	-.134	-.257
q39	-.291	.627	.048	.160	.064	.252	-.036	-.018	.140	-.145	-.103
q11	-.009	.596	.205	.050	-.134	-.166	-.012	-.067	.013	.116	.093
q49	-.006	.554	-.087	.044	-.171	.067	-.052	-.150	-.052	.036	-.049
q10	.138	-.420	.117	.075	.200	.031	.201	-.116	-.247	-.038	-.119
q6	-.077	.392	-.047	-.313	.112	-.149	.042	-.069	.010	-.069	.180
q20	.036	.367	.093	-.121	.160	.002	-.026	.351	-.007	.187	.035
q22	.108	-.027	.651	.087	.011	.035	.052	.038	.030	.035	.138
q48	-.251	.097	.595	-.348	.004	-.053	.049	-.116	.080	-.063	-.050
q14	-.221	.064	.456	.360	-.209	.121	.219	.049	-.127	-.115	.101
q30	-.121	.410	.420	.096	.249	.018	-.184	-.083	.060	-.182	-.162
q27	-.153	.150	-.391	.219	.138	-.001	.388	-.062	.034	-.044	.356
q7	-.016	.228	.107	-.653	-.121	.115	.031	.014	.093	.041	.052
q18	-.086	.142	-.054	.559	-.077	.089	.188	-.065	.142	.008	.020
q37	.134	-.069	-.179	-.501	-.064	-.200	.113	.098	-.232	-.035	.041
q44	.218	.284	.175	.445	.028	-.309	-.076	-.132	.008	.249	-.121
q38	-.069	-.029	.093	.073	.635	-.305	-.229	.215	-.132	.218	.075
q9	-.015	.099	.062	-.018	-.598	.002	-.220	.051	-.076	-.070	-.149
q33	.123	-.029	-.166	.032	-.569	-.007	.018	.112	.012	.014	.438
q5	-.096	.001	-.304	-.036	.397	.198	-.124	.191	-.152	-.351	-.039
q26	-.087	.253	.190	.196	-.324	.103	-.211	-.085	-.193	.235	-.026
q31	.178	-.270	-.229	.078	.317	-.009	.000	-.111	-.013	-.067	.111
q43	-.058	-.103	-.011	.029	.024	.670	-.003	-.057	.008	-.026	-.095
q1	-.097	.126	.119	.069	-.107	.641	.040	.308	.050	.128	.108
q47	.016	-.084	-.074	-.371	-.001	-.456	.238	.056	-.372	.134	-.107
q16	-.253	.115	-.108	-.036	.054	-.104	-.680	-.103	.143	.114	-.121
q29	.099	.000	.081	.124	.004	.173	-.630	.024	-.095	-.304	.099
q41	.119	-.125	.072	.081	.352	.051	.465	-.111	.042	.044	.138
q15	-.097	-.360	.218	.053	.040	-.067	.418	.326	.123	-.143	-.108
q45	.273	-.133	-.037	.055	.024	.050	.069	.623	.112	.067	-.141
q21	-.052	.079	.041	.190	.189	-.107	.023	-.586	.074	.049	.007
q40	-.008	.077	-.004	-.064	-.114	.467	-.024	-.500	-.152	.042	-.183
q36	-.361	.012	.276	.067	-.109	.040	.084	-.463	.316	.138	.111
q3	.020	.012	-.101	.212	-.046	.087	-.015	-.045	.657	-.029	-.013
q24	-.108	-.060	.121	-.056	.079	-.033	.116	.243	.626	.170	.035
q2	-.030	-.264	-.038	.217	.225	.274	-.147	.089	-.491	.326	.147
q4	.045	.118	.308	.052	.115	.131	-.229	-.216	.425	.094	.087
q28	.046	.046	-.149	-.023	.207	.184	.075	.134	.089	.664	.210
q42	-.038	.153	.179	.028	.014	-.048	-.075	-.088	.002	.543	-.154
q46	-.113	-.137	-.249	.013	-.090	-.044	.173	.016	-.021	.502	-.285
q23	-.056	-.021	-.028	.172	-.113	-.042	-.029	.052	-.031	.017	-.667
q17	-.183	.065	.253	.087	.016	-.242	.108	-.016	-.008	-.158	.493

THE IMPACT OF GENDER AND BILINGUALISM (PERSIAN & KURDISH) UPON THE MANNER OF  
EXPRESSING OF IRANIAN UNIVERSITY EFL LEARNERS

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*SPECIAL THANKS TO: DR. AKBAR AZIZIFAR AS SUPERVISOR AND DR. HABIB GOWHARY AS ADVISOR*

**Abstract**

The aim of conducting the current study is to investigate the effect of gender and bilingualism on direct or indirect ways of men and women request. To do so, and to reach a logical conclusion, the researcher in the present study tried to show the effect of gender and bilingualism role on imperative manner of expressing. Therefore, 120 English as a foreign language learners among master degree students, 30 of them were Persian monolingual male, 30 Persian monolingual female, 30 Persian and Kurdish bilingual male and the last 30 Persian and Kurdish bilingual female were selected. Then, a questionnaire about impact of gender and bilingualism upon manner of learners including 32 questions was prepared in which each question was attributed to a different. The data obtained throughout the study were analyzed via ANOVA variance statistics as well as by using Wilks and Tokei tests. The findings revealed that women pay closer attention to their request manner than what men do. With regard to the obtained results, it can be logically asserted that women act more formal and conservatively in their verbal behavior than what men do in this regard, and this issue can comparatively be attributed to their speech social behavior.

**KEYWORDS:** gender, bilingualism, request, order

**INTRODUCTION**

Sex is to a very large extent biologically determined whereas gender is a social construct (but still one heavily grounded in sex, as we can see in recent publications that use the term sexuality, e.g. Kulick, 2003; Cameron & Kulick, 2003) involving the whole gamut of genetic, psychological, social, and cultural differences between males and females. Wodak (1997) says that gender is not... a pool of attributes possessed by a person, but... something a person does. In such a view, gender must be learned as a new aspect in each generation. As Cameron (2006) says: sex is a word used in connection with the biological characteristics that mark humans and other animals as either male or female, whereas gender refers to the cultural traits and behaviors deemed appropriate for men or women by a particular society.

According to Bradley (1998), men use one dialect among themselves and women use the other. Men also use men's dialect to speak to women and women use women's dialect to speak to men. Men and women speech differ because boys and girls are brought up differently and men and women often play different roles in the society.

***Statement of the problem***

Men and women not only differ with each other biologically but also they are different in terms of the cognitive performances (Rahimzadehgan, 2008). Generally in the modern societies, there are some differences in the social role of the both sexes; some differences in their elements structure and finally in their linguistic behavior can also be observed. These differences can- be ignored in some of societies and may be limited to the certain pronunciation characteristics and idioms, but in the other societies these differences are important and should be regarded. In the view of some of linguists, the linguistic differences of two genders have arisen from the social gap, but in most of the societies men and women communicate with each other freely with little social obstacles, and they haven't any social effect on the extent of their relationship. Thus, we cannot attribute the difference between the species related to the gender to the geographic, ethnic and class species (Nooshinfar, 1995).

However, the fundamental intended issue is dealing with the effect of bilingualism and gender between men and women in the manner of expressing. Bilingualism is defined as knowing two languages by a person that can think of

them simultaneously. A bilingual person, on the other hand, has the capability to express his manner by either two known languages. Expressing the manner may be affected by various factors. This study aims at exploring the impression of gender and bilingualism on the manner of expressing between men and women. However, with regard to differences between men and women in the society of Iran, the main focus of the ongoing research is investigating the influence of gender and bilingualism upon the manner of expressing of Iranian EFL learners.

### ***Significance of the study***

Among various differences between men and women, bilingualism and gender have not been taken into account seriously to be examined whether they have impact upon the manner of expressing or not. Therefore, the current study dealt with this process as a nominal step to shed lights on the unclear ideas in this regard. One more point that adds to the significance of the study is the inclusion of Kurdish language conjugated with Persian. Because Kurdish language is spoken in some particular places put another way, the main aim of this study is high lighting the impact of bilingualism and gender on the manner of expressing of men and women.

## **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

In the community Keenan studied (1974), in a village in Madagascar, it was men, rather than women, who used indirect speech and a formal speech style.

Al-Wer (1997), proposes that women (and educated and urbanized men) use more prestige forms than less-educated locally affiliated men, and men seem to avoid highly salient forms that are associated with women's speech. Janet Holms (2008) proposes that women and men do not speak in exactly the same way as each other in any community. Women tend to use more of the standard forms than men do, while men use more of the vernacular forms than women do.

Jahromi Jafarian (1993-1994) has studied the effect of the gender on learning of the English language and again has emphasized on the differences between the men and women in this field.

Yeganeh (1996) also in a research has studied the effect of the gender and the speaker age and also the listener on the extent of the politeness in Iran. And has compared its result with the other societies. The results of this research shows that the student and scholar girls who speak in Persian language are more polite than the same course, and the age of the speaker has little role in the extent of the polite.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Regarding the purposes of the study, the following research questions are posed:

### ***Main question***

Do gender and bilingualism (Persian & Kurdish) affect the application manner of request discourse among Iranian English language university students?

### ***Peripheral questions***

1. Is there a significant difference with regard to "internal variable" in the manner of expressing among men and women?
2. Is there a meaningful difference with regard to "supportive" manner of expressing among the four language groups?
3. Is there a meaningful difference in the "alterter" manner of expressing among the four language groups?
4. Is there a meaningful difference in the "standard indirect" manner of expressing among the four language groups?
5. Is there a meaningful difference in the "direct" manner of expressing among the four language groups?
6. Is there a meaningful difference in the "hints" manner of expressing among the four language groups?

### ***Research Hypotheses***

Based on the above mentioned research questions the following null Hypotheses are formulated:

1. There is no difference in the manner of expressing in the internal variable of men and women.
2. There is no difference in supportive variable in the manner of expressing among men and women.
3. There is no meaningful relationship in the manner of expressing with regard to alterters between men and women.
4. There is no meaningful relationship between the four language groups regarding the manner of expressing indirect variables in language speech.

5. There is no meaningful relationship viewing the manner of expressing utterances in direct variable scores in the four language groups under study.

6. There is no meaningful relationship viewing hints variable in the manner of expressing in the four language groups under study.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

The participants of the study included Ilam, Sanandaj and Tehran Islamic Azad University Science and Research Campus male and female EFL learners studying English in 2012-2013 educational years. The sample included 120 participants of EFL university students in Ilam, Sanandaj and Tehran Islamic Azad Universities of Science and Research Campus in 2012-2013 educational years who were randomly selected in four groups of 30 subjects. They were both male and female.

### ***Instrument***

The undergoing study adopted Hedayat (2005) questionnaire which included six questions and was entitled as investigating the gender impact on manner of stating request. I prepared a questionnaire including 32 questions. The first questions were population cognitive feature questions. The questionnaire involved six subscales which were: direct requests, indirect requests, hints, alerts, supportive requests and internal variables. The scoring of the questions depended upon the way of answering the experienced subjects to the questions directly or indirectly, hints or supportive. However, the scores in each scale were gathered and the total score of each subscale was attained.

### ***Procedure***

The intended sample which was 120 subjects was selected and based on the four groups of monolingual Persian men (30), bilingual Kurdish men (30), monolingual Persian women (30), and bilingual Kurdish women (30) were divided into four groups. It should be noted that this study aimed at exploring the effect of bilingualism (other than English) and gender on the manner of expressing of men and women. Then the subjects in the four groups answered the research questions then the questionnaires were gathered.

### ***Data analysis***

In conducting the current study, a questionnaire model containing 32 questions based on Hedayat (2005), 6 questions questionnaire model was provided for the selected participants who were 120 M.A EFL male and female students. Each of the questions showed a different situation. Since the aim of study was comparing men and women in the manner of expressing, they were assigned into two men (monolingual & bilingual) and women (monolingual & bilingual). In other words, the fundamental aim of the current research was to determine whether gender and bilingualism have any impact upon participants' manner of expressing in six aspects or not. These six aspects were : direct requests, indirect requests, hints, alerts, supportive requests and internal variables.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

*Table 1: The average and standard deviation of scores variables in four language groups*

Dial	Groups	number	Average	Standard deviation
Internal variable	Persian monolingual men	30	4/13	3/67
	Kurdish bilingual men	30	1/96	1/82
	Persian monolingual women	30	6/65	3/87
	Kurdish bilingual women	30	7/38	2/95
Supportive variable	Persian monolingual men	30	5/96	5/08
	Kurdish bilingual men	30	5/50	3/35

	Persian monolingual women	30	6/27	3/69
	Kurdish bilingual women	30	6/00	2/69
Alerters	Persian monolingual men	30	5/20	2/72
	Kurdish bilingual men	30	4/20	2/58
	Persian monolingual women	30	1/75	1/57
	Kurdish bilingual women	30	1/16	1/39
Indirect standard	Persian monolingual men	30	4/40	2/72
	Kurdish bilingual men	30	4/70	3/28
	Persian monolingual women	30	2/79	2/52
	Kurdish bilingual women	30	1/74	2/29
Direct	Persian monolingual men	30	8/83	5/92
	Kurdish bilingual men	30	11/66	7/03
	Persian monolingual women	30	5/82	4/57
	Kurdish bilingual women	30	2/80	3/08
Hints	Persian monolingual men	30	2/70	2/05
	Kurdish bilingual men	30	4/20	4/58
	Persian monolingual women	30	6/79	4/22
	Kurdish bilingual women	30	12/06	4/33

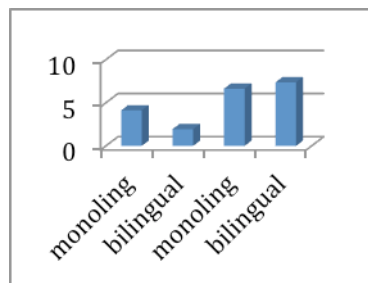


Diagram 1: The internal variable scores mean of the four language groups

### Internal Modifiers

The internal variables are those which are related to the main speech acts and may affect its social conditions (Hedayat, 2005). This remedy is the most indirect speech because some respectful words such as “Excuseme”, “Favor me” and “can I” are used in a sentence simultaneously and increase their indirectness amount. So, viewing the

contents of table 1 and diagram 1, it is concluded that the score mean of bilingual Kurdish women had considerable changes in comparison to the other groups.

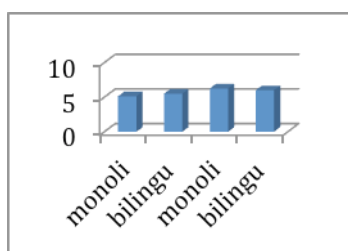


Diagram 2: The supportive variable scores mean in four language groups

### Supportive moves

These are complementary speech acts which influence communication. The speaker can apply supportive requests to affect discourse positively or negatively. The supportive requests affect the situation within they occur and change the language behavior indirectly (Hedayat, 2005). In some parts relevant to questionnaire, this guideline has been used. In this request some words like, sorry, can I..... favor me ..... are used in a sentence simultaneously and increase the indirectness degree. Application of these supportive parts can bring about changes in speech acts results. In table 1 and in diagram 2 it is observed that the scores mean of the four language groups under study in supportive variable were not meaningful in comparison to each other.

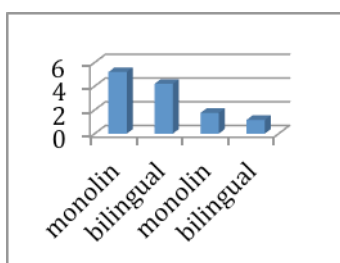


Diagram 3: The alerters variable scores mean in the four language groups

### Alerters

We use alerter requests of manner when we want to interest the audiences' discretion and show our social statement effected by this way, which may intense the force degree (Hedayat, 2005). As an example, "would you please give me your pamphlet to copy it down"? The application of phrases like "would you please" "can you" are helpful here. More particularly speaking, alerter is defined as the application of some phrases which raise the force degree of the manner of expressing used by both genders and this helps attracting the audience attendance. Therefore, as it is observed in table 1 and diagram 3, the Persian monolingual men scores mean show considerable changes in comparison and relation to other three groups. Also, the Kurdish bilingual women scores mean was in the least level in comparison to the other three groups.

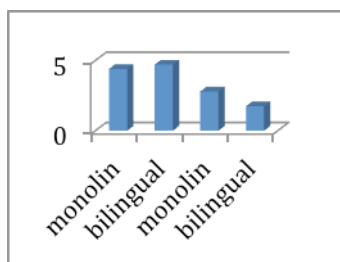


Diagram 4: The standard indirect variable scores mean in the four language groups

### Conventional indirect requests

These are the manners which are in question forms, and are followed by terms such as can I ....., excuse me ....., sorry ..... to show their indirectness (Islami Rasekh, 1993). So, as it is observed in table 1 and in diagram 4, the Kurdish bilingual men group scores mean considerable changes in comparison to other three language groups are seen. As a reality, the least mean is related to Kurdish bilingual women.



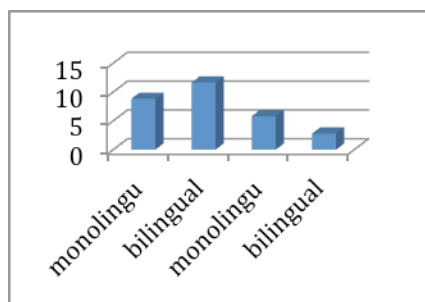


Diagram 5: The direct variable scores mean in the four language groups

#### Direct manner of expressing

This is related to requests which are expressed directly without a broker in between. These are not stated as the questions form and hence are the most direct requests. A good example is: close the window (Islami Rasekh, 1993). Therefore, as it was appeared in table 1 and in diagram 5, the Kurdish bilingual men scores mean shows remarkable changes in comparison to the other three groups and is higher than the other groups. Meanwhile, the Kurdish bilingual women scores mean was in the least level in comparison to the other three groups.

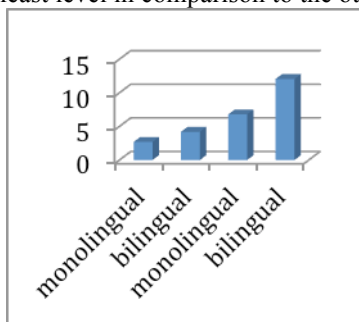


Diagram 6: The hints variable scores mean in the four language groups

#### Hints

These are related to those request categories which are stated in question form without direct mentioning to what the teller wants, like: Do you have a pen?

In this kind of speech act, the teller prefers to use imperative sentences and express himself by using hints. Economidou –Kogetsidis (2002) define hint as the conventional request which are not used in language but give the listener or hearer the capability to extract the tellers (speakers) intention and purpose. In so much, as it was noted in table 1 and diagram 6, Kurdish bilingual women group scores mean changed remarkably in comparison to the other three groups. Besides, the least amount of mean is related to Persian monolingual men.

Table 2: The results of multivariables covariance analysis on the four language groups

Effect	Test name	Amount	F	Df hypothesis	Error hypothesis	P	Eta coefficients
Language	Examination of Pylayy	0/915	8/26	18/00	339/00	0/000	0/305
	Wilks Lambda test	0/250	11/03	18/00	314/44	0/000	0/370
	Test of the Hotelling	2/36	14/41	18/00	329/00	0/000	0/441
	The largest root test	2/08	39/27	6/00	113/00	0/000	0/676

In table 2, the multivariable's covariance analysis quadripartite tests related to the variables means comparison, internal variable, supportive variable, alerter, indirect standards, direct and hints were demonstrated. As it is

observed, internal and supportive variables, alerter, indirect and direct standards, and hints are statistically meaningful. They indicate that the four language groups differ at least in one variable or in mean among the variables from each other

Table 3: The analysis results of variance on post test scores in four language groups

Dial	Change sources	Total mean	fd	sm	Relation f	Meaningful level
Internal variable	Intergroup	554/45	3	184/81	18/31	0/000
	Intra group	1170/34	116	10/08		
	Total	1724/79	119			
Supportive variable	Intergroup	9/20	3	3/06	0/207	0/891
	Intra group	1720/26	116	14/83		
	Total	1729/46	119			
Alerters	Intergroup	337/22	3	112/40	22/51	0/000
	Intra group	579/10	116	4/99		
	Total	916/32	119			
Indirect standard	Intergroup	176/60	3	58/86	7/90	0/000
	Intra group	864/19	116	7/45		
	Total	1040/80	119			
Direct	Intergroup	1331/18	3	443/72	15/47	0/000
	Intra group	3325/81	116	28/67		
	Total	4656/99	119			
Hints	Intergroup	1554/23	3	518/07	33/46	0/000
	Intra group	1795/73	116	15/48		
	Total	3349/96	119			

The results obtained from ANOVA variance analysis in table 3 on variables scores indicate that there is a meaningful difference between the internal variable scores mean ( $p < 0/000$ ,  $F = 18/31$ ), alerter ( $p < 0/000$ ,  $F = 22/51$ ), indirect standards ( $p < 0/000$ ,  $F = 7/90$ ), direct ( $p < 0/000$ ,  $F = 15/47$ ) and hints ( $p < 0/000$ ,  $F = 33/46$ ) in the four language groups. As well, there was not seen a significant difference regarding supportive variable ( $p < 0/891$ ,  $F = 0/207$ ) in the four language groups. Because of the variable differences among the four groups, a followed test for designating the group differences was used according to which the results have been shown in table 4.

Table 4: Toki test for investigating the changes made in the four language group variables

variable	The compared group	Mean differences	Standard error	Meaningful level
Internal variable	Persian monolingual men-Kurdish bilingual men	2/16	0/820	0/046
	Persian monolingual men-Persian monolingual women	2/52	0/827	0/015
	Persian monolingual men-Kurdish bilingual women	3/25	0/813	0/001
	Persian monolingual women-Kurdish bilingual women	0/731	0/820	0/809
	Kurdish bilingual men-Kurdish bilingual women	5/42	0/813	0/000
	Kurdish bilingual men-Persian monolingual women	4/68	0/827	0/000
Supportive variable	Persian monolingual men-Kurdish bilingual men	0/466	0/994	0/966
	Persian monolingual men-Persian monolingual women	0/309	1/00	0/869
	Persian monolingual men-Kurdish bilingual	0/033	0/986	1/00

	women			
	Persian monolingual women-Kurdish bilingual women	0/275	0/994	0/993
	Kurdish bilingual men-Kurdish bilingual women	0/500	0/986	0/957
	Kurdish bilingual men-Persian monolingual women	0/775	1/00	0/866
Alerters	Persian monolingual men-Kurdish bilingual men	1/00	0/576	0/311
	Persian monolingual men-Persian monolingual women	3/44	0/581	0/000
	Persian monolingual men-Kurdish bilingual women	4/03	0/572	0/000
	Persian monolingual women-Kurdish bilingual women	0/597	0/577	0/729
	Kurdish bilingual men-Kurdish bilingual women	3/03	0/572	0/000
	Kurdish bilingual men-Persian monolingual women	2/44	0/581	0/000
Indirect standard	Persian monolingual men-Kurdish bilingual men	0/30	0/704	0/971
	Persian monolingual men-Persian monolingual women	1/60	0/710	0/041
	Persian monolingual men-Kurdish bilingual women	2/65	0/699	0/000
	Persian monolingual women-Kurdish bilingual women	1/05	0/705	0/446
	Kurdish bilingual men-Kurdish bilingual women	2/95	0/699	0/000
	Kurdish bilingual men-Persian monolingual women	1/60	0/710	0/113
Direct	Persian monolingual men-Kurdish bilingual men	2/83	1/38	0/176
	Persian monolingual men-Persian monolingual women	3/00	1/39	0/000
	Persian monolingual men-Kurdish bilingual women	6/02	1/37	0/000
	Persian monolingual women-Kurdish bilingual women	3/02	1/38	0/134
	Kurdish bilingual men-Kurdish bilingual women	8/86	1/37	0/000
	Kurdish bilingual men-Persian monolingual women	5/83	1/39	0/000
Hints	Persian monolingual men-Kurdish bilingual men	1/50	1/01	0/455
	Persian monolingual men-Persian monolingual women	4/09	1/02	0/001
	Persian monolingual men-Kurdish bilingual women	9/36	1/00	0/000
	Persian monolingual women-Kurdish bilingual women	5/27	1/01	0/000
	Kurdish bilingual men-Kurdish bilingual women	7/86	1/00	0/000
	Kurdish bilingual men-Persian monolingual women	2/59	1/02	0/060

According to data obtained from variance analysis (table 4 and diagram 1) show the internal variability show the meaningful difference in the four language groups so, the first hypothesis is rejected. Viewing results from variance analysis (table 4 and diagram 2) shows supportive variable groups that there is no meaningful difference between in four language groups so, the second hypothesis is accepted. According to analysis data from variance analysis (table 4 and diagram 3) on indirect variable scores with regard to meaningfulness of indirect variable. Therefore, the third hypothesis is rejected. With regard to the variance analysis results in (table 4 and diagram 4) on direct variable scores in four language scores, it can be said that there is a meaningful relationship between the four language groups from indirect variable aspects points of view. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis is rejected.

According to the results obtained via variance analysis (table 4 and diagram 5) on indirect variable scores in the four language groups, it is seen that there is no meaningful difference between the four language groups from direct variable points of view. Therefore, the fifth hypothesis is rejected. According to the obtained results via variance (table 4 and diagram 6) on hints variable scores in the four language groups, it can be seen that with regard to hints variables there is a meaningful difference between the four language groups. Therefore, the sixth hypothesis is rejected.

## CONCLUSIONS

Imperative utterances, are the spoken words or sentences by speakers asking the audience to do a task for them. They have various forms and patterns. The degree of social politeness can be determined via classification of these utterances from the most direct to the most indirect ones. The hearer (audience) cannot avoid staying against the most direct speech, Lakoff, (1975). In reality, since direct speech is imperative, the response of the listener is therefore positive. Of course, this is true if the speaker be in an authority status in comparison to the listener. More particularly speaking, direct speeches are imperative utterances and according to the current study it was revealed that women were more polite and positive in encountering these utterances. However it simply put the results and findings of the current study reveal that women (monolingual and bilingual) apply their indirect responses along with extra explanation more and usually act more politely than men (monolingual and bilingual). As well, they act more conservatively than what men do.

This was clearly seen in the speech behavior of women under study. What they uttered and the kind of behavior they did while speaking made it more tangible for the researcher to see that they were more conservative. Put another way, it seems that women (monolingual and bilingual) have learnt how to use more polite, weaker, attractive and humble forms of language. The application of sentences such as "Pardon me" and "I can't find this book" show how women were polite in their communication and their speech activities. Sentences like "I want to use this set but I don't know how to work with it sorry" show that women (monolingual and bilingual) speak somehow in a weaker and lower level (tone) so that they can achieve what they want more easily. They use the word "Excuse me (Pardon me)" more frequently to show their respect and attention. Women (monolingual and bilingual) show such kind of behavior for their high social position and also for their amicability. Simply put, they try to keep and preserve their social personality by keeping the utterances as secret. For instance, "Excuse me dear Professor, Do you know how to work with this device" justifies this statement. All in all, based on the findings related to the present study, the following conclusions were made:

- Women show more respect and attention in their speech
- They (women) make their attempts to keep their social position and amicability while communicating with others
- These kinds of behavior is rarely seen in men communication in comparison to the women

According to the studies and attempts done by Brown and Levinson (1978) the **indirectness of speech** is not the only aspect of request affecting the social politeness. The presence or lack of internal and external factors is also important. The uses of more **supportive and internal variables** which dulcify the language elements have caused fundamental differences between women (monolingual and bilingual) and men (monolingual and bilingual). These requests are the most polite and indirect requests and since they have been mostly used by women (monolingual and bilingual), they can therefore be connected somehow to women social politeness in their speech behavior.

## Research limitation

This study, like many other research studies, was not without its limitations. First, lack of collaboration in answering the questions of the questionnaire from students' part. Second, difficulty in access to sites. Third, having no access to universities and libraries in the long distance. Fourth, the severe limitation and hierarchical rules in not allowing access to other theses. In addition, the huge and dispersal of the required data and the time limitation in collecting, classifying and analyzing them. Limiting the research merely on the effect of bilingualism on the manner of expression. And finally, the limitation and restriction of inner and outer sources regarding the effect of gender and bilingualism (Persian & Kurdish) and request manner.

### ***Applied suggestions***

The findings of this study may inspire several implications. First, the finding of the research can be used for promoting the equal behavior of male and female students in education. Second, the results of the current study can be used as a reinforcement of equal behavior for the male and female university students in higher educational centers. Third, the findings of the research can be helpful in compiling writing English books and using it for gender combination or breakdown. Fourth, the results obtained from the present study can be used for women communicative issues occurring to them while entering men jobs. In addition, the findings are also helpful in virtual economic agencies as well as for marketing institutions. Using the results of the research for educating those interested ones for entering the security and informative sections. And finally, the results can be used for promotion of the equal behavior of the male and female prisoners in jail affairs organization and retraining centers.

### ***Research issues for further researches***

Further investigations can be conducted with a view to the findings of the present study. The investigation of the effect of gender and bilingualism on students' intelligence measurement to enter schools. The investigation of the impact of gender and bilingualism upon English language teaching. The study of the influence of new information technology on discourse. Investigating the impact of migration upon discourse. The study of the effect of work and economics on the discourse manner. The investigation of the impact of education on the manner of discourse application. The study of the effect of politics and government on the discourse manner application. The study of the effect of culture on the manner of discourse application. The study of the impact of gender on language borrowing.

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**OBSTRUCTIVE INTERRUPTIONS BY J.K ROWLING IN OPRAH WINFREY SHOW; A STUDY OF CONVERSATIONAL ANALYSIS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The paper is entitled “Obstructive Interruptions By J.K Rowling in Oprah Winfrey Show; A Study of Conversational Analysis is purposed to find out the characteristics of obstructive interruption and the reasons why Rowling initiates interruption during the conversation with Oprah Winfrey in the Oprah Winfrey Show. The theoretical background that is employed is Conversational Analysis. The method that is used to analyze is qualitative by implementing inductive technique. The data is in a form of video that is collected from <http://youtube.com> and <http://harrypotterspage.com> for the video transcription. The research find out that obstructive interruptions are identified by three indicators; cutting more than three syllables away, silences or pauses, and overlapping talk. Rowling interrupts because she wants to give clarification, to show reluctant disagreement and to show strong agreement.

**KEYWORDS:** supportive interruption, obstructive interruption, seeking information and clarification, reservation remark, contrastive marker, disjunctive marker.

**INTRODUCTION**

People communicate by means of a language. Language as a means of communication plays an important role in human interaction. Human interacts each other to convey ideas, thoughts and messages. The communication occurs when the messages stated by the speaker are understood by the hearer and the hearer responds accordingly to the speaker. In expressing the message, people use two modes, written and spoken communication. In order to know that communication occurs accordingly, spoken language holds an essential function. Through spoken language, people can express their message, feeling, intension and emotion directly. Furthermore, they can not only read facial expression to show agreement, disagreement, or hesitation directly without waiting too long but also build good relationship. They might receive feedback directly. Therefore, spoken language holds important role in communication.

In using spoken language, especially in conversation, there should be at least two participants, a speaker and a hearer. There are utterances between a speaker and a hearer. Utterances spoken by hearer should be understood by both of them because conversation is not monolog but dialog (Conklin, 2009:11). Conversation is the interchange of ideas; it is the willingness to communicate thought on all subjects, personal and universal, and in turn to listen to the sentiments of others regarding the ideas advanced. Furthermore, Conklin continues that good conversation is the give and take the talk (Conklin,2009:16).

In conversation, people cannot expect that only one person will do the talk all the time because there should be take-and-give activity, especially in a talk show. Talk shows can be regarded as a particular kind of face-to-face conversation (Ilie, 2001:214). Conklin defines that good conversation, then, is the give and take of talk. A person who converses well also listens well. The one is inseparable from the other. (Conklin 2009:16). One of the famous talk show is Oprah Winfrey Show. The Oprah Winfrey Show had been broadcast for over two decades. It was a very famous talk show whose almost prominent public figures around the globe had been invited as guests. Many of Oprah’s shows supported discussions of personal matters. No topic was taboo. The participants willingly shared personal and private elements of their lives with viewers, elements they hadn’t told others. Even though doctors report that patients generally are reluctant to discuss sexual matters with them, it seems they are ready to go on television and tell all (Garson, 2004:45).One of the guests of the talk show was J.K Rowling.



J.K Rowling is the author of Harry Potter novel. She is a well-known writer. To interview J.K Rowling, Winfrey had to fly from United States to Scotland where Rowling originates from. The talk show did not occur in Harpo Studio where it was usually attended by so many audiences that the sound of applause would be heard. As a guest of a talk show she has to answer all questions, give clarification of the rumors, show agreement or disagreement to the utterances stated by Winfrey as the hostess of the talk show. In doing those obligations, Rowling sometimes has to interrupt. Esposito (1975) in Tannen (1994) further describes that interruption occurs when the speaker A cuts off more than one word of speaker's B unit-type. Tannen herself (1994) defines an interruption as when a second speaker usurps another speaker's right to continue speaking by taking the conversational floor in the absence of any evidence that the other speakers intend to relinquish the turn.

There are two types of interruption, supportive and obstructive. Supportive interruption or cooperative interruption is intended to help the speaker by providing a word or phrase that a speaker is searching for or by completing the speaker's utterance. Supportive interruption can be identified in forms of short commentaries or clarifying questions. The second type is obstructive interruption. It occurs when the second speaker cuts the first speaker off more than the last word of the utterance. This research will find out the characteristics of obstructive interruption initiated by Rowling and the reasons Rowling initiates obstructive interruption.

### **THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

This research uses Conversational Analysis as an approach in analyzing the conversations. The main reference about Conversational Analysis is taken from Psathas (1995). Psathas describes the definition of conversation clearly and understandably. He also clarifies the characteristics of good conversation. In line with Psathas is Liddicoat (2007), Conklin (2004), Silverman (1998), Huchthby and Wooffitt (1998). They have similar theoretical background in describing conversation or talk. To support Psathas' theory on conversation the researcher uses the theory not only from Conklin (2004) but also Levinson (1983) which is supported by Yule (1983) because Levinson describes about Turn-taking. This analysis focuses on interruption occurs during the talk show.

To analyze obstructive interruption the writer uses the first indicator from West and Zimmermann ((1983:104). West and Zimmerman (1983: 104) in Okamoto et al (2002:39) defined obstructive interruption as "incursions that are initiated more than two syllables away from the initial or terminal boundary of a unit-type." In simpler terms, an interruption can be detected when a deep intrusion occurs more than two syllables away from a possible turn-transition space.

The second indicator to find obstructive interruption is overlapping talk that occurs as a result from interruption.

Harwood (2006) states that in authentic conversation, interruptions and overlaps are part of the negotiation of turns. Tannen (1994) explained that overlap is an act of interruption without leaving any pause in conversation. This will make the second speaker's words and the first speaker's words heard together at the same time in conversation.

The third indicator of obstructive interruption is the availability of silences and pauses. Pauses and silences are unavoidable either in conversation. Pauses can be short or long. Short pauses may indicate hesitations but longer pauses will lead to silences. Silence happens when one speaker turns over the floor to another and the other does not speak. Yule (1996 : 72-73) calls it attributive silence. Meanwhile, to find out the reasons of obstructive interruption, the writer uses indicators from Wardhaugh (1985). The writer will focus on two reasons of obstructive interruption; seeking information or clarification and showing agreement or disagreement.

### **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

To mention clearly, there are two research questions that will be elaborated based on the theoretical background;

What are the characteristics of obstructive interruptions initiated by J.K Rowling?

What are the reasons J.K Rowling initiate obstructive interruptions?

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The methodology employed in the research is conversation analysis. The methodological preferences of the conversation analysis are derived from ethnomethodology (Levinson, 1983: 295). Considering this, conversation analysis is a kind of qualitative research. The method of conversation analysis is inductive. The method is made for recurring patterns across many

records of natural conversation (Levinson:1983). This research uses the technique of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling refers to a technique of collecting data that has certain purposes. The researcher uses her judgment about which respondents to choose. The researcher picks only those who meet the purposes of the study. It means that the samples are able to support the research.

In this research, the researcher transcribes all recorded data into the form of orthography. The steps for data collection are as follows:

1.1 Downloading all six parts of the videos.

The source of data is a conversation between Oprah Winfrey and J.K. Rowling. The conversation can be downloaded from <http://youtube.com>. There are six parts of them:

- a. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnHvy\\_50IIE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnHvy_50IIE)
- b. [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ow0\\_H7as1g8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ow0_H7as1g8)
- c. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wp15OXgFad8>
- d. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=omtUS5qnGag>
- e. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veZ9n6wVKxQ>
- f. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zp4lWsJn29k>

1.2 Downloading the transcript from <http://harrypotterspage.com>

3.3 Giving codes to the transcript of each conversation text by using orthography adopted from Levinson (1983 : 369-370).

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following chapter will describe the finding of obstructive interruption initiated by Rowling as the guest of the talk show. Obstructive interruption will be characterized by three indicators as well. The first indicator will be shown from the syllables that are cut by the second speaker. The second speaker will cut off the first speaker's utterances more than two syllables away. The second indicator will be identified by overlapping talk between the two speakers. The last characteristic of obstructive interruption will be indicated by silences and pauses that occur during the conversation. The followings are the findings.

Excerpt 1

1. Winfrey: But isn't it interesting that in the first book (.2)
2.           when Harry is being dropped-off at his uncle's (.2)
3.           **it is predicted** (.2) // ...
4. Rowling:                               // **One day every child in the world will**
5.           **know his name**

The topic of the conversation on excerpt 1 was about how Rowling started writing her first novel. Winfrey introduced the topic by giving her impression on the first novel. She said '*Isn't it interesting*'. She would like to introduce the new topic that Winfrey wanted to know. She showed her impression first by using contrastive marker '*But*' then followed by introductory statement '*Isn't it interesting*'. It showed that Winfrey found confusion to find appropriate words or utterances to open the topic of the conversation. Her confusion can be shown when she put silence around two seconds after the utterance '*book*' (line 1), (line 2) after the utterance '*uncle's*' and (line 3) after the utterance '*predicted*'. The silences that occurred three times showed that Winfrey needed help to express her thought. Therefore, Rowling initiated to take over a turn after Winfrey finished her turn.

Winfrey had not finished with her turn yet. The utterance '*It's predicted*' needed completion. The utterance '*It's predicted*' consists of Subject that is represented by '*It*' and Verb that is represented by '*is predicted*'. The utterance still needed Object to form it into complete sentence. The Object of the sentence was completed by Rowling by saying '*one day every child in the world will know his name*'. If the utterance from Winfrey was combined by the utterance from Rowling, it could form a complete Noun Clause, such as the following description:

It + is predicted + (that) every child in the world will know his name  
S +       V               +                               O

Therefore, it can be assumed that the interruption initiated by Rowling was obstructive interruption. Rowling took over a turn before Winfrey finished her utterance. There are more than two syllables away cut by Rowling. Moreover the interruption initiated by Rowling was preceded by silence put by Winfrey. Seemingly, Rowling did

not have an intention to relinquish Winfrey's turn. She waited Winfrey to finish her turn. However, since Winfrey showed confusion to clarify her further utterance by putting silences three times, Rowling was triggered to interrupt by stating the utterance searched by Winfrey. Consequently, it can also be considered that the obstructive interruption initiated by Rowling was successful enough because Winfrey did not say further utterances. She let Rowling take over a turn in order to finish Winfrey's utterance.

The reason why Rowling interrupted was because she wanted to finish Winfrey's utterance. She was to confirm that the utterances Winfrey would like to complete were '*one day every child in the world will know his name*'. Rowling used confirming device to interrupt. She repeated what she wrote in her first novel. She knew it well that those were the utterances that Winfrey was looking for. She interrupted not because she needed to get information or confirmation. On the other hand, she gave confirmation to Winfrey. Winfrey didn't mind at all when she was helped by Rowling in finishing her utterance. There was no overlapping talk that indicated Winfrey would take over a turn. She remained silence. It showed that Winfrey indeed needed confirmation from Rowling to finish utterance. Actually, Winfrey as the hostess of the talk show should be responsible for asking or seeking information and clarification. As the guest of the talk show Rowling has responsibilities to give information and clarification. Thus, the obstructive interruption that was initiated by Rowling above by using confirming device was purposed to give confirmation.

In brief, excerpt 1 is identified as obstructive interruption by Rowling because she cut Winfrey's utterance more than two syllables away. It was considered obstructive interruption also because Winfrey put silences in her utterances. The device that she used to interrupt is confirming device because she wants to give confirmation that what Winfrey says is correct.

The second finding of obstructive interruption that was initiated by Rowling was as follow.

Excerpt 2

1. Winfrey: Did it help you to know more of who you are? Did it bring
2. // [you into a] // ...
3. Rowling: // [Eventually] But I can't say I walked straight out of
4. that marriage and that experience saying, you know,
5. I feel enlightened in any way. I felt quite shell-shocked.

The topic of the conversation was about Rowling's first marriage that had ended into divorce. Winfrey asked Rowling what her first marriage taught her about herself. The topic of Rowling's marriage had never been revealed too much in public. Winfrey only knew little about her marriage that ended into divorce in a short period of time. Winfrey asked Rowling '*Did it help you to know more of who you are?*' (line 1) to describe whether her short marriage had brought Rowling into a person who knew herself better. The word '*it*' refers to her divorce. Winfrey's question did not stop until the utterance '*who you are*'. The question '*Did it bring you into a?*' was intended to paraphrase the previous question '*Did it help you to know more of who you are?*'

Knowing that Winfrey would like to paraphrase the question, Rowling was triggered to interrupt. She did not let Winfrey finish her utterance. She wanted to take over her turn. She yielded Winfrey's turn by saying '*Eventually*' (line 3) when Winfrey was still saying '*you into a*' (line 2). Therefore, the voice from Winfrey when she said '*you into a*' and the voice from Rowling when she said '*eventually*' was heard together. It was considered overlapping talk. The overlapping talk that was initiated by Rowling to interrupt was successful because Winfrey did not continue her question. Rowling was successful to relinquish Winfrey's turn to finish her question. The question from Winfrey had not come to an end yet. The utterance '*Did it bring you into a?*' was not completed yet. The possible completion could be as the following: '*Did it bring you into a better person?*' The utterance '*better person*' is pronounced four syllables. Therefore, the interruption that indicated by overlapping talk initiated by Rowling was considered obstructive interruption, because Rowling had cut more than two syllables away from the possible turn transition of Winfrey's utterance.

The utterance that Rowling used to interrupt '*eventually*' was a reservation remark. Reservation remark is by Rowling to indicate that she feels reluctant or uncertain to disagree. She used the utterance '*eventually*' to refer that being a better person needed process. She did not want to disagree Winfrey's utterance in a quick response because she felt uncertain whether she had become a better person or not. However, after she said '*eventually*', she used contrastive marker '*But*'. The contrastive device that used was not to show confrontation. She wanted to confront herself. She felt uncertain of herself. It can be seen from the utterance she said. Once she said '*I feel enlightened*' (line 5) to express that she felt relieved after the divorce. On the other hand, she said '*I felt shell-shocked*' (line 5) to

express that she was very shocked after the divorce because she had a tiny baby. Therefore, she said '*eventually*' to show delayed agreement of Winfrey's question that being divorced could help Rowling into a better person. She did not want to agree right away that she could become a better person after the divorce. She needed process because of the terrible experiences she had.

In short, the finding in excerpt 2 was obstructive interruption that identified by overlapping talk that was initiated by Rowling. Besides, she cut more than two syllables away from the possible turn transition of Winfrey's utterance. The device that she used to interrupt was reservation remark utterance to show reluctant disagreement.

The following analysis will be the third finding of obstructive interruption that was initiated by Rowling.

Excerpt 3

1. Winfrey: I love the Harvard speech. Were you a little nervous?
- 2. [going to speak to Harvard?]
- 3. Rowling: // [a little. That was] //
4. Winfrey: // Even you?
5. Rowling: That was easily (.). The most frightening in my life.
6. Easily. It felt very exposing because this wasn't
7. reading out words that had already been approved.

The conversation in excerpt 3 above discussed about how Rowling felt when she gave a speech in Harvard University. The topic of the conversation was introduced by Winfrey by showing an expression of compliment. She gave compliment to Rowling that she supported and respected to what Rowling had spoken in Harvard University. The compliment was followed by question '*Were you a little nervous?*' giving a speech. The question was answered directly by Rowling without waiting turn signal from Winfrey by saying '*A little*' (line 3) She thought that Winfrey had ended her turn and would like to give a turn to Rowling. However, Winfrey still kept talking '*going to speak in Harvard?*' after asking a question. It is considered interruption.

Rowling interrupted Winfrey's utterances because Winfrey had not come to the end of turn transition yet. Rowling did not realize that Winfrey had not given a turn signal yet. She thought that the question '*Were you a little nervous?*' was completed enough to be responded. Therefore, she answered the question by saying '*a little*'. Even she intended to give clarification why she felt a little nervous. It can be seen from the utterance '*that was*' which followed the utterance '*a little*'. However, Winfrey did not give away her turn to Rowling right away although she knew that Rowling had taken over a turn. Winfrey kept her turn by continuing her utterance. She said '*going to speak in Harvard*'. It resulted in the utterance from Rowling when she said '*A little. That was*' (line 3) was heard together with the utterance from Winfrey when she said '*going to speak in Harvard*' (line 3). It is considered overlapping talk.

The overlapping talk that occurred in line (2 and 3) was identified as obstructive interruption. The overlapping talk happened between two speakers because Rowling impatiently would like to answer Winfrey's question without waiting turn yielding signal from Winfrey. Accidentally, Winfrey herself did not finish her utterance until '*Were you a little nervous?*' She thought she still needed to complete her utterance. If Winfrey's utterance was combined, it could become like this: '*Were you a little nervous going to speak in Harvard?*' There were five words uttered by Winfrey after '*were you a little nervous*' and they had more than two syllables away.

On the other hand, Rowling herself stopped her utterance after saying '*A little. That was*' although she was eager to take over the turn. It can be noticed from the phrase '*That was*'. The phrase was still absurd. It did not have any meaning at all. It did not show complete sentence. She did that because she did not intend to overtake her turn when she knew that Winfrey still kept her turn. She gave back the turn to Winfrey. It can be seen from the utterance '*Even you*' (line 4) uttered by Winfrey that was not overlapped by other utterances. Rowling let Winfrey finish her turn. After being sure that the utterance '*Even you*' was a turn signal given by Winfrey, Rowling then took over the floor.

The overlapping talk that occurred accidentally because Rowling wanted to give clarification on how she felt about giving a speech in Harvard as soon as she understood the question delivered by Winfrey. Winfrey's question '*were you a little nervous?*' was clear enough for Rowling to be answered right away. She used repetition to confirm. She repeated the same word '*A little*' with Winfrey's utterance '*were you a little nervous?*' Rowling took one word '*a little*' to show agreement that she indeed felt a little nervous giving a speech in Harvard. She showed strong agreement with Winfrey. The repetition initiated by Rowling was to show agreement. Moreover, she had an

intention to give further explanation after the utterance '*That was*'. Her explanation was delayed until Winfrey gave a turn signal. Once the signal was given, she explained her agreement by exaggerating or upgrading utterance device. It can be noticed in line (5- 7).

The exaggerating agreement that she used to explain '*A little nervous*' were the utterances such as '*easily*'. It meant that it was likely true that she felt a little nervous. She also used '*the most frightening*' to show the reason that giving a speech in Harvard scared her and made her nervous. She also used '*It felt very exposing*' that referred to the same word '*nervous*'. She successfully explained her feeling in giving her speech in Harvard by paraphrasing the word '*nervous*' into several different words which had exaggerating meaning.

To sum up, the interruption in excerpt 3 was obstructive interruption that was identified by overlapping talk. Rowling did an overlapping talk because she wanted to take over a turn. She intended to take over a turn because she wanted to agree with Winfrey that giving a speech in Harvard made her nervous. Rowling used exaggerating agreement to show her strong agreement with Winfrey.

## CONCLUSION

From the data analysis, it can be concluded that, the obstructive interruption initiated by J.K Rowling during the conversation with Oprah Winfrey as the hostess of the talk show, characterized by three indicators. First indicator, Rowling interrupts Winfrey three syllables away before the turn transition. Second indicator is the silences and pauses that initiated by Winfrey that triggered Rowling to interrupt. The third characteristic is the overlapping talk that results from interruption initiated by Rowling.

The reason why Rowling initiates interruption can be identified from the device she uses to interrupt. The first device that she used to interrupt is confirming device because she wants to give confirmation that what Winfrey says is correct. The second device that she uses is reservation remark utterance because she wants to show reluctant disagreement. The third reason is to show her strong agreement with Winfrey because the device that Rowling uses to interrupt is exaggerating agreement utterance.

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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN METACOGNITIVE AWARENESS AND TEST-TAKING STRATEGIES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON TEST PERFORMANCE OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between metacognitive awareness and test-taking strategies used by Iranian learners studying English as a foreign language (EFL). It also investigated the possible effects of participants' test-taking strategies and metacognitive awareness on their language test performance. 79 Iranian EFL learners studying English as a foreign language participated in this study. They were at intermediate level and included both male and female learners. All participants were asked to complete a metacognitive awareness inventory and a test-taking strategies questionnaire. The participants were divided into three groups (low, average, and high) based on test-taking strategy use score and the score of metacognitive awareness. The achievement of learners was investigated through their performance on final exam. Findings showed that a) learners' metacognitive awareness and test-taking strategy use significantly affected their test performance and their final achievement score; besides, b) there was a significant correlation between metacognitive awareness and test-taking strategy used by learners during their exam. The results of this study emphasized the importance of metacognitive awareness and test-taking strategy use in learning process and learners' performance. Learners can improve their performance by being metacognitively aware of their learning and using strategies in language tests.

**KEYWORDS:** Metacognitive awareness, Test-Taking Strategies, Test Performance.

### INTRODUCTION

These days, tests are found to play a key role in decision making. Learners are frequently evaluated based on their performance under test-taking situations. Consequently, better performance has become a great concern for most of students; therefore, they try hard to improve their performance on tests (Zhang, Liu, Zhao, & Xie, 2011). Successful learners use some strategies while taking tests which help them in finding right answers and perform more efficiently. Teachers can help their students by teaching them test-taking strategies which they can employ under a test situation and motivate them to recognize the importance of these strategies and how to benefit from them in order to achieve the desired outcome. However, knowledge of test-taking strategies is not enough; there are some factors that affect test-taking strategies. One of these factors is metacognitive awareness, being aware of what happens in one's mind or knowing about cognitive process. This awareness allows learners to have more control over their own learning process and test performance.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### *Test-Taking Strategies*

Learning strategies are one of the most controversial issues which have attracted the attention of many researchers (e.g. Cohen & Upton, 2007; Oxford, 1990; Zhang et al., 2011; Purpura, 1999; Phakiti, 2003, 2006). Oxford (1990) has discussed learning strategies as in the following: "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more transferable to new situations" (p. 8). One of these learning strategies is test-taking strategy which enables learners to take advantage of the characteristics and the format of the test to improve their performance and increase scores in test-taking situations (Rogers & Harley, 1999). These strategies include reading instructions carefully, scheduling the allocated time appropriately, making use of clue words in questions, delaying answering difficult questions, reviewing the work in order to check the answers, etc (Pour-Mohammadi & Zainol Abidin, 2012).

Language learners are to some extent aware of test-taking strategies or process that they selected. Accordingly, language test-taking strategies are classified into three categories: language use strategies, test-management strategies and test-wiseness strategies (Cohen & Upton, 2007). Language use strategies refer to those actions that

learners consciously take to increase the employment of a second or foreign language to complete language tasks. In most cases, examinees need to use four types of language use strategies (i.e., retrieval, rehearsal, cover, and communication strategies) in a testing situation so that they can store, retain, recall, and apply the information for use on the test (Pour-Mohammadi & Zainol Abidin, 2012, p.297). Test management strategies refer to those strategies for responding meaningfully to testing tasks (Xu & Wu, 2012). Test-wiseness strategies are “strategies for using knowledge of test formats and other peripheral information to answer test items without going through the expected linguistic and cognitive process” (Hirano, 2009, p. 158). For example, choosing the longest choice in a multiple choice test without knowing what it really means is one of these strategies. The difference between these three categories is that the basis of language competence decrease from first category (language use strategies) to the last one (test-wiseness strategies) (Xu & Wu, 2012).

Rezaee (2006, p.155) classified test-taking strategies into two types: “general and specific” strategies. General strategies refer to those strategies that can be applied to a wider variety of tests such as preparing for the test, reading the directions, use of time during a test, error avoidance strategies etc. While specific strategies refer to those strategies which are related to the exact area of the subject matter that is being tested and deal with taking various kinds of tests such as multiple-choice, matching, fill-in-the-blanks, essay, short answer, true-false, and problem solving. Pour-Mohammadi & Zainol Abidin (2011, p. 242) in a review of studies on test-taking strategies in second/foreign language reading comprehension tests, indicated that generally most of the studies on test-taking strategies describe test-taking strategies instruction and this fact that the use of such strategies help learners improve their performance on language tests, particularly reading comprehension tests. This is true for most EFL students regardless of what learning context they are in. They also investigated whether teaching test-taking strategies to Iranian EFL learners would help them to enhance their reading comprehension test performance. They found that teaching test-taking strategies was effective.

The relationship between test-takers’ cognitive and metacognitive strategy use and second language test performance was investigated by Purpura (1997). He used sophisticated statistical methods to investigate the relationships between test takers’ reported strategy use and their performance on second language tests (SLTP). He found that “strategies’ beneficial effects depend both on the type of task in which test takers deploy them and on the combination of other strategies with which test takers use them” (p. 315). A few years later, Phakiti (2006) investigated the relationship of these two strategies and EFL reading test performance. It was found that the degree of relationship between strategies varied depending on the function of cognitive processing (p. 86).

### ***Metacognitive Awareness***

Metacognition refers to “the ability to reflect upon, understand, and control one’s learning” (Schraw & Dennison, 1994, p. 460). Flavell (1978) first coined this term and defined it as “cognition about cognition” or “thinking about thinking” (Flavell, 1979). Two categories were distinguished for metacognition, including knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition (Flavell, 1979). He classified knowledge of cognition into three categories: person, task, and strategy knowledge. Person refers to general knowledge one has about human beings’ cognitive capabilities. Task is the knowledge about the nature of the task and finally strategy indicates the knowledge about strategies that may be useful for different tasks and in different situations. However, some other researchers such as Schraw (1994) have differently categorized components of metacognition. Accordingly, three types of knowledge are proposed: declarative knowledge or the knowledge about self and about strategies; procedural knowledge which is the knowledge about how to use strategies and conditional knowledge which relates to knowledge of when and why to use strategies. Regulation of cognition includes a set of sub-processes that regulate and facilitate the control of aspects of learning (Schraw & Dennison, 1994). The skills of this component are planning, monitoring and evaluation (Schraw, 1998). Planning includes goal setting and choosing the appropriate strategies before involving in learning. Monitoring is consideration of learning, task performance and the use of strategy while engaging in an activity. Evaluation is assessment of learning outcomes and strategies to examine whether the goals have been achieved (Schraw, 1998).

Recent studies demonstrated that learners who are aware of their metacognition and are metacognitively aware perform better than unaware learners (Garner & Alexander, 1989; Pressley & Ghatala, 1990, as cited in Schraw & Dennison, 1994). This is because metacognitive awareness allows learners to plan, sequence, and regulate their learning in a way that improve performance (Schraw, 1994).

Many recent studies indicate that metacognitive awareness is necessary due to the fast speed of change and innovation in knowledge (Cihanoglu, 2012). There are many studies focusing metacognition. Yüksel and Yüksel

(2012) investigated metacognitive awareness of academic reading strategies of students in Turkey. The results indicated that their participants were often aware of academic reading strategies. Memnun and Akkaya (2009) designed a study to determine the level of metacognitive awareness of primary teacher trainees and examined whether there was a difference according to class levels and gender. They reported that the majority of teacher trainees had a high level of metacognitive awareness. In addition, there was no significant difference among candidate teachers' metacognitive awareness regarding gender, but the difference among candidate teachers' metacognitive awareness according to class level was significant. Temur, Kargn, Bayar, and Bayar (2010), in their research investigated the effect of age and language skill levels on metacognitive awareness in the field of reading. The subjects were in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. The result of the study revealed that there was a positive correlation between grade level and metacognitive awareness in reading, but the difference was not statistically significant. Young and Fry (2008) examined the relationship between metacognitive awareness and academic achievement among college students. Correlations were found between the metacognitive awareness and cumulative GPA as well as end of course grades. Graduate and undergraduate students performed differently according to their metacognitive awareness. A study was also conducted by Yanyan (2010) who investigated the role of metacognitive awareness in English writing of Chinese EFL learners. The researcher used a self-designed questionnaire of metacognitive awareness. The results indicated that the learners' metacognitive knowledge was not strong, metacognitive knowledge and its three components, i.e., person knowledge, task knowledge and strategic knowledge, were all positively correlated with English writing performance. The results demonstrated that a good command of metacognitive knowledge can empower EFL learners in their English writing and cultivate their learning autonomy in English learning.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The present study attempted to investigate the use of English test-taking strategies and the effect of learners' metacognitive awareness on these strategies. To achieve this purpose, the following research questions were formulated:

1. Does Iranian EFL learners' metacognitive awareness affect their end of course achievements?
2. Do test-taking strategies used by Iranian EFL learners in English final exam affect their end of course achievements?
3. Is there any significant relationship between test-taking strategies used by Iranian EFL learners in English final exam and their metacognitive awareness?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The participants in this study were 79 learners studying English as a foreign language in two language institutes in Mashhad, Iran. They were at intermediate level and included both male and female learners. The number of the female participants amounted to 50 (36.7%), whereas that of the male participants corresponded to 29 (63.3%). During the semester, they have tried to improve their English knowledge such as grammar, vocabulary and their four skills of language learning including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. These learners studied English at schools at least for five years and attended English classes at language institutes at least for 8 semesters. To have the permission of continuing study in the present semester, all the participants have successfully passed the achievement test of the last semester which assessed the materials they have learnt throughout the term. Furthermore, all the participants have successfully passed the placement tests designed and carried out by the institutes in order to be able to study at this level. Four skills of language learning including speaking, listening, reading, and writing were tested through placement tests. First, learners took an English test examining their knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and their ability in dealing with reading passages and listening parts. After completing language tests, they were asked to write a short text about titles introduced by institutes' supervisors. At the end, in order to check the participants' speaking ability, they were interviewed one by one. Through interview section, both accuracy and fluency in speaking were considered. Those learners who successfully pass these stages and gain the acceptable level could attend the classes. In these language institutes, the focus of teaching was mostly on improving learners' speaking ability and there was no instruction for learners about test-taking strategies and how to take English test and take over problems during the test.

### *Instruments*

Two instruments were used to gather the relevant data for this study. They included Likert rating-scale questionnaires and final achievement test.

#### *Metacognitive Awareness Inventory*

The metacognitive awareness inventory used in this study was the one developed by Schraw and Dennison (1994). This inventory consisted of 52 multiple choice items. All items were written using 5-Likert-type scale, ranging from “Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree”. The items investigated two categories of metacognition; knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition with their subcomponents: declarative knowledge; procedural knowledge; conditional knowledge; planning; information management strategies; monitoring; debugging strategies; and evaluation. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient reported by Schraw and Dennison was 0.88. In order to check the efficiency of this inventory for EFL context and its appropriateness for the context of this study, the internal consistency reliability was calculated. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient in the present study was .92 which was quite strong (Dörnyei, 2007; DeVellis, 2003; Nunnally, 1978 as cited in Pallant, 2010).

#### *Test-Taking Strategy Use Questionnaire*

To measure participants’ test-taking strategies, a 5-point Likert rating-scale questionnaire: 1 (Never) to 5 (Always) adopted from Rezaei (2006) was used. This inventory included 22 multiple choice items with the Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient of 0.76. In the current study, the Chronbach alpha coefficient was .72 which is acceptable according to Dörnyei (2007 p.207). Strategies checked by this questionnaire can be put into four categories: a) items which bear on strategies generally used in taking a test, b) items which are related to specific strategies which are usually employed in taking reading comprehension tests, c) items which show strategies which subjects use in grammar tests, and d) items concerned with taking vocabulary tests.

#### *Final Achievement Test*

The achievement of learners was investigated through their performance on final exam of that semester. The test consisted of four parts. Grammar and vocabulary parts examined learners’ knowledge of vocabulary and grammar points which they acquired during the term. This test was designed by doing all the necessary steps of test development process. It was administered to many learners in order to be considered as a proper instrument for assessing learners’ English knowledge. It also tested learners’ listening ability and their ability in dealing with general reading passages. The scores were used as a criterion for their achievement and effectiveness of test-taking strategies they employed to complete the test.

### **Procedure**

#### *Data Collection*

In order to find the level of learners’ metacognitive awareness, all the participants were asked to complete the related questionnaires three weeks before the exam. The last session of the term was the final exam day. Students were to answer exam questions which need them to remember what they have learnt during the whole term and use their listening and reading skills. The questionnaire that seeks to identify the subjects’ test-taking strategies was conducted immediately after the final exam in order to prevent forgetfulness. The scores of final English test were considered as a criterion for investigating learners’ performance.

#### *Data Analysis*

Data collected from the two questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), 19<sup>th</sup> version. Data analysis procedures for this phase of the study included calculating descriptive statistics, such as means and standard deviations for the whole sample. In order to investigate any relationship between test-taking strategies and metacognitive awareness, a Pearson product moment correlation was conducted. The possible effect of test-taking strategies on EFL learners’ test performance was investigated by conducting a one-way analysis of variance. Another one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of metacognitive awareness on learners’ test performance. In order to check the learners’ achievement their scores of final exam were examined and used to find the above mentioned analyses.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Descriptive statistics including mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum were measured for test-taking strategy scale and metacognitive awareness inventory. Descriptive statistics are shown in Table 1. The metacognitive awareness inventory included 52 items with choices for each item ranged from 1(strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The highest possible score for this inventory was 260. In this study the learners’ metacognitive awareness ranged from 145 to 249. As can be inferred, there was no learner with perfect metacognitive awareness. Also, the

mean score obtained for total metacognitive awareness was 197.44 which was more than 75% of the full score for this scale (260).

The test-taking strategy scale was a 5-point Likert rating-scale questionnaire included 22 items. The responses for each statements of this scale ranged from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always). Considering 22 items on a five point scale, full score for this scale is 110. As can be seen in Table 1, the learners' using test-taking strategies during the exam ranged from 52 to 102 with the mean score of 79.55 which is somewhat more than 72% of the full score for this scale (110).

*Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Test-Taking Strategy Scale and Metacognitive Awareness Inventory*

	Min	Max	M	SD
Total MA	145	249	197.44	24.79
Total TTS	52	102	79.55	10.19
Scores	50	98	77.89	13.03

Note. MA= metacognitive awareness; TTS= test-taking strategy.

To facilitate hypothesis testing, participants were grouped into three categories based on their metacognitive awareness and their level of strategy use. The cutoff points were made using equal percentiles. In categorization based on metacognitive awareness, those learners scoring 187 or less comprised the low metacognitive group ( $n=28$ ); those scoring between 188 and 208 comprised the average group ( $n=27$ ); those scoring 209 or more comprised the high group ( $n=24$ ). Three test-taking strategy groups included low group comprising learners scoring 76 or less ( $n=28$ ); average group including those individuals scoring from 77 and 85 ( $n=29$ ); and those scoring 86 or more comprised the high group ( $n=22$ ).

In order to answer the first and second research questions and to see whether learners' test-taking strategy employment through the test affect their final exam achievement, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. The ANOVA results (see Table 2) showed that there was a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level for the three groups (low, average, and high) of test-taking strategy use:  $F(2, 76) = 125.18$ ,  $p = .01$ . The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was .7 which indicates that the difference in mean scores between the groups was quite large. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test showed that the mean score for learners with high test-taking strategy use ( $M = 93.37$ ,  $SD = 3.57$ ) was significantly different from learners with average test taking strategy use ( $M = 78.87$ ,  $SD = 8.96$ ) and those with low strategy use ( $M = 64.71$ ,  $SD = 4.62$ ). Average strategy use group was also statistically different from low strategy users.

*Table 2: One-Way ANOVA Test-Taking Strategy*

	df	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	2	10167.537	5083.768	125.188	.01
Within Groups	76	3086.295	40.609		
Total	78	13253.832			

Note. df= degree of freedom; SS= sum of squares; MS= mean squares.

\*  $p < .05$ .

Another one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare the three groups (high, average, and low) of metacognitive awareness in order to identify any dissimilation in test performance between groups. The ANOVA results (see Table 3) showed that there was a statistically significant difference at the  $p < .05$  level for the three groups (low, average, and high) of metacognitive awareness:  $F(2, 76) = 234.85$ ,  $p = .00$ . The effect size, calculated using eta squared, was .8 which indicates that the difference in mean scores between the groups was quite large. Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test showed that the mean score for learners with high metacognitive awareness ( $M = 94.28$ ,  $SD = 2.44$ ) was significantly different from learners with average metacognitive awareness ( $M = 77.11$ ,  $SD = 6.72$ ) and those with low metacognitive awareness ( $M = 64.60$ ,  $SD = 4.44$ ). Average metacognitive awareness group was also statistically different from low metacognitively aware learners.

*Table 3: One-Way ANOVA Metacognitive Awareness*

	df	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	2	11407.969	5703.985	234.851	.00
Within Groups	76	1845.863	24.288		
Total	78	13253.832			

Note. df= degree of freedom; SS= sum of squares; MS= mean squares.

\*  $p < .05$ .



These findings were in line with Young and Fry's (2008) study which examined the relationship between metacognitive awareness and academic achievement in college students. There were correlations between the metacognitive awareness and cumulative GPA as well as end of course grades. Schraw (1994) also stated that learners who are aware of their metacognition and are metacognitively aware perform better than unaware learners. He recognized high metacognitive awareness as an indicator of better performance since it allows learners to plan, sequence, and regulate their learning in a way that improve performance. The results of the present study also confirmed that the group differences in metacognitive awareness affect the learners' test performance. Learners with high metacognitive awareness perform statistically better than average and low groups. In a study conducted by Yanyan (2010), the role of metacognitive awareness in English writing of Chinese EFL learners was investigated. It was found that although the learners' metacognitive knowledge was not strong, metacognitive knowledge and its three components, i.e., person knowledge, task knowledge and strategic knowledge, were all positively correlated with English writing performance. The results demonstrated that high level of metacognitive knowledge can empower EFL learners in their English writing and help them improve their learning autonomy in English learning. In this study, learners having high metacognitive awareness and think about their learning, the process of learning and what happens in their mind differ significantly from low and average groups with regards to their achievement scores. It means that they might be able to make a connection between what happens in their mind and what they know about their learning, and their real performance in test situation and on test papers. It seems that they were able to transfer their awareness to the world out of their mind. Moreover, test situation and its characteristics could affect learners' mind and help them to think more effectively about what they know and focus on test. In addition, learners' proficiency in controlling their thoughts and using them toward reaching the desired goals was another thing which could affect their performance and using their metacognitive awareness in a given situation. They might know how to use this awareness for their own benefit.

The result of the effect of test-taking strategies used by test-takers on achievement scores in this study was in line with previous studies. Purpura (1997) investigated the relationships between test-takers' cognitive and metacognitive strategy use and second language test performance. He found that both metacognitive and cognitive strategies directly affect the language performance. Phakiti's (2003b) study confirmed Purpura's findings. He found that cognitive and metacognitive strategies positively correlated with the reading test performance. He reported that highly successful learners significantly used higher metacognitive strategies and approached the test task more strategically. However, finding of the study conducted by Song (2004) was not in line with the results of the present study. Song found that these two strategies accounted for 8.6% of the test score and the effects of strategy use on language performance was weak (Song, 2005, as cited in Phakiti, 2006).

In the current study, learners with high level of test-taking strategy use differ significantly from low and average groups with regard to their final achievement scores. It means that those who used more test-taking strategies through the test gained a better score and had a better performance. It seems that test-taking strategy use affected the learners' test performance. This finding might be due to the effectiveness of test-taking strategies learners employed under the given test. Strategies which learners used to deal with questions and overcome problems might be effective enough to find the right answers and increase their scores. This could be because of employing right strategies for given questions. The learners might know what test-taking strategies are; how to use them in test situation; where a given strategy is employed and whether it is effective in that situation. Furthermore, a strategy might be used consciously in tests and the test-taker might be aware of using that specific strategy. Cohen (2012) emphasized that the selection is a necessary element in the notion of strategy; otherwise, the process would not be considered strategy (Cohen & Upton, 2007).

Question number three investigated any relationship between participants' metacognitive awareness and their test-taking strategy use. To answer this question, the Pearson product moment formula was used and the correlation between estimated metacognitive awareness and test-taking strategy was computed. This correlation reached the statistical significance ( $r = .82$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

**Table 4: The Correlation between Test-Takers' Test Performance and Their Metacognitive Awareness**

Variables	<i>Metacognitive Awareness</i>
Test Performance	.82**

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



It means that learners tended to be aware of strategies they used during the test. They think about the processes happening in their mind while selecting and employing strategies. This result was also found by Yüksel and Yüksel (2012) who investigated metacognitive awareness of academic reading strategies of students. They found that participants usually used reading strategies which they were aware of. It means they used their metacognitive awareness to select a strategy and thought about which strategy is helpful for the given questions. They might think about different strategies for questions and select the best ones to find the answer for those questions. It means that learners with higher level of metacognitive awareness tended to use more test-taking strategy through the test in order to handle the questions and find answers.

## CONCLUSION

This study began with the idea of examining the relationship between metacognitive awareness, test-taking strategy use and General English achievement of male and female students learning English as a foreign language. The results of this study indicated that test-taking strategy use and metacognitive awareness of Iranian EFL learners affected their test performance and final achievement scores. There were significant differences between low, average and high groups in their effects on test performance. A significant correlation was found between learners' metacognitive awareness and their test-taking strategy use. The results of this study can help learners to improve their performance in language tests and make them aware of how metacognitive awareness works and how it can help them in learning a foreign language. Moreover, it seems necessary to make learners aware of test-taking strategy and how to employ them. It might be better for learners to think deeper about their process of learning and what they know about their learning. The participants for this study were at intermediate level. Therefore, the results of the study could not be generalized for learners with different levels of language proficiency. It might be useful to conduct a study that includes different proficiency level to check whether this factor play a role in variables used in this study. In addition, test-taking strategy use related data were gathered through questionnaires. In order to consider the quality of strategies used by test-takers and assessing their effectiveness, it will be useful to use other method of data collection such as self-report, self observation, and think aloud.

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**GENDER DIFFERENCES IN READING STRATEGY USE, READING SELF-EFFICACY, AND PERCEPTUAL LEARNING STYLES AMONG EFL LEARNERS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The present study's primary purpose was the exploration of gender differences in Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' reading strategy use, reading self-efficacy, and their perceptual learning styles. To fulfill so, 127 sophomore English majors were randomly selected from two universities in Iran. The participants comprising 65 males and 62 females were given three questionnaires including; Reading Strategy Use Questionnaire, Reading Self-efficacy Questionnaire, and Perceptual Learning Style Questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Results demonstrated no significant difference between female and male participants on compensation reading strategy and perceptual learning styles. Gender, however proved as an influential factor concerning the participants' performance on metacognitive reading strategy and the reading self-efficacy. The findings implied that gender, albeit playing a prominent role in the Iranian EFL learners' metacognitive reading strategy use and their perceived self-efficacy did not have any significant influence on the performance of Iranian high intermediate EFL learners. As Poole (2005) suggested, factors other than gender influence learners' performance on compensation reading strategy use and their perceived learning styles.

**KEYWORDS:** gender, metacognitive reading strategy, compensation reading strategy, reading self-efficacy, perceptual learning style

**INTRODUCTION**

The word 'revolution' might remind every individual of a sudden change eradicating a political party or government of a specific country. Contrary to such radical associations with the term, one might well think of a prosperous perspective when 'education' is concerned. Language teaching as a subset of education has undergone a plethora of vicissitudes and dramatic changes which have been revolutions in their own right. However what makes the apparently brittle discipline a solid one is its striving challenge for improvement. To shed more light on the issue, consider the endless competition of various educational methodologies or techniques prevalent among educators a hundred years ago and the current pedagogues' emphasis on 'learners' and their unique characteristics which might astonishingly affect their performance in a specific instructional program (Williams & Burden, 1997, p.205). Focus on individual learners and their features as a result of educational revolution in the context of language learning since 1970s has yet revealed more opaque aspects of language learning in general and language learning in particular.

One of the ways through which one can bring up effective language learners, as Chamot (2004) points out, is to equip them with learning strategies which are defined as conscious thoughts and actions that learners take in order to achieve a learning goal. An area of basic research in learning strategies has been language reading. Reading strategies have been appealing to the researchers of the area based on what they reveal about the way readers manage their interaction with written text. Accordingly, Singhal (2001) believes that reading strategies comprise skimming, scanning, contextual guessing, utilizing background knowledge, recognizing text structure and so forth. Barnett (1989, cf Shang, 2010, p.21) defines reading strategies as "the mental operations involved when readers purposefully approach a text to make sense of what they read". Of the various classifications introduced for learning/reading strategies, metacognitive and compensation strategies were selected specifically in accordance with the objectives of the present study. The two strategies have been reported to be utilized highly by EFL learners (Rahimi, Riazi, & Saif, 2008; Saricoban & Saricaoglu, 2008). Fostering the learners' self-efficacy in the learning process is another technique which leads to learners' effectiveness. Self-efficacy, first introduced by Bandura (1977), is purported to be

learners' beliefs about their real capabilities to perform the intended task in the most optimum way (Bandura, 1994). Learners with high levels of such belief are more motivated to take the challenging tasks enthusiastically, and never surrender to that. Learners with high self-efficacy usually set themselves challenging goals and maintain a strong commitment to achieving those goals (Shannon and college, 2008). They have also been purported to be more successful in their academic conduct (Li and Wang, 2010; Schunk, 1990). Reading self-efficacy as a subset of general learning self-efficacy is getting more attention nowadays in the EFL and ESL settings. To date, no vigorous attempts have been made to diagnose the effect of external variables, particularly gender on such vital self-belief.

Learning style is still another individualistic characteristic which has been investigated from various perspectives. In Oxford's (2003, p.273) opinion, learning style "is a general approach preferred by the students when learning a subject, acquiring a language, or dealing with a difficult problem". This is what makes the same instructional method interesting for some students while boring for some others. Various dimensions have been recognized so far for learning styles but the one which has been devoid of adequate attention by scholars up to now is perceptual or sensory learning style introduced by Reid (1987). It includes six modalities of visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, group and individual. According to Ehrman and Oxford (1988) it is biased to say every learner possesses only one specific learning style since based on the situation or type of task, learners might prefer a specific learning style or a combination of two or three styles. Researchers have worked on and identified the learning styles of learners in relation to some variables including age, gender, field of study, proficiency level, and culture (Reid, 1987; 1995; Riazi & Mansoorian, 2008; Riazi & Riasati, 2006; Schunk, 1990; Tirfarlioglu & Sinkara, 2009). Along with the objectives of the present study, the variable of gender and its possible effects on Iranian EFL learners' perceptual learning style, reading strategy use and reading self-efficacy were inspected through three questionnaires of Perceptual Learning Style Questionnaire, Reading Strategy Use Questionnaire, and Reading Self-efficacy Questionnaire.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The SLA history has witnessed conflicting findings with regard to gender and its relationship with learning and reading strategy use. While some of the results have been in favor of female's outperformance in the strategy use (Oxford, 1993; Ok, 2003; Nguyen, 2008), other findings have purported trivial and insignificant differences between the genders (Sheory & Mokhtari, 2001; Szoke & Sheory, 2002; Rahimi et al. 2008; Poole, 2005). However, few studies have provided insights about relationship between gender and students' reading strategy use and its relation to self-efficacy beliefs.

Investigating metacognitive, cognitive and support strategies of L2 readers, Sheory and Mokhtari (2001) presented a 28-item questionnaire on the reading strategy use to 152 ESL students. Their findings revealed no significant difference between males and females except for individual strategy. In the same vein, Phakiti (2003) examined the strategy use of the Thai university students. The results demonstrated no significant differences between men and women in terms of the cognitive strategies they used, but concerning metacognitive strategy use men outperformed women. Tabanlıoglu (2003) made an attempt to identify the learning styles and strategies of Turkish college students. She further tried to check whether there were significant differences between male and female learners in the learning style and strategy preferences. The findings revealed significant difference between males and females in the tactile learning style preference, whereas they did not differ significantly in the use of learning strategies. In a comprehensive study, Poole (2005) compared the academic reading strategies of 248 (138 males and 110 females) advanced college ESL students. Following a quantitative analysis, he found very few strategic differences between females and males concerning strategy use.

In the milieu of the current research; Iran, Rahimi, Riazi, and Saif (2008) conducted a study on factors influencing the use of language learning strategies by Persian EFL learners. Their results signified proficiency level and motivation as major predictors of language learning strategies use. Gender, however did not prove to have any effect on the performance of the participants on the language learning strategies questionnaire. Naseri and Zaferanieh (2012) also made an attempt to diagnose how gender affected the relationship between the reading self-efficacy and the use of reading strategies. Results of Wilk's Lambda and Pillais' Tests revealed that such relationship was not influenced by gender.

Concerning gender effects on the reading self-efficacy, the most relevant study worthy of consideration belongs to Mamanyi et al. (2010) who attempted to diagnose the gender differences in self-efficacy and academic performance

of science students including 129 females and 101 males in Kenya. The results of t-test demonstrated that there was no significant difference between girls and boys concerning self-efficacy.

In terms of learning styles, Reid (1987) presented her Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ) to 1388 ESL students. Her findings demonstrated that males preferred visual and tactile learning styles with a much higher frequency than the females. Riazi and Mansoorian (2008) tried to investigate the preferred learning styles of Iranian EFL learners. Their participants included 150 females and 150 males from 6 different cities in Iran. Using the translated version of Reid's Perceptual Learning Style Preference Questionnaire (PLSPQ), they found out that both genders preferred auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and tactile learning styles as their major learning styles. Both female and male participants chose group and individual learning styles as their minor learning styles. Subjects however did not choose any negative learning style. Their findings also exhibited tactile, group, and kinesthetic learning styles mostly preferred by males. Females however, showed less preference toward their counterparts' favorite learning styles.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main purpose of the present study was exploring of an individual characteristic, namely gender which might affect the EFL learners' performance on reading strategy use, reading self-efficacy, and perceptual learning styles. To fulfill so, the following research questions were explored:

1. Does gender have any influence on the Iranian high intermediate EFL learners' compensation and metacognitive reading strategies use?
2. Does gender have any effect on the reading self-efficacy of Iranian high intermediate EFL learners?
3. Do Iranian high intermediate EFL female and male learners use different perceptual learning styles?

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The participants of the present study were chosen from among university sophomores of English from Allameh Tabataba'i in Tehran and Azad University in Garmsar, Iran, who were willing to take part in the study. Consequently, 65 male students and 62 female students took part in the study and filled out the questionnaires within 60 minutes. Results of the demographic questionnaires indicated that the participants ranged in age from 19 to 29 years old, with an average of 24 years old. All of them had received at least 8 years of instruction in English at school and university, hence making a proficiency level of upper intermediate. Participants were also assured on the confidentiality of their names and results.

### *Instruments*

Reading Strategy Use Questionnaire (RSUQ) was developed based on Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning Questionnaire (SILLQ) and Shang's (2012) Reading Strategy Questionnaire. The devised Questionnaire which was first developed and utilized by Ghezlou and Biria (2013) in another study, assessed learners' compensation and metacognitive reading strategies in particular. The questionnaire comprised 23 questions, namely 8 on compensation and 15 on metacognitive reading strategies in a randomly arranged order. The RSUQ questions were of 5-point Likert-scale type which ranged from 1-strongly disagree- to 5-strongly agree. The second questionnaire was Reading Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (RSEQ) which was constructed based on Li and Wong's (2010) Reading Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, Ghonsooly and Elahi's EFL Learners' Self-efficacy in Reading Comprehension (2010), and that of Horwitz's (1988) Beliefs about Language Learning (BALL) Reading Strategies Questionnaire. RSEQ, previously conducted in the same study by Ghezlou and Biria (2013), incorporated 16 5Likert-scale items. Participants were required to read the items and decide on the extent to which each statement met their agreement. The last questionnaire was Reid's (1987) Perceptual Learning Style Questionnaire (PLSQ) which consisted of thirty statements on six learning style preferences, i.e., visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, group, and individual learning. The participants were asked to respond on the basis of a five point Likert Scale from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree". Participants took the three questionnaires within a time limit of 60 minutes, i.e., 20 minutes for RSUQ, 10 minutes for RSEQ, and 30 minutes for PLSQ.

### *Reliability of Questionnaires*

To keep the safe side and to minimize the probability of statement misunderstandings among participants, all questionnaires were translated into Persian. The translated questionnaires were then checked against any possible comprehension problems by 4 experienced English teachers. Having done the necessary modifications, both questionnaires were piloted with a group of 20 high intermediate EFL students. The piloting phase called for further



adaptations to the statements. In the final run, the results of piloting revealed the relatively high reliability coefficients of .72, .78, and .81 for the RSUQ, RSEQ, and PLSQ respectively.

#### *Statiscal Analysis*

After collecting the questionnaires from the participants, both descriptive and exploratory data analysis were done to check for means, standard deviations, outliers, missing data, coding errors, etc. and to assure that the statistical analysis would yield valid results. In order to find any possible relationship between gender and reading strategies as well as gender and self-efficacy, and the perceptual learning style the independent samples *t*-test was run to compare the two means for male and female participants.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The first research question pertained to the differences between male and female EFL learners' reading strategy use: Does gender have any influence on the Iranian high intermediate EFL learners' compensation and metacognitive reading strategy use?

With regard to compensation reading strategy, results did not indicate any significant difference between female and male participants ( $p > .05$ ). Although females with a mean of 3.50 ( $m=3.50$ ) showed a slightly higher rank in compensation strategy use than the males ( $m=3.46$ ), the difference was not high enough to reject the null hypothesis ( $t=.394$ ). Compensation reading strategies are those which help learners compensate for missing knowledge (Ghezlou and Biria, 2013). Such missing knowledge could be an unknown word or a new concept which might interfere the comprehension of the text. Scholars such as Oxford (1990), Sinatra and Dowd (1992), and Shang (1993, cf. Shang, 2011) have emphasized on teaching active compensation strategy for obviating such comprehension difficulties. Both males ( $m=3.46$ ) and females ( $m=3.48$ ) exhibited approximately identical means, which correspond to medium strategy use. Participants did not differ significantly on the individual items of compensation strategy either.

Concerning metacognitive reading strategy, subjects nevertheless performed quite differently on the whole as well as six individual components of metacognitive strategy. As table 1 indicates male students showed a more frequent use of metacognitive reading strategy ( $m=3.63$  vs  $m=3.56$ ) and the difference is significant at  $p > .05$  ( $t=.000$ ). Metacognitive reading strategy which comprises having a purpose in mind, previewing the text as to its length and organization, or using typographical aids, tables or figures, in Tercanlioglu's (2004) words, are the planned techniques through which learners monitor or manage their learning. As the results of present study demonstrate the present EFL male learners have been quite successful in implementing such critical strategy compared to their female counterparts. This was at odds with the "widely held myth" that females are better strategy users than males (Poole, 2005).

*Table 1: Mean scores and t-tests for reading strategies, self-efficacy, and learning styles*

Sex		N	M	SD	F	Df	p
Metacognitive	Male	65	3.63	.439	16.717	125	.000
	Female	62	3.56	.377			
Compensation	Male	65	3.46	.617	.732	125	.349
	Female	62	3.50	.409			
Self-efficacy	Male	65	4.53	.326	11.551	125	.001
	Female	62	3.27	.527			
Styles	Male	65	3.54	.515	1.655	125	.201
	Female	62	3.56	.356			

Participants also exhibited meaningful differences on six individual metacognitive strategies. To be more precise, as Table 2 demonstrates, females revealed more frequent use of four individual metacognitive strategies (strategies 4, 6, 8, 11), whereas male students reported outperformance on two individual metacognitive strategies (strategies 5 and 10). In other words, female subjects indicated that they preferred to 1) set themselves a time limit before starting reading ( $m=3.05$  vs  $m=3.03$ ), 2) set special goals for improving their reading skill ( $m=3.59$  vs  $m=3.45$ ), 3) think about their progress in reading English texts ( $m=3.82$  vs  $m=3.53$ ), and 4) use the title in order to understand the whole text ( $m=3.79$  vs  $m=3.62$ ) while male students showed that they usually 1) look for opportunities to read more ( $m=3.54$  vs  $m=3.21$ ), and 2) underlined the key vocabularies in order to understand the text better ( $m=3.95$  vs  $m=3.24$ ).



Table 2: Mean scores and t-tests for individual reading strategies

	Sex	N	M	SD	F	Df	P
Metacognitive4	Male	62	3.03	1.425	5.399	122	.022
	Female	62	3.05	1.193			
Metacognitive5	Male	65	3.54	1.174	6.758	125	.010
	Female	62	3.21	.926			
Metacognitive6	Male	65	3.45	1.090	5.392	112	.022
	Female	56	3.59	.910			
Metacognitive8	Male	62	3.53	1.141	19.772	122	.000
	Female	62	3.82	.758			
Metacognitive10	Male	65	3.95	1.217	5.809	125	.017
	Female	62	3.25	.862			
Metacognitive11	Male	65	3.62	1.128	4.507	125	.036
	Female	62	3.79	.943			

The second research question addressed gender differences in reading self-efficacy. As the findings in table 1 indicate male subjects exhibit much higher levels of self-belief in the reading ability ( $m=4.53$ ) than the female participants ( $m=3.27$ ) and the difference is quite significant at  $p<.05$ . In all the 16 individual items of reading self-efficacy, males also show much higher levels of such beliefs (Table 2). Upon encouragement of such self belief, as Bandura (1984) puts forward, learners' motivation, persistence, and feeling of self-confidence will increase dramatically. Tilfanlioglu and Sinkara (2009, p. 135) also assert that learners' belief "about their ability to complete a learning task [reading task] can regulate the ways in which they approach that specific [reading] task or their perceived ability to do it". They also contend that having high self-efficacy in the foreign language competence increases the intrinsic motivation, lowers anxiety, and sustains perseverance in the face of difficulty. Such recommendation can be generalized to Iranian EFL female learners' efforts in performing all language skills particularly reading skill by fostering their reading self-efficacy.

The third research question aimed at investigating potential gender differences in perceptual learning styles. In so doing, the researcher needed to figure out the participants' major, minor, and negligible or negative learning styles. According to scoring procedure reported for PLSQ (Reid, 1987, cf. Riazi and Mansoorian, 2008) mean score of 17.91 and above is considered major perceptual learning style; mean score 15.91 to 17.90 is known minor perceptual learning style; mean score 15.91 or less is recognized as negative perceptual learning style. Table 3 demonstrates participants' average score on each learning style. Both genders proved to enjoy the same major learning styles of kinesthetic, tactile and visual.

Table 3: The learning styles preferred by learners (males=65, females=62)

	Visual	Tactile	Auditory	Group	Kinaesthetic	Individual
Males' mean score	18.25	18.21	17.55	15.82	18.79	17.36
Females' mean score	18.27	19.12	17.57	16.36	19.25	15.47
Total mean	18.26	18.66	17.56	16.09	19.02	16.41
Type	Major	Major	Minor	Minor	Major	Minor

Indeed, kinesthetic learning style with the grand mean of 19.02 ( $M=19.02$ ) got the highest rank with both genders, followed by tactile as the second ( $M=18.66$ ), and finally visual perceptual learning style as the third ( $M=18.26$ ). Similarly, both genders chose auditory, group and individual learning styles as their minor perceptual learning styles with the grand means of 17.56, 16.09, and 16.41 respectively. This finding reveals learners' preference in EFL learning through utilization of various activities pertinent to specific learning styles. Subjects favoring tactile (touch oriented) style mostly are those who enjoy writing, drawing, building models, or conducting a lab experiment (Kinsella, 1995), whereas learners with kinaesthetic learning style preference find dramatizing, pantomiming, or interviewing (Kinsella, 1995) quite interesting. The other major learning style shared among the male and female participants was visual. For such learners, as Oxford (2003, p. 3) puts forth: "lectures, conversations, and oral directions without any visual backup can be very confusing". Participants of the present study implied that the above mentioned activities were their upmost priorities in the EFL classrooms. Hence, EFL educators and teachers need to be aware of such interests and make an attempt to satisfy the learners' needs via implementation of various educational techniques. Auditory learning style as both gender's minor style is related to listening to the lectures,

conversations and oral instructions. Students with group learning style learn more effectively through group interactions (Reid, 1995) whereas learners with individual learning style preference mostly prefer completing the task on their own. Educators once more should assess their learners' learning styles and by provision of various activities not only satisfy learners' perceptual styles, but also strengthen their minor preferences since successful learning has been proved to be the outcome of the application of all learning styles not just one or two of them (Oxford, 2003).

Concerning the priorities of female and male participants based on mean scores, as table 4 depicts, females obtain a higher mean on tactile, group, and kinesthetic sensory learning styles, whereas males outperformed only on individual perceptual learning style. To diagnose the significance of the differences between genders on learning styles, independent samples t-tests were run on each learning style. Results are depicted in Table 4. Both female and male subjects chose visual as their major learning style ( $m=18.27$  vs  $m=18.25$ ), but the difference is not significant enough in this respect ( $t=0.08$ ,  $p>0.05$ ). Participants also selected tactile as their major learning style, the results of t-test indicates meaningful difference between females ( $m=19.12$ ) and males ( $m=18.21$ ) at the level of  $p<.05$  ( $t=.02$ ). Female students with a mean of 17.57 and male students with the mean of 17.55 rated auditory learning style as their minor preference, but the difference between the two means was not very high ( $t=.09$ ,  $p>.05$ ). Group learning style proved to both genders' minor preference. Findings however did not signify any kind of meaningful difference between genders ( $t=.07$ ,  $p>.05$ ). Regarding kinesthetic learning style, female subjects' performance showed a higher mean ( $m=19.25$ ) than male subjects ( $m=18.79$ ) and evidently the difference is significant at .05 value. Quite contrary, male learners proved to enjoy higher levels of individual learning style ( $m=17.36$  vs. 15.47) and results of t-test confirmed such significant difference ( $t=.00$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

Table 4: Mean scores and t-tests for all six perceptual learning styles

Sex		N	M	SD	F	Df	P
Visual	Male	65	18.25	1.425	5.399	122	.080
	Female	62	18.27	1.193			
Tactile	Male	65	18.21	1.174	6.758	125	.022
	Female	62	19.12	.926			
Auditory	Male	65	17.55	1.090	5.392	112	.093
	Female	62	17.57	.910			
Group	Male	65	15.82	1.141	19.772	122	.070
	Female	62	16.36	.758			
Kinaesthetic	Male	65	18.79	1.217	5.809	125	.031
	Female	62	19.25	.862			
Individual	Male	65	17.36	1.128	4.507	125	.000
	Female	62	15.47	.943			

As with individual styles on PLSQ, male subjects in general obtained higher means on four items (items 5, 18, 21, 25), whereas females outperformed on two styles, i.e., 7 and 9. Males in other words prefer to 1) learn better through working with others, 2) learn better when they work alone, 3) work on an assignment with two or three classmates, 3) do something for class project indicating their preferences for group, individual and tactile styles. Such differences were all meaningful at the level of .015, .004, .000, and .018 respectively. Female subjects got a higher rank in auditory learning style for preferring to "receive instructions" ( $m=3.44$  vs.  $m=3.12$ ), and "remember things better via listening" ( $m=4.05$  vs.  $m=3.86$ ) with the differences significant at .008 and .000 ( $p<.05$ ).

Table 5: Mean scores and t-tests for individual learning styles

	Sex	N	M	SD	F	df	P
Style 5	Male	59	3.54	.953	6.053	116	.015
	Female	59	3.49	1.257			
Style 7	Male	65	3.12	1.193	7.298	125	.008
	Female	62	3.44	.974			
Style 9	Male	65	3.86	1.133	13.463	125	.000
	Female	56	4.05	.711			
Style 18	Male	59	3.83	1.003	8.813	116	.004
	Female	59	3.41	1.328			
Style 21	Male	65	3.55	.936	17.997	125	.000
	Female	62	3.29	1.384			
Style 25	Male	65	3.48	1.312	5.133	125	.018
	Female	62	3.31	1.034			

## CONCLUSION

Gender as an individual factor which might affect learners' performance on various aspects of learning process has attracted much attention recently. The current research was an endeavor to shed some light on the effect of gender differences in reading strategy use, an area which has been deprived of germane studies especially in the context of Iran. Focusing on two particular reading strategies, i.e., metacognitive and compensation, results indicated gender influence only on metacognitive reading strategy with the outperformance of males, whereas no meaningful difference was found between female and male subjects on compensation strategy use. While findings of previously conducted studies indicate gender differences in general learning strategies (Baily, 1996; Oxford, 1993), they have not come to the same conclusion regarding reading strategies. They have been generally in favor of negligible differences between the genders (Phakiti, 2003; Poole, 2008; Sheory & Mokhtari, 2001) and the results of the present study confirmed partial agreement with them since gender despite its influence on metacognitive reading strategy, did not influence the female and male participants' performance on compensation reading strategy. This is what differentiates the present study from the previous ones.

Concerning reading-self-efficacy, literature has witnessed very few if any attempts to sort out the relationship between such self-belief and the gender of the learners (Mamanyi et al. 2010). Results of the current study once more revealed male subjects' sophisticated belief in reading skill in comparison to their female counterparts. Such finding could entail thorough reflection on behalf of those responsible for fulfilling learners' optimum needs in the learning process. They are further recommended to create equal opportunities for enhancing such efficacy among both genders.

With respect to the overall perceptual learning style, both genders exhibited approximately identical means suggesting that the present high-intermediate EFL learners' perceptual learning styles are not primarily influenced by gender. Factors other than gender could be responsible for their perceived learning style and such assumption leaves the door open for future research.

## Limitations of the study

The study is not without its own limitations. The major research tools for gathering data in the present study were questionnaires, and as Li and Wong (2010:155) reiterates, the reliability of the results could be enhanced by incorporating some qualitative methods such as interviews and observations. Another limitation of the study could be the small sample size which might have threatened the generalization of the findings to all EFL contexts. Finally, the study did not include other individual characteristics of the learners which could affect their performance on the intended variables. Considering such differences can be immensely helpful to the understanding of the factors which might affect the performance of both EFL and ESL learners.

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## Appendix

Appendix 1. Reading Strategy Questionnaire

—		Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I use different strategies for comprehending the text					
2	I use my previous mistakes for understanding the new texts					
3	When I confront unfamiliar words in the text, I try to guess their meaning					
4	I try to guess the content of the following paragraph					
5	I am always looking for new strategies for improving my reading skill					
6	I set myself a time limit before starting reading					
7	I don't pay attention to new vocabularies					
8	I look for opportunities to read more					
9	I have set special goals for improving my reading skill					
10	In reading the texts, I try to guess its overall meaning					
11	I reread the previous sentences or paragraphs in order to understand the whole text					
12	I read the text without looking up every new word					
13	I usually think about my progress in reading the					

	English texts					
14	I try to guess the meaning of new vocabularies by repeating them several times					
15	I attempt to guess the meaning of new vocabularies by segmenting them into their constituent parts					
16	I am usually after making connections between what I'm reading with my background information					
17	Underlying the key vocabularies aids me in comprehending the text					
18	Reading the introduction, summary, and conclusion helps me in understanding the new vocabularies					
19	Understanding the title, helps me in improving the whole text					
20	I pay attention to the punctuation while reading an English text					
21	While reading the text, I usually ask myself if I have understood well or not					
22	Before reading the text, I usually skim over it					
23	I ask myself questions concerning the reading text while reading it					

**Appendix 2. Reading Self-efficacy Questionnaire**

		Strongly agree	Agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	I am the best student in my reading class					
2	I don't need the help of any one in my reading tasks					
3	No matter how much challenging the reading task is. I do try to handle it enthusiastically					
4	My reading teacher considers me an intelligent reader					
5	I have the courage to answer the most difficult reading questions					
6	I enjoy reading authentic texts such as novels or poems					
7	Browsing the net and understanding it is one of my favorites					
8	I can handle comprehending English newspapers and magazines					
9	I don't feel stressful while answering reading questions					
10	I need the help of my reading teacher or a proficient reader while doing a reading task					
11	When I can't understand the text, I use different strategies to take care of that					
12	I can handle the most difficult texts full of unknown words or structures					



13	Reading is not a boring task to me anymore					
14	I can concentrate on the reading tasks quite well					
15	I can read and understand the text within the proposed time limit					
16	In my idea, reading can improve my writing and speaking skills					

## Appendix 3. Perceptual Learning-Style Preference Questionnaire

**Directions**

People learn in many different ways. For example, some people learn primarily with their eyes (visual learners) or with the ears (auditory learners); some people prefer to learn by experience and/or by "hands-on" tasks (kinesthetic or tactile learners); some people learn better when they work alone while others prefer to learn in groups.

This questionnaire has been designed to help you identify the way(s) you learn best--the way(s) you *prefer* to learn.

Read each statement on the following pages. Please respond to the statements AS THEY APPLY TO YOUR STUDY OF ENGLISH.

Decide whether you agree or disagree with each statement. For example, if you strong agree, mark:

<b>SA</b> Strongly agree	<b>A</b> Agree	<b>U</b> Undecided	<b>D</b> Disagree	<b>SD</b> Strongly Disagree
X				

Please respond to each statement quickly, without too much thought. Try not to change your responses after you choose them. Please answer all the questions. Please use a pen to mark your choices.

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. When the teacher tells me the instructions I understand better.					
2. I prefer to learn by doing something in class.					
3. I get more work done when I work with others.					
4. I learn more when I study with a group.					
5. In class, I learn best when I work with others.					
6. I learn better by reading what the teacher writes on the chalkboard.					
7. When someone tells me how to do something in class, I learn it better.					
8. When I do things in class, I learn better.					
9. I remember things I have heard in class better than things I have read.					

10. When I read instructions, I remember them better.					
11. I learn more when I can make a model of something.					
12. I understand better when I read instructions.					
13. When I study alone, I remember things better.					
14. I learn more when I make something for a class project.					
15. I enjoy learning in class by doing experiments.					
16. I learn better when I make drawings as I study.					
17. I learn better in class when the teacher gives a lecture.					
18. When I work alone, I learn better.					
19. I understand things better in class when I participate in role-playing.					
20. I learn better in class when I listen to someone.					
21. I enjoy working on an assignment with two or three classmates.					
22. When I build something, I remember what I have learned better.					
23. I prefer to study with others.					
24. I learn better by reading than by listening to someone.					
25. I enjoy making something for a class project.					
26. I learn best in class when I can participate in related activities.					
27. In class, I work better when I work alone.					
28. I prefer working on projects by myself.					

29. I learn more by reading textbooks than by listening to lectures.					
30. I prefer to work by myself					

THE EFFECTS OF PROFICIENCY AND GENDER ON THE COMPLIMENTS AND  
COMPLIMENT RESPONSES MADE BY IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS

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**ABSTRACT**

This study reports on the effects that gender and proficiency have on three aspects of compliments made by students majoring in English in Iranian English as Foreign Language (EFL) contexts at university level. The aspects studied in this paper included, a) topics of compliments, b) syntactic structures used to launch compliments and, c) the type of responses given to compliments. Sixteen EFL learners, aged 20 to 23, were selected out of 57 based on the results obtained from the speaking and listening sections of the IELTS exam administrated by the researcher with intra-rater reliability of 0.76; subsequently, the participants were assigned to two groups of intermediate and advanced levels. In each group there were four male and four female students. Individuals from the same gender were paired to each other, male with male and female with female. They were asked to talk about six topics presented by the researcher out of which three were of significance to this study. Students were instructed to record themselves while speaking. The data collected from the recording showed that three types of syntactic structures prevailed. The examination of the data also showed that the compliments were mostly on appearance, achievements and personal traits with appearance being the most frequent. The compliment responses were the last aspect that was studied, and appreciation was the most frequent response type for both male and female students and for both intermediate and advanced proficiency levels. The results showed that proficiency and gender had an effect on the compliments and their responses. The findings also substantiates the point made by Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2005) that acquisition of pragmatic aspects of language could take several years although sometimes learners never acquire a native-like pragmatic aspect of foreign language.

**KEYWORDS:** proficiency, gender, complements, complement responses

**INTRODUCTION**

Different cultures differ from each other in terms of sociolinguistic norms they have. People in each society use the interaction rules of their mother tongue in their community each time they interact with each other (Chick, 1996: 132). However, EFL learners encounter difficulty when they attempt to interact with the new sociolinguistic norms even if they have sufficient competence in other components of language like phonetics, syntax and semantics of the language they are learning. While one source for the failure in communication can be attributed to the unfamiliarity of the EFL learners to sociolinguistic norms of the language being learnt; the other source for it might be the transfer of sociolinguistic norms of their mother tongues to the target language. Generally, sociolinguistic transfer is the use of sociolinguistic rules of interaction of one's mother tongue while interacting in another language (Chick, 1996, P.132; Lewis, 2003; Holmes, 1987, 2001; Celce-Murcia, 1991; Manes, 1983; Wolfson, 1989).

Since compliments act as an opening through which we are able to see what people in other cultures consider as valuable they are quite suited for investigating sociolinguistic transfer (Chen, 1993, Chen, 2003; Herbert, 1990; Holmes, 1987; Mane and Wolfson, 1981; Manes, 1983; Pomerantz, 1978).

The purpose of the present study is to investigate how proficiency and gender interact in speech acts of compliment strategies in Iranian EFL learners. It is assumed that by performing this research it is possible to shed light; hence, gain a better understanding of the issue of gender and proficiency and their interaction on the speech act of EFL learners.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Holmes (1987, p. 485) defines a compliment as "a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker himself, usually the person addressed, for some 'good' (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer." Complimenting is a speech act that is intrinsically polite and it makes its giver able to use the opportunity to express interest in the hearer.

Wolfson and Manes (1980) and Wolfson (1981, 1983, 1984) collected a corpus of more than one thousand compliments in different situations in American English. The findings demonstrated that almost 80% of American compliments can be categorized into three syntactic forms: "I (intensifier) like/love NP" (e.g., I really love your shirt), "NP is/looks ADJ" (e.g., your room is very nice), and "PRO is (intensifier) (a) ADJ NP" (e.g., that's a (really) nice car.)

There have also been several comparative studies of compliments in different languages. For example, Baek (1998) found that in Korean compliments, "I like/love NP" never occurred, whereas the patterns "YOU VERB (intensifier) ADJ" (51%) and "NP is/looks (intensifier) ADJ" (24%) were the most frequent.

Daikuhara (1986) carried out a study which compared American compliments with those in Japanese and she found similar results. Findings showed that the pattern of compliment "I like/love NP" did not appear in the data collected from Japanese. Of course the verbs such as *niau* ("suit") was observed in the data, as in

"Kosuchumu ga *onai* desune."

"That costume suits you well."

But this verb only had a frequency of 2% in the collected data. The reason for the absence of the word meaning "love" (*aishiteru* or *daisuki*) in Japanese was that it was considered to be too strong to be used in such contexts.

Baek (1998) argues that because compliments act as an evaluation or as an overt statement of approval, the topic of the compliment should therefore be relevant to values and sociocultural norms within the society. Manes and Wolfson (1981) reported that, in English, compliments can be classified in two classes according to the topics they have,

- a. Compliments on appearance
- b. Compliments on ability

Other studies have shown that the topic of compliments can be different cross-culturally. For example, in Japanese society the most frequent topic is ability and achievement; surprisingly appearance is not much referred to in this culture; contrary to English in which appearance is widely complimented on (Barnlund & Araki, 1985; Daikuhara, 1986). In Korean culture compliments on personality are also more frequent than they are in English (Baek, 1998). According to her, '*chakhada* (good-natured),' '*bujireonhada* (diligent),' and '*yeeuibareuda* (polite)' are the most frequent words for complimenting on personality. These compliments, she added, are offered due to a person's conduct or morality conforming to social norms or expectations required in certain situations. Polish speakers usually compliment on food and appearance (Herbert, 1990). Nelson, El-bakary and Al-Batal (1993) investigated the compliments by Egyptians and found that speakers of Egyptian Arabic favor personality as the topic of their compliments.

Therefore, language learners must be aware of both the complimentable values and the appropriate topics of compliments in the target culture; otherwise, there is always the possibility of miscommunication.

How a compliment should be responded appropriately is also of concern to language learners. Holmes (1987) classified the strategies of responding to compliments based on her data from New Zealand English and she discovered 12 strategies and classified them into 3 major types:

- a. Accept
- b. Reject
- c. Deflect/Evade

The data from her study showed that Accept was the most frequent response type. Response patterns also were very different in different cultures. The rates of acceptance are much higher in English than those of non-western languages (Baek, 1998). For example, it is reported that Japanese and Korean people seldom accept compliments. According to Daikuhara (1986), "Ie, ie (No, no)" or "Sonna koto nai" (that's not true.)" were the most frequent responses to a compliment in Japanese. This use of "No, no" is restricted to Japanese speakers; whereas speakers of American English rarely rejected the compliments. When speakers of American English reject a compliment it is most of the times confined to intimate interactions (Wolfson & Manes, 1980). In another study, compliment responses of Korean and English speakers were compared by Joen (1996 cf. Baek, 1998) and the results

demonstrated that there is a contrast in the denial of compliments—Korean (8.8%) vs. American (0.5%). She argues that this happens because more negative response strategies are selected by Korean speakers owing to politeness; besides, they adhered to the ideas of humility and modesty. Baek (1998) reported that 42.75% of the compliments were deflected in Korean. The single strategy of 'No acknowledgement' accounts for 29.98% of the responses in Korean and only 5.08% in American English. According to Baek, The reason why the Korean speakers did not respond to the compliments explicitly was that they were trying to be modest. Silence was considered an aspect of modesty and is a type of indirectness and therefore highly valued in cultures like that of Korean's.

The other issue that is also of significance to compliments is gender. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) argue that compliments are speech acts that are mostly conceived as gendered, for example, Holmes (1995) found that women tend to compliment and be complimented more than men, because compliments are seen by them as a way of being polite. She argued that compliments are given to make their recipient feel liked and connected with the giver of the compliment. On the other hand, men compliment to show their authority to appraise the other; hence it brings face threat. As for responses to compliments, Holmes found that half the responses were of acceptance type. While compliments have been widely investigated in different cross-cultural settings; studies in EFL contexts are scanty and they are even scantier in Iranian EFL contexts. In order to understand the nature and influence of proficiency on the speech act of compliments and its interaction with gender further studies should be done in such contexts.

The purpose of the present paper is to investigate the way proficiency and gender interact in speech acts of compliment strategies in Iranian EFL learners—one group is at intermediate level and the other group is at advanced level, each comprising equal number of male students and female students. It is assumed that by performing this research it is possible to shed light and therefore gain a better understanding of the issue of gender and proficiency and their interaction on the speech act of EFL learners.

In order to research these issues two major questions were raised to be answered.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. Are there any meaningful differences between Iranian male and female EFL University students in the topics they complimented on, structures they use to launch their compliments and the strategies they use to respond to compliments?
2. Are there any meaningful differences between Iranian intermediate and advanced proficiency University students in the topics they complimented on, structures they use to launch their compliments and the strategies they use to respond to compliments?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Participants***

There were sixteen students in this study that were assigned to intermediate and advanced groups after taking a placement test (eight students in each group). These students were studying English to Persian Translation at Islamic Azad University in Abadan in Iran. All of these students were between 20 to 23 years old. In each group there were four male and four female students, and there were the total of sixteen students. These students were selected out of 57 Junior and Senior students who took the speaking and listening sections of IELTS exam. None of these students had ever been to an English speaking country.

### ***Instruments***

1. In order to assign the participants to the intermediate and advanced levels, the researcher used the Speaking and listening sections of the IELTS examination. This test enjoys high validity and reliability, and is developed and administered by the Cambridge University in conjunction with some other international and cultural organizations.

The listening section was administered, and the standard procedure for scoring based on the answer keys of the sample was used. For speaking section the researcher scored the taped interviews twice based on the IELTS standard procedure of scoring that was emphasized by the administrators as the researcher could obtain them from sample tests that were published by Cambridge University Press. Intra-rater reliability estimate of 0.76 was obtained for scores.



2. Four digital sound-recorders were used in order to collect the data. These recorders were made by Sony. Each pair of the participants was given one recorder in order to carry with them all the time. They were instructed to record their conversations whenever they talked about the topics determined by the researcher.

### **Data collection**

The students in this study knew each other due to being classmates and their relationship with each other as classmates made the data more natural than if they had been otherwise. The researcher asked the participants to have several conversations on six topics in private and record their voices. Out of these six topics they conversed on, three are of importance to this study. One was about the items they had bought recently, the other was about their abilities and achievements, and the third one was on their personality traits; of course the researcher did not tell them to compliment on any of them because it was assumed that it would perhaps distort the data. The reason the researcher asked them to talk about several topics was to give them more time to feel at home with the presence of a recorder and to neutralize their giving any one topic unnecessary attention leading to distortion of the data that was being collected. These topics, the researcher assumed, would probably cause the hearer to give compliments, based on the results of an earlier pilot study carried out by the researcher in Persian language. Interestingly, this prediction was confirmed by the data that was collected.

The other three topics were the food they had eaten recently, the trips they had taken, and a new person they had met. These topics were given to the participants to act as a way of relaxing the participants with the presence of voice recorder and to promote naturalness as a result of making the interactions longer. In addition, it helped to take the participants attention away from the main topics, so they did not know what the main area of interest of the researcher was.

As mentioned above, in each group there were four male students and four female students. The researcher paired participants of the same gender to see how proficiency level influences the compliment structures and their responses when interaction is between members of the same gender. Unfortunately the researcher could not pair male students with female students due to several reasons of which one was lack of intimacy among them.

The participants were instructed not to consult a dictionary or any other resources, and were asked to only use their own current knowledge of English. They were given two days' time to be able to record their conversations and deliver them to the researcher.

### **Analysis**

To be able to carry out the analysis, the data on tapes were transcribed and all the compliments and their responses were extracted. The data were then analyzed in terms of three broad categories of a) types of compliments, b) topics of compliment c) types of responses as mentioned above. These categories were later divided into narrower subcategories (table 1).

*Table 1: Framework for analysis*

<b>Types of compliments</b>	<b>Topics of compliment</b>	<b>Types of responses</b>
NP is (intensifier) ADJ	Appearance/clothing	Appreciation (e.g., Thank you)
I (intensifier) like/love NP	Neighborhood	Return compliment
NP looks/seems (intensifier) ADJ	Personal traits	No response
How ADJ	Ability/achievement	Denial
-----	-----	Question
-----	-----	Praise upgrade

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Analysis of the data showed that compliments were not very frequent. There were 47 compliments in the data. Remarkably female students, as predicted by Holmes (1995), outnumbered male students in giving compliments even in EFL context across proficiency 32 to 15 (nearly two times more than the number of male students' compliments).

### Structures of compliments

Three types of structures emerged from the data for both groups. The related frequency of the structures that were observed in the data is presented in the following table (table 2).

*Table 2: The syntactic structures of the compliments*

Structures	Frequency	Proficiency	Female students		Male students		Total	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
NP is (intensifier) ADJ	No.: 36 %: 76.59	Intermediate	14	43.75	7	46.66	21	44.68
		Advanced	10	31.25	5	33.33	16	34.04
NP Looks/seems (intensifier) ADJ	No.: 9 %: 19.14	Intermediate	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Advanced	6	18.75	3	20	8	17.02
I (intensifier) like/love NP	No.: 0 %: 0	Intermediate	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Advanced	0	0	0	0	0	0
How ADJ	No.: 2 %: 4.25	Intermediate	0	0	0	0	0	0
		Advanced	2	6.25	0	0	2	4.25
Subtotal	47		32	68.08	15	33.36		

Basically, the structure 'NP is (intensifier) ADJ' was the most preferred structure in the corpus collected. This structure comprised 76.59% of all the structures in the data. The Female Students in Intermediate group used this structure more than any other group (15 times or 43.75%). Interestingly female students in intermediate group did not use any other structures at all. The same results were obtained for male students in intermediate group with the frequency of 7 (46.66%). Male students in intermediate group did not use any other structure, either; this led the researcher to the conclusion that the intermediate groups did not have the knowledge to construct other forms to perform the function of complimenting. Female students in advanced group also used the structure 'NP is (intensifier) ADJ' more than any other structures with frequency of 10 (31.25%); however, they used other structures, too. Female students in advanced group used the structure 'NP Looks/seems (intensifier) ADJ' 6 times (18.75%) and 'How ADJ' 2 times (6.25%). By way of comparison, male students in advanced group (from now on BA) used the structure 'NP is (intensifier) ADJ' 5 times (33.33%) as the most frequent. They also used the structures 'NP Looks/seems (intensifier) ADJ' 3 times (20%) but did not use other structures, namely, 'How ADJ' and 'I (intensifier) like/love NP'. The findings demonstrate that in general female students compliment more in EFL contexts than the male students do which is in line with the findings from native contexts (Holmes, 1995). However, findings from this study also demonstrate that intermediate and advanced students cannot compliment using certain structures.

The absence of the structure 'I (intensifier) like/love NP' and the scantiness of the other structure 'How ADJ' in the data prove this point. This inability to construct native like compliment structures might be attributed to two reasons. First, it might be attributed to a lack of necessary knowledge needed to perform this task (grammatical lack of knowledge). Another reason might be due to the potential sociolinguistic transfer from L1. What the precise reason is will be very difficult to find out, however. For instance, the prevalence of the structure 'NP is (intensifier) ADJ' can be attributed both to limited grammatical knowledge as it is a very simple structure and therefore easy to construct and to sociolinguistic transfer, as well, because this structure is the commonest structure for complimenting in Persian. It is more understandable if we compare it with the total absence of the structure 'I (intensifier) like/love NP' in the data collected. The absence of this structure cannot be attributed to the lack of grammatical knowledge owing to its very simple structure and vocabulary. However, such structures are almost very rarely used in Persian to compliment. The rarity of such structures might have been transferred to sociolinguistic norms of English from L1 causing this structure to sound inappropriate and thus never used. The use of the words 'like and love' in compliments will probably require the complimentee to get involved in the ritual act of 'offering the item complimented more seriously to the compliment-giver' as it is the custom in Persian culture. Therefore, the compliment-giver avoids these words on the assumption of this ritual in Persian culture and other sociolinguistic norms.

**Compliment topic**

The topics of compliments were also investigated in this paper. The participants talked about six topics but the researcher only examined three of the topics in the data because other topics did not comprise topics with potentials to be complimented on. The reason for their inclusion was mentioned in section 2 above. The examined topics in this study were appearance/clothing, achievement/abilities and personal traits. These topics and their related frequency for the groups are presented in the table 3.

*Table 3: Frequency of the topics of the compliment for each group*

Topic	Female students				Total No. for females		Male students				Total male students for		Total No. for all					
	Intermediate		Advanced				Intermediate		Advanced									
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No	%	No	%	No.	%	No.	%				
Appearance/ clothing	8	53.33	9	52.94	17	53.12	1	14.28	1	12.5	2	13.33	19	40.42				
Achievement/ ability	3	20	3	17.64	6	18.75	4	57.14	5	62.5	9	60	15	31.91				
Personal traits	4	26.6	5	29.41	9	28.12	2	28.57	2	25	4	33.3	13	27.65				
Total	15		17		32		68.08		7		8		15		31.91		47	

In this study, as mentioned before, female students gave more compliments than male students did (32 to 15). 53.12% of the compliments given by female students were on appearance and clothing; while only 13.5% of the compliments by male students were on clothing and appearance. The findings in this study supported Janet Holmes (1995) study of compliments in which female students generally compliment more than male students.

Contrary to the compliments given by female students, the most frequent type of compliments given by male students was on achievement and ability which comprised 62.5% of all of their compliments. Female students' portion of compliments on achievement and ability was only 18.75% of all of their compliments. The percentage of compliments on personality traits was again larger for male students than it was for female students (33.33% to 28.12%); however the number of compliments made by female students was higher in comparison to those made by male students. The interesting finding was that proficiency did not influence the number of compliments in the data, i.e., the number of compliments did not increase as a function of proficiency level. The findings of this study in EFL context are in line with the findings of studies by Baek (1998) and Manes & Wolfson (1981) which found the same results. It can be said that female students'/women's language has certain characteristics different from that of men's, and the topics they select for their compliments are probably one of the specific features. It can be stated that women select the same values cross-culturally to give compliments on which are different from those of men's, and this is observed even in Iranian EFL context regardless of their proficiency levels.

**Compliment responses**

The responses made to compliments in this study could be categorized in 5 classes. The responses given and their related frequencies for each type are presented in table 4 below.

*Table 4: Compliment responses*

Type of response	Female students				Total female students for		Male students				Total for male students	
	Intermediate		Advanced				Intermediate		Advanced			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Appreciation	7	35	6	37.5	13	36.11	6	50	4	44	10	47.61
Return compliment	7	35	5	31.25	12	33.33	2	16.66	2	22.22	4	19.04
Denial	1	5	0	0	1	2.7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Question	3	15	3	18.78	6	16.66	2	16.66	1	11.11	3	14.28
Offering the item to complimenter	2	10	2	12.5	4	11.11	2	16.66	2	22.22	4	19.61
Total	20		16		36		12		9		21	

On the whole, female students gave more responses to compliments than male students did; nonetheless, it can be argued that the higher number of responses was due to the higher number of compliments they had received from each other rather than other factors. The interesting finding was that the number of responses was higher than the number of compliments. This was due to the use of multiple types of responses given to a single compliment out of politeness. Of course, it is assumed to be higher if the conversations had been performed in Persian (this is merely a conjecture made by the researcher which has to be investigated and proved independently).

Appreciation was the most frequent form of response to a compliment both for female students and male students. Neither gender nor proficiency seemed to affect the frequency of this response type. This finding supports previous findings by Diakuhara (1985) research on compliment response types in EFL contexts. Furthermore this is also in line with Holmes (1988) study in which she investigated the response types of native speakers of English and found appreciation as the most frequent response type. It seemed that both female students and male students are equally apt to appreciate for the compliment if they receive one in EFL context. 'Return compliment' was the second most preferred response to compliments for female students. Again, proficiency did not seem to interact with this type of response.

There were two responses for the male students that were preferred as the second most preferred response type. One is 'return compliment' and the other is 'offer the item complimented to compliment-giver (this was not observed in English culture) but was transferred by Iranian EFL learners (evidence for sociolinguistic transfer). For male students, the increase in proficiency level increased these types of responses. The reason why the number of 'offer the item complimented to compliment-giver' increases by proficiency despite the fact that it does not exist in English might be attributed to the lack of syntactic resources in intermediate learners to create a sentence for this function, i.e., they want to use this, but they do not have the capacity to construct the appropriate structure for it. While advanced learners in this study use this structure probably because they have attained the resources which enable them to construct such a structure. The problem, however, is that advanced students have failed to acquire the appropriate sociolinguistic norms of the target culture. That is why they have used it as their second favorite response type beside 'return compliment' (further evidence for sociolinguistic transfer).

For female students, 'offer the item complimented to compliment-giver was the least used response type. This might be due to the topics they conversed about, because this response type is popular in contexts where the compliment is on an item bought recently by the complementee. Then the complementee offers it to the compliment-giver by saying sentences such as "you can have/take it". The third frequent type of response was 'question'. For female students its frequency was 6 and for male students it was 3. Proficiency did not affect the number of 'question responses' to compliments.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this study, 47 compliments and 57 responses were collected and analyzed to find out how gender and proficiency influence their structures and if there is sociolinguistic transfer of sociolinguistic norms in Iranian EFL context. The data demonstrated that some of the male students' strategies for making compliments and responding to them were different from those of female students. Also proficiency seemed to impact the strategies that were chosen by different groups in the study; however, it did not affect the strategies as heavily as gender. In addition, it was possible to see that some of the strategies that were used by the EFL learners participating in this study were sociolinguistic transfer from L1 rather than being learned from the target language.

This supports the point made Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2005) that acquisition of native-like speaking ability by EFL learners will take several years if at all it is possible, because the sociolinguistic and cultural norms cannot be learned or are at least very difficult to learn in EFL contexts. The teachers, therefore, should provide a learning environment enriched with opportunities for students to learn to express themselves and interpret others with appropriate sociolinguistic conventions of the target language. Both the teachers and the students should be aware of these rules and should also know that knowing grammar and vocabulary is not enough to be able to communicate in another language.

This study was limited first by the observer's paradox which refers to idea that the presence of the researcher and the recorder will influence the language that is produced by the participants. This effect is believed to have distorted the naturalness of the data; however, the absence of the researcher through the design of this research by giving the participants time to record their interactions on their own contributed to the naturalness of the data.

One interesting area for further research can be the investigation of the interactions between male and female students to find out how the compliments and their responses would be. However, due to the limitations in this study the researcher was not able to perform that.

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ELECTRONIC LEARNING /EDUCATION IN TAKESTAN ISLAMIC AZAD UNIVERSITY:  
DEVELOPMENT, CHALLENGES, AND SOLUTIONS

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**ABSTRACT**

Recently, higher education systems seek to use network-based and internet-based information technologies in education, teaching and learning. E-learning in Iran higher education system has been started since 2003, however, its development has been very slow. The present study is a survey research. The participants (n = 500) of the study are faculty members, graduates and PhD students of Takestan Islamic Azad University, Iran. The accuracy of indicators and items in the questionnaire (face validity) has been confirmed by specialists. A questionnaire was used to collect data. The questionnaire on the e-learning barriers was distributed among the respondents. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated by using Cronbach Alpha. In this study, Factor analysis is used to achieve the key factors. The results show that deficiency of executives, lack of learners' motivation, infrastructural barriers, restriction of credit, and software and hardware limitations are the main problems in the development of web-based training. At the end of the article, some recommendations are presented aiming to accelerate electronic training in Iran's higher education system.

**KEYWORDS:** Higher Education, the Literature and Human Sciences College of Takestan Azad University, web-based training, barriers and strategies

**INTRODUCTION**

Since more than two thousand years ago, the field of teaching and learning experienced many changes and there is very little variation, now, with advent of information technology, rapid developments have started in this field (Jerry, 2000). It is indicated that, these developments range from learning resources that students were sent to the students' home in the printed form to educational radio stations, educational television programs and recently, e-learning and interactive web-based training (Jamalan, 2004). These technological developments, has disrupted all equations and the structure of educational systems; and, educational policy makers and planners are forced to be consistent with the new transformations.

Emergence of communication networks such as the internet, along with advanced tools and educational facilities, caused the method of teaching to be changed. It enables a wide range of knowledge seekers, from near and far distances, to enjoy training network; and, with methods different from conventional types implement scientific programs. This new method of learning is called e- (virtual) learning, which today is known as the most advanced teaching methods and it is benefiting from variety of advanced technologies, such as networking, databases, and knowledge management, etc. (Galusha, 1997).

Many universities invest large, and however imperfect, amount of financial resources in e-learning. But they gain little fundamental change or profit due to lack of strategic orientation and an integrated approach. Concurrent with the development of e-learning as a transformative technology, institution policies should be defined to provide adequate resources in order to simplify the long and difficult processes (Garrison & Anderson, 2002).



In the implementation and development of e-learning programs, there are barriers and limitations. One of the largest of them is lack of library facilities as one from of supporting systems in e-learning and since library is considered as the nerve center of any educational institution (Mabawonku, 2004), the students who lack adequate information resources during their education, the quality of their education will be degraded. Therefore, e-learning performers should not only be responsive to the students' needs, but also they should be involved in the design and delivery of support services and information resources, because libraries and information centers play an important role in improving the quality of their e-learning programs (Succhandand, 2002).

Other obstacles and limitations are that e-learning cannot be a good replace for teacher, human and emotional interactions as well as face to face communication in the classroom (Twomey, 2004).

Other limitations of the use of computers in educational environments are lack of proper understanding of virtual learning environments, lack of proper infrastructure and telecommunications, and enough bandwidth for transmitting and receiving data. Moniee (2004), in his article, acknowledged that system of supply and demand for higher education still do not have an accurate understanding of virtual spaces and it is well acquainted with the features and functions and does not know the basic information technology skills yet (Moniee, 2004). In this system, the learners' success is associated with technical skills in the use of computers and networks (Schuster, 2003). The high rate of received messages and responding them is time-consuming and information management skills are required (Thourmond, 2003).

Zhang and colleagues (2002) and Wilson and Moore (2004) considered the cost of access to the internet as the problem of virtual education. They still believe that the price of Internet access is high; so, many students simply cannot use this technique as low-cost method. In some studies, it is also referred to the low speed and high cost of the purchase and development of internet technology (Murphy & Dooley, 2000; Grant, 2004).

Kurtus (2000) and Beneke (2001) have mentioned that the main issues of virtual learning are lack of social interaction and the interval between students and faculty members' activities. According to them, students can't interact with friends and classmates when faced with possible problems and images and texts may not satisfy the learners. Some researchers asserted cases such as illiteracy in Educational Technology, lack of training in this area, inexperienced faculty members in the effective use of new technologies, and their resistance for virtual courses as the main issues of e-learning (Anstead et al, 2004; Alston et al, 2003; Kelsey et al, 2002; Dillon & Walsh, 1992).

The present study is conducted to determine the attitudes of students and faculty members of the Literature and Human Sciences College of Takestan Azad University toward barriers and strategies of teaching e-learning system.

The present study, entitled investigation of the barriers and strategies for the development of e-learning in the Literature and Human Sciences College of Takestan Azad University, explains the necessity of the operation and development of e-learning looking at these issues. The following cases are the concerns and issues facing the education system in the country.

In such circumstances that the country in terms of population is the world's youngest country, more people tend to have academic education. This issue due to the recent changes in the world and the arrival of the information age, in which knowledge provides the highest value, has faced us with a major challenge that can be overcome using e-learning. Several factors make the development of e-learning difficult in organizations especially higher education that is considered as barriers to the development of e-learning in higher education; and the identification of them to foster goals is a prerequisite. Since Takestan Azad University is one of the great universities in Iran, many students at different BA, Master's and doctoral levels are studying, a type of education is needed that that could potentially respond (teaching and learning) students' needs, and provide transmission speed, flexible, accessible, learner-centered, and up to date information and time and cost savings to students.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Problems in the development of e-learning are barriers due to policies of educational and planning, infrastructure, language, capacity building and finance, pedagogical challenges, organizational challenges, technological challenges (Razzaghi, 1383; Jahangard, 1382).

In another study on the barriers to the development of the e-learning on the educational system in Iran, these barriers were divided into six categories:

- technological;
- cultural and social;
- pedagogical;

- legal and administrative;
- strategic; and,
- economic (Houseinilorgani et al, 1387).

In some studies, lack of social participation and social interaction between students and professors have been considered and their results suggested that students, in e-learning, do not possess the possibility of interacting with friends and classmates and getting help when they are faced with problems and then, probably images and texts may not be satisfying for them (the students). So, the students are deprived of the sense of community in e-learning; and, the students' sense of resentment and despair in e-learning courses is more in comparison to traditional courses (Kurtus, 2000; Beneke, 2001; SalimAbadi, 1385; Lieblein, 2000).

The Internet information technology offered tools for developing collaboration and cooperation activities in distance learning (Jara et al., 2009; Macdonald, 2003), facilitating student interactions in a constructivist perspective linked to Vygotsky's theory (1978). Cooperation implies an engagement to peers through social interaction (Amhag & Jakobsson, 2009; Hew & Cheung, 2008) and collaboration activities delivered in the virtual social environment offered the student the possibility to develop understanding through their own constructs, becoming active learners. Chao, Saj, and Hamilton (2010) believe that collaborative course implementation is the best way to design high quality online courses.

E-learning efforts and experiments currently receive much attention across the globe. The availability of electronic and web-enabling technologies also dramatically influences the way we view the learning strategies of the future (Kramer, 2000; Hitz, 1995).

Lynch (1999), in a study entitled 'investigation of effective variables for students participation in an electronic evaluation', that was conducted by regression analysis, showed that 'computer', 'gender' and 'the experience of participating in Electronic evaluation' are of the predictor variables of the variability of the dependent variables. There is a significant relationship between the variables 'attitude toward computers and CBT' and 'psychological readiness of the learners to participate in electronic evaluation (Lynch, 2004).

Looking at recent developments at the educational system shows that most of these developments were used in educational technology for questions and answers and acquiring primary technology skills. The application of this technology leads to the basic skills. Further development of technology and the increasing use of it lead to the greater use of information technologies in order to gain the advanced skills (Rose, 2001).

For the past few years, there has been a growing understanding of the important role of information and communication technologies (ICT) in higher education. Various new models of education are evolving in response to the new opportunities that are becoming available by integrating Web-based technologies (Barak & Rafaeli, 2004; Light, Nesbitt, Light, & White, 2000; Ward & Newlands, 1998). Though Web-based technologies are considered to be commonly used for educational purposes, the transition from traditional teaching to ICT-enhanced environments is not obvious and ought to be further investigated.

Arbaugh (2002) defined e-learning as the use of the Internet by users to learn specific content. Other researchers define e-learning as using modern Information and Communications Technology (ICT) and computers to deliver instruction, information, and learning content (Selim, 2007). The stakeholders of e-learning are learners, faculty, administrative and technical staff, and employers (Ozkan & Koseler, 2009).

Some, like Hinmann (2003) stated the circumstances for the easier and better implementation of these trainings in virtual interactive spaces. In other studies, it has been shown that implementing e-learning would be merely successful when the courses are theoretical. E-learning has great facilities for solving many of the problems of education systems including education system such as limited financial resources, lack of attention to developing learners' creativity and innovative ability, little use of distance learning technologies and the Internet, little relationship of students with the international scientific community, little relationship of education sector with the private sector, mismatch between education system and global changes, use of inappropriate teaching methods, lack of a learner-centered approach in education and lack of cross-organizational relationships (Esmaeeli Salumahaleh, 2013)

Some researchers have referred to management issues such as student recruitment strategies, lack of standardization in the field of e-learning, inadequate salary for faculty members, shortage of teaching spaces which are equipped with new technologies, assessing methods of students, copy right and intellectual property issues of the content and course (Shea et al. 2005; Wilson 2003).

In some studies, lack of social participation and social interaction between students and professors have been considered and their results suggested that students, in e-learning, do not possess the possibility of interacting with friends and classmates and getting help when they are faced with problems and then, probably images and texts may not be satisfying enough for them (the students). So, the students are deprived of the sense of community in e-learning; and, the students' sense of resentment and despair in e-learning courses is more in comparison to traditional courses (Kurtus 2000; Beneke 2001; Lieblein 2000; Liyan Song et al. 2004).

E-learning, which is considered as both internet use and digital technologies in teaching and learning, has always been identified as either an alternative solution or a new procedure to boost traditional approaches of education (Mirzayi and EsmaeeliSalumahaleh, 2013).

Information technology has created new opportunities for education. More than 1000 institutions in 50 countries provide e-learning options (Sharma & Kitchens, 2004). E-learning is a useful tool for enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. E-learning is an "innovative approach to education delivery via electronic forms of information that enhance the learner's knowledge, skills, or other performance" (Siritongthaworn, Krairit, Dimmitt, & Paul, 2006, p. 139).

When examining the literature at the intersection of teaching and learning with information and communication technology (ICTs), one is struck by the relative lack of focus upon the potential problems and drawbacks of the incorporation of technology into educational work-life (i.e. Granger, Morbey, Lotherington, Owston, & Wideman, 2002; Hassini, 2006; Liaw, Huang, & Chen, 2007; Marbach-Ad & Sokolove, 2001; Marbach-Ad & Sokolove, 2002; Mazzolini & Maddison, 2007; Ruthven, Hennessy, & Deaney, 2005).

Frazeen (2006), in his final dissertation, entitled 'effective factors in quality of web-supported learning' considers the relationship and impact of several basic factors. He divided these elements in following six groups: organizational and educational factors, instructor, students, technology and educational designing (Frazeen, 2005).

Recent studies have shown that "the successful implementation of educational technologies depends largely on the attitudes of educators, who eventually determine how they are used" (Albarini, 2006). Indeed, understanding the intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions, and including moderating factors (specifically, the cultural dimensions) that influence educators' attitudes towards ICT and adoption in higher education is, therefore, a focal point of interest but is under-researched in recent educational studies of information-accessing behavior (see for instance, Chang and Lim (2002)). As Li and Kirkup (2007) propose, "how far culture influences people's perception of the Internet and their use of it (. . .) needs further research". As Venkatesh (2000) notes, there is a significant and growing body of research regarding the importance of the role of intrinsic motives in technology use (see for instance, Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (1992); Finneran and Zhang (2005) and Sanchez-Franco and Roldan (2005) for a review).

Chahill (2008), based on Duderstat (2001), in this regard, stated that the higher education must meet these changes and they should invest in capacities which make the new types of learning, independent of time and place limitation, possible, in order to create a persuasive view in their future in the next millennium (Chahill, 2008).

## RESEARCH GOALS

1. The investigation and development of e-Learning at the Literature and Human Sciences College of Takestan Azad University
2. Identification of (technical, human, administrative and educational) barriers in the development of e-learning in the College,
3. Identification of the different (technical, human, administrative and educational) solutions in the development of e-learning in the College,
4. Evaluation and determination of contribution of each factor in the development of e-learning.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- Are technical, human, administrative and educational infrastructures the most important obstacles to the development of e-learning in the Literature and Human Sciences College of Takestan Azad University, Iran?
- Does the development of e-learning in the Literature and Human Sciences College of Takestan Azad University require the identification various proper strategies in technical, human, administrative and training perspectives?
- Do educating students and teachers lead to the development of e-learning in the Literature and Human Sciences College of Takestan Azad University, Iran?
- Do review and determination of each factor in the development of e-learning contribute to the development of e-learning in the Literature and Human Sciences College of Takestan Azad University, Iran?

## **METHODS AND MATERIALS**

This study is a survey. Survey researches are reviewed and investigated by selecting and studying samples chosen from the community; and frequency, distribution and the relationships among variables are investigated in survey researches. In this research type, the scholar infers the defined characteristics of the society by the analysis of the data obtained from the sample. The most common method for collecting the data in the surveys is the questionnaire (Kurlindger, 1986). Regarding the data collection method of the present study, non-experimental descriptive method is used. This type of research can be merely for understanding the current situation and it is used to assist the decision making process. Furthermore, this study is actually applied when there is no possibility of manipulating variables and only the researcher will examine the relations. So, the present study is non-experimental descriptive type (Sarmad et al, 1376).

### ***Participants of the study***

Population is the collection of individuals or objects which have one or more attributes in common. Therefore, in this study, the populations are postgraduate students and PhD candidates in the second semester of the academic year 1391-92 in the Literature and Human Sciences College of Takestan Azad University, Iran, which some of them were selected by sampling; and their opinions will be used. Statistics of graduate students (Masters and PhD) and faculty members of the Literature and Human Sciences College of Takestan Azad University for each department is shown in table 1.

*Table 1: Faculty and students of the Literature and Human Sciences College of Takestan Azad University, in the second semester of the academic year 1391-92*

No.	Master degree	Number of Ss	The college majors	Number of Faculties
1	English Language Teaching	76	English Language Teaching	6
2	English Translation	79	English Translation	8
3	Linguistics	51	Linguistics	5
4	Law	78	Law	6
5	Persian Literature	81	Persian Literature	6
6	Educational management	92	Educational management	10
7	Political Sciences	48	Political Sciences	5
8	Theology	87	Theology	9
9	Jurisprudence	62	Jurisprudence	8
total		653		63

### ***Sampling method***

In this method, two-stage random sampling is used. In the first stage, as table 1 shows, the number of educational courses was selected and in the next step the total number of graduate students (Masters and PhD) faculty and the departments, the number of faculty and students of each department was examined. Thus, the total population of faculty and graduate students (Masters and PhD) were considered because of their limited number (below 200), and 180 of the master students were analyzed.

### ***Data analysis Instruments***

In data analysis, regarding the measured variables, in terms of research objectives different statistical methods were used. In the descriptive statistics, the following items were used: frequency, percentage, median, mode, standard

deviation, variance, mean and the others. In addition, to study the relationship between variables and to compare the differences among the groups, parametric statistical tests such as F, T and non-parametric statistical tests of Kruskal-Wallis and Mann Whitney will be used. Finally, to identify the key factors, factorial analysis is used. These actions will be conducted using the SPSS/win 16 software.

#### **Data Collection Method**

For data collection, two methods of library research were used; like, studying the records of university that had been a pioneer in the use of e-learning and also using the conditions, facilities, infrastructure and equipments of that universities for the development of such courses. To collect the field data to test the hypotheses, a questionnaire was used. The questionnaire consists of two parts, one is the individual characteristics including age, sex, education, average level of computer literacy and academic major; and, the second part includes 46 items that were the factors influencing establishment and the development of e-learning in the Literature and Human Sciences College of Takestan Azad University.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Factorial analysis of the barriers and limitations in the operation and expansion of e-learning***

Factorial analysis is a general name which is used for some multivariate statistical methods and its main purpose is to summarize the data. This is one of the interdependent techniques and all variables are considered simultaneously. Factorial analysis, due to strong, elegance and its proximity to the scientific core, is considered the queen of analytical methods (Kurlinger, 1986). The main purpose of factorial analysis is to identify underlying factors or variables. In this regard, the common variables are identified with the same variance and then they are named by the researcher. It should be noted that regarding the high capability of this technique in analyzing the data, there is not the possibility of using them in every situation. The data used for factorial analysis should have the necessary qualifications. For this purpose, the Bartlett test and KMO coefficient are used. If KMO value is greater than 0.5, factor analysis can be used for sure. The coefficients for the questionnaire of faculty members equals to 70 which is an acceptable figure (table 2). Bartlett's test equals to 0.000 which shows that it is statistically significant at 99% level.

*Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's test coefficient for faculty members*

value	Test type
49.018	KMO
1.439	Bartlett's
0.00	Sig

After we ensured that the data is proper to perform the factorial analysis, the rotation varimax norm is used to achieve the significant factors. The extracted factors are indicated in table 3. Collectively, these factors explain 49.018 % of the variance related to affecting variables on the barriers and constraints on the development of e-learning. In simple terms, considering these seven factors could explain 49.018 percent of the effective factors in the creation, obstacles and limitations in the launch and development of e-learning in the university.

It must be explained that, among the total of variables, 17 factors are excluded from the factorial analysis process due to the low load factor and lower impact.

*Table 3: The number of extracted factors with eigenvalues, percentage of variance and cumulative percentage*

No.	Factor name	Eigenvalues	Variance percentage of Eigenvalues	Cumulative percentage
1	Deficiency of executives	21.437	14.683	14.683
2	Restriction of credit	24.905	7.001	21.684
3	infrastructural barriers	31.257	6.556	28.241
4	Cultural barriers	36.430	5.610	33.850
5	Educational barriers	41.733	5.399	39.249
6	human barriers	46.635	5.059	44.308
7	Technical barriers	51.185	4.710	49.018

Status of loading factors after rotation based on variables with loadings larger than 0.5 is shown in the table 4.

*Table 4: Variables related to each of the factors influencing barriers of the development of e-learning and factor loadings obtained from the rotated matrix*

Priority	Factors Name	Variables	Factor loading
1	Deficiency of executive factor	low potential for evaluating progress in learning courses	0.681
		low e-learning system for the continuity of learning activities by faculty members	0.536
		low e-learning system in terms of providing feedback by the faculty members	0.679
		the low level of the learner or instructor permission to change the presentation of the course	0.547
		low rates of encourage for e-learning system in the relationship between the learner and teacher	0.664
		lack of full cooperation of the Ministry of Science and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology	0.573
		insufficient faculty expert regarding the new educational technologies	0.557
2	Credit constraints	the high costs preparation and production of material for the content of e-learning and updating them	0.732
		high cost of Internet service	0.710
		lack of funds for the development of e-learning in universities	0.750
		deficiency or absence of local manufacturing facilities, and components required for e-learning	0.836
3	Infrastructure barriers	limited access to computers and online communication with faculty members	0.554
		low speed internet and the actual bandwidth	0.797
		lack of coverage of optic fiber in the entire country	0.669
		fluctuation in Internet speed and lack of real speed	0.808
4	Cultural constraints	lack of development of e-learning at high management level and those involved in educational planning	0.545
		lack of necessary policy to certify or endorse the content, quality and structure of electronic courses in universities	0.662
		lack of giving priority to the e-learning in the comprehensive program of ICT development in the country	0.707
		lack of attempt of administrators for culture-building in developing e-learning in the countries	0.703
5	The educational limitations	lack of enough training in the field of educational technology for the faculty	0.545
		unfamiliarity of planners and administrators with the concept of e-learning applications	0.554
		stakeholders' opposition with e-learning methods	0.673
		unfamiliarity of faculty with methods of communicating with students using e-learning	0.677
6	human limitations	requiring a lot of time preparing the students	0.686
		faculty resistance to change and their worries regarding electronic technology	0.673
		lack of experienced faculty on the e-learning and e-teaching units	0.556
7	Technical limitations	lack of technical and administrative support to maintain e-learning equipments	0.591
		possible limitations of laboratory sessions through e-learning	0.515
		lack of policy for the implementation and appropriate strategic management of the development of educational technology in universities	0.507

As it can be seen, 7 key factors cause barriers and limitations in the development of e-learning.

**First factor (Deficiency of executives):** This factor explains 14.683 percent of total variance of barriers and constraints in the implementation and development of e-learning and it is the top priority. There are 7 factors with the loading factors greater than 0.5 which are presented below: low potential for evaluating progress in learning courses; low e-learning system for the continuity of learning activities by faculty members; low e-learning system in terms of



providing feedback by the faculty members; the low level of the learner or instructor permission to change the presentation of the course; low rates of encourage for e-learning system in the relationship between the learner and teacher; lack of full cooperation of the Ministry of Science and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology regarding the development of electronic learning; and finally, insufficient faculty expert regarding the new educational technologies.

**Second factor (Restriction of credit):** This factor explains 7.001 percent of total variance of barriers and constraints in the implementation and development of e-learning and it is the second priority. There are 4 factors with the loading factors greater than 0.5 which are presented below: the high costs of preparation and production of material for the content of e-learning and updating them; high cost of internet service; lack of funds for the development of e-learning in universities; deficiency or absence of local manufacturing facilities, and components required for e-learning.

**Third factor (infrastructural barriers):** This factor explains 6.556 percent of total variance of barriers and constraints in the implementation and development of e-learning and it is the third priority. There are 4 factors with the loading factors greater than 0.5 which are presented below: limited access to computers and online communication with faculty members; fluctuation in internet speed and lack of real speed; lack of coverage of optic fiber in the entire country; low speed internet and the actual bandwidth.

**Forth factor (cultural barriers):** This factor explains 5.610 percent of total variance of barriers and constraints in the implementation and development of e-learning and it is the forth priority. There are 4 factors with the loading factors greater than 0.5 which are presented below: lack of development of e-learning at high management levels and those involved in educational planning; lack of necessary policy to certify or endorse the content, quality and structure of electronic courses in universities; lack of giving priority to the e-learning in the comprehensive program of ICT development in the country; lack of attempt of administrators for culture-building in developing e-learning in the countries.

**Fifth factor (educational barriers):** This factor explains 5.399 percent of total variance of barriers and constraints in the implementation and development of e-learning and it is the fifth priority. There are 4 factors with the loading factors greater than 0.5 which are presented below: unfamiliarity of faculty with methods of communicating with students using e-learning; unfamiliarity of planners and administrators with the concept of e-learning applications; lack of enough training in the field of educational technology for the faculty; stakeholders' opposition with e-learning methods.

**Sixth factor (human barriers):** This factor explains 5.059 percent of total variance of barriers and constraints in the implementation and development of e-learning and it is the sixth priority. There are 3 factors with the loading factors greater than 0.5 which are presented below: requiring a lot of time preparing the students; faculty resistance to change and their worries regarding electronic technology; lack of experienced faculty on the e-learning and e-teaching units.

**Seventh factor (technical barriers):** This factor explains 4.710 percent of total variance of barriers and constraints in the implementation and development of e-learning and it is the seventh priority. There are 3 factors with the loading factors greater than 0.5 which are presented below: lack of technical and administrative support to maintain e-learning equipments; possible limitations of laboratory sessions through e-learning; lack of policy for the implementation and appropriate strategic management of the development of educational technology in universities.

### ***Discussion***

The results of the research show that the following seven factors are considered as e-learning development restrictions and limitations in developing countries, especially in Iran:

1. *Deficiency of Executive Factors:* Cumbersome rules, the absence of a specific organization or institution as a custodian to set up e-learning courses, and lack of adequate support for holding such courses are considered as 'Deficiency of Executive Factors'.
2. *Lack of learners' motivation:* Learners are not motivated enough to enter and study e-learning courses due to sufficient knowledge about e-learning courses.
3. *Credit constraints:* E-learning development requires sufficient funds.
4. *Infrastructure limitations:* IT infrastructure in Iran are both outdated and inefficient and it should be developed and updated.

5. *Technical barriers*: These barriers include lack of optical fiber, electronic components and telecommunication devices.

6. *Human barriers*: In this category, there is a shortage of skilled manpower to launch e-learning courses.

7. *Software and hardware limitations*: accessing and supplying of software and hardware equipments is a complex task in Iran.

These factors are considered as e-learning development barriers and limitations in Iran as a developing country. Seemingly, if these limitations are managed and handled, e-learning development will be facilitated.

## **CONCLUSION**

New technologies have great potential to transform and shape teaching and learning activities to all higher education institutions and they provide tools to design modern scientific environments which have never been possible before. For this reason, many universities in Iran want to set up e-courses using information technology capabilities in the form of e-learning or online learning. However, the review of literature shows that the development of e-learning in educational systems is faced with many problems which unfamiliarity of policymakers and educational planners with such problems can impose heavy costs on educational institutions.

This paper aims to familiarize planners, policy makers, students and faculty members with the e-learning issues in higher education. It was found that strengthening and developing telecommunication infrastructures in educational institutions and providing access to information networks in such institutions is one of the important steps in the development of e-learning; because effectiveness of e-learning depends on the reliability and accessibility of hardware and software. And, lack of good telecommunication infrastructures severely affects the relationship between the learner and the educational system. Therefore, funding for facilities and e-learning tools for universities is a serious necessity.

Investments in human resources training and training of skilled manpower are another important issue in the development of e-learning. Because development of e-learning will fail without a skilled and capable workforce and resistance of traditional training will be increased and finally, the way of approaching information technology to higher education will be harder. In addition, the nature of academic courses must be considered carefully before e-learning implementation. E-learning cannot be replaced by traditional training. E-learning should be focused on courses and subjects that traditional education system is unable to respond to them. Finally, we can say that to overcome the barriers of e-learning development at universities and educational institutions a holistic and integrated approach is needed. The policies to orient and provide the necessary resources to facilitate the development of long process of e-learning should be determined.

## **Recommendations**

1. The users' skills knowledge of English language and mastering of software, hardware and network are necessary factors for development of web-based training in Iran. Before planning for e-learning development, students' familiarity and mastery of computer skills and workshop attending will be indispensable.
2. Since the shortage of qualified, proficient and competent e-learning teachers and experts in the field of electronic content production is obvious, it seems that training of interested teachers and experts is essential.
3. Currently, software and educational content furthermore material for e-learning development have not been developed yet in many academic disciplines. Necessary steps should be taken in this regard.
4. Based on the research findings, low speed and inappropriate connection are the main problems in the development of e-learning. Accordingly, communication infrastructures in Iran must be fostered.

## **Research Limitations**

Possible limitations of the study will be as follow:

- the restriction of access to information on the characteristics of the hardware and telecommunication infrastructure facilities of Takestan
- the restriction of access to information on the characteristics of the hardware and telecommunication infrastructure facilities of Takestan Azad University

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THE EVIDENCE OF PRAGMATIC TRANSFER IN COMPLIMENT RESPONSES IN ENGLISH  
CONVERSATION BETWEEN INDONESIAN AND AMERICAN SPEAKERS

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**ABSTRACT**

This study analyzes the types of agreement mostly used by Indonesian American speakers in responding compliments in their conversation. It is also aimed at finding out the evidence of pragmatic transfer in compliment responses used by Indonesian speakers in responding compliments toward American speakers in English conversation. The data is taken from the face-to-face interaction in natural setting conversation between ten pairs of Indonesians and Americans. Qualitative method is used as a method in analyzing the data. The data is analyzed by using Agreement types in Compliment Responses Taxonomy proposed by Herbert (1990). The result shows that American speakers mostly use Comment Acceptance strategy in responding compliments toward Indonesian speakers. Meanwhile Indonesian speakers also use Comment Acceptance and Appreciation Token strategy as dominant strategy in responding compliments given by American speakers. The result of the analysis also shows that there is an evidence of pragmatic transfer used by Indonesian speakers in responding compliments, which can be seen from the percentage of the use of compliment responses strategy used by both speakers. The uses of those strategies used by Indonesian speaker lead to the pragmatic transfer in responding compliments in which Indonesian speakers use forms of strategy which mostly occur in American utterance in which they tend to use appreciation and approval in responding compliment. This matter is triggered by the influence of American culture in English club where Indonesians like to hang out for talking, sharing, and gaining language about English for a long term. By using those strategies, it is clearly that there is a cultural understanding occur in Indonesian speakers utterances in which they can fit themselves in another culture which is contrastly different with their own culture.

**KEYWORDS:** Pragmatic transfer, Compliment responses, Indonesians, Americans.

**INTRODUCTION**

Compliment responses are one of speech act types in pragmatic study that deals with the compliment given by the complimenter to the hearer in order to maintain good communication. Holmes (1988a: 485) stated that compliment is “a speech act which is explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addresses, for some ‘good’ which is positively valued by the speaker and hearer. In the other way, compliment is aimed at showing respect to the hearer that minimizes the feeling of discomfort between speaker and hearer. Moreover, compliment is need to be paid so that it reduces the problems that probably occur in communication such as uneasy feeling or imposition to the complimenter. Paying compliment is a symbol of positive politeness (Fasold, 1990) strategy that serves a ‘social lubricant’ by diminishing elements such as distance and power and by strengthening solidarity between interlocutors. It means that giving compliments gives a sense that the speaker feels comfortable in talking to the hearer, especially for positive comments. However, people apply compliment responses different across culture. It depends on their norms and rules of their own culture. Comparing Indonesians and Americans, Indonesians tend to reject or downgrade compliment given toward them which is recognized as a typical of their culture. For example, a speaker gives a compliment to the hearer by saying ‘You have nice shoes’ and he gets the responses ‘No, I don’t think so’. Commonly some people would react to this compliment by using appreciation like ‘Oh thank you’ or ‘thanks’. Another example can be seen from the response of American toward compliment ‘You look fresh today’ and he responds it by saying ‘thanks’ which is common as an appropriate answer of compliment in their culture. Thus, this research describes the types of agreement mostly used by Indonesian and American speakers in their conversation. Furthermore, the use of compliment responses used by Indonesian speakers



will be compared with American speakers' responses in order to find out whether there is an evidence of pragmatic transfer in responding compliments.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In analyzing compliment responses that are used by Indonesian and American speakers in their conversation, compliment responses theory are needed in order to identify which form of agreement are used. The first study of compliments is proposed by Pomerantz (1978) who investigated compliment responses from conversation analytic perspective. Her results claimed that in American English, the recipients of compliments use various types to respond compliments, as follows 1) Acceptance, 2) Rejection, 3) Self-praise Avoidance. Herbert (1990) developed the compliment responses theory from the previous research which was proposed by Pomerantz (1975). He pointed out that the theory of compliments consists of three-categories, which are 1) Agreement, 2) Non-agreement, and 3) Other interpretations. Furthermore, in analyzing the evidence of pragmatic transfer, only the category of agreement is required because it is related to Western culture who commonly uses this type in responding compliment in their conversation. There are only two category of agreement used in this research, they are: Appreciation Token and Comment Acceptance. According to Herbert (1990), there are five strategies as a sub-major of agreement: 1) *Appreciation token* 'thank you', 2) *Comment Acceptance* 'Thanks, I like it too', 3) *Praise Upgrade* 'It looks beautiful in me, doesn't it?' 4) *Reassignment* 'My sister gave it to me, and 5) *Return* 'So's your'. Furthermore, since this research is a face-to-face interaction between speakers from different cultures, the use of context is extremely needed in order to determine the meaning of an utterance. Related to this context, McManis (1987: 197) explains the four kinds of context. These four contexts are *Physical context*, *Epistemic context*, *Linguistic context*, and *Social context*. "*Physical context: where the conversation takes place, what object are present and what actions are taking place*". "*Epistemic context; background knowledge shared by the speakers and hearers*". "*Linguistic context; utterances previous to the utterance under consideration*". "*Social context; the social relationship and setting of the speakers and the hearer*".

## DATA AND METHODS

The data is taken from the conversations between Indonesian speakers and American speakers in natural setting that take place in an English conversation club in Bandung, Indonesia. There are many people who are coming to join, practice, and learn English with Native English Speaker who mostly come from America. The data is recording in a form of face-to-face interaction between interlocutors. The subjects of this research are ten pairs of Indonesian and American speakers. Both of the groups are college students and graduate college students between the ages of 20-26 years old. The Indonesian speakers are also qualified to the people who join that English club for more than two years. It is used in order to show whether there is an evidence of pragmatic transfer in responding compliments in their conversation or not.

The data is analyzed by using qualitative method. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) states that "qualitative research focuses on interpretation of phenomena in their natural settings to make sense in terms of the meanings people bring to these settings." Qualitative research involves collecting information about personal experiences, introspection, life story, interviews, observations, historical, interactions and visual text which are significant moments and meaningful in peoples' lives. Pope and Mays (1995) states qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings as an effort to discover the meanings seen by those who are being researched (or subjects) rather than that of the researcher. There, a non-participant observation method is applied in collecting the data (Burnst, 1994). It means that the researcher is not involved in their conversation and functioned as observer. Furthermore, there is no scenario given to them whether it is in a form of clue or topic of the conversation.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

This research concerned with the evidence of pragmatic transfer that occur in Indonesian speaker utterances in responding compliment toward American speakers. There are 50 data which indicates the use of compliment responses by Indonesian and American speakers in their conversation. The data shows that American speakers use Comment Acceptance strategy as a dominant response of compliment in conversing with Indonesian speakers. While Indonesian speakers also use two types of agreement in responding compliments which are Comment Acceptance and Appreciation Token. Both of the speakers use Comment Acceptance as a dominant strategy even though the occurrences of comment acceptance by Indonesians are less than used by Americans. It suggests that there is an evidence of pragmatic transfer to Americans' form of compliment responses in applying their agreement. Some examples are provided below:

***The use of Appreciation Token***

It is found that the percentage of this strategy is equal between Indonesians and Americans (8:8). By using appreciation token, the complimentee shows appreciation for the interlocutor's previous utterance. This strategy is usually used in Western model especially American culture when they respond to compliment. The participants in the conversation are labelled with X and Y in which X is American and Y is Indonesian. Some examples of using this strategy are provided below:

- (1) X: I've been in The Center one day...couple hours...  
Y: Couple hours? Yes...yes...  
X: My best experience is this time right now talking to DJ  
Y: *Thank you (smile)...Thank you...Thank you*

In the conversation above, previously, Y asked about what is the best experience that X feels in The Center and how long he has been The Center. X replied that he has been in The Center for couple hours. When answering another question from Y, it is recognized that there is an indication of using compliment and compliment response in their utterances. The utterance of compliment is made by the X toward Y which can be seen from his utterance "My best experience is this time right now talking to DJ". That utterance is considered as a compliment because there is a praise which delivers to the hearer about his personal character. As an answer, Y applied an agreement toward that compliment by using Appreciation Token strategy, one of agreement types in compliment responses theory. It can be seen from his utterance when he said "*thank you (smile)... Thank you... Thank you...*" and smiling toward American speaker. Appreciation Token is identified by marker "thank you, thanks, or smiling" which is most common answer in Western culture in responding. Appreciation token is a type of an agreement where the complimentee accepts what the complimenter says toward him. Furthermore, in Western culture, it is a common way to pay a compliment toward others. From the repetition of "thank you" it can be seen that Y really appreciated the compliment which is made by X toward him since that day was the first time they met and had a talk each other. It is clearly that there is an evidence of pragmatic transfer in their interaction. Both of the speakers communicate well toward each other in which Y can put himself out of his natural culture in responding such compliment. If he responds that compliment by using responses that commonly used by Indonesians (Indonesian culture), the answer will be questioning or downgrading that compliment such as 'Really?' or 'No, I don't think so'. Furthermore, Indonesian speaker can fit himself in Western culture so there is no misunderstanding occurs between them.

- (2) X: Cool...So what does she do in the Bank?  
Y: As a supervisor.  
X: It's cool... Oh your English is awesome.  
Y: *Ohhh...That's mean a lot Joye...a lot...thank you so much.*

The conversation above occurred after previously both of the speakers talked about Y's family and what her family does. She also explained that her sister works in a Bank. In the utterance above, X asked about what her sister position in the Bank. Y replied that her sister is a supervisor. Then X commented that it is cool that her sister works there. She remained silent for a while and said that Y's English is awesome. Related to the context, it does not really fit with the topic when she just jumped to another topic, which is irrelevant with previous subject, but there is no matter about it. Here X praised Indonesian speaker by saying "Oh your English is awesome". As a replied, Y surprised with that compliment and being overreacts in a positive thing. She responded that compliment by saying "*Ohhhh...That's mean a lot Joye...a lot...thank you so much*" Her utterance is considered as an agreement toward the compliment which suggests one type of compliment response which is "Appreciation Token" because there is an indicator of "thank you" in it. It is considered as Appreciation Token strategy where she really respects and appreciates that compliment given by American speaker. Comparing with the form of compliment response between them, Y can put herself into American or Western culture where she can accept the compliment and paying it with "thank you" where it is common in American culture pays compliment with "thanks" or "thank you". Whereas in Indonesian culture, they usually rejected or low their self-esteem toward the compliment they got by using 'Not at all' or 'I'm not good'. From the utterances above, it can be seen that there is no misunderstanding between X and Y. It suggests that Y paid the compliment as a symbol of modesty toward the NES. In order to compare the use of Appreciation Token strategy with Indonesian speakers, the uses of Appreciation Token strategy used by American speakers are also showed in the data below:

- (3) Y: Wow I must come...You must be good in cooking.  
X: *Thank you (laughing smoothly)*

In previous utterance, X said that she would like to cook something Mexican in her cooking class. As a feedback, Y gave her a compliment toward what she would like to do there. It can be seen from his utterance “Wow I must come...It must be good” His utterance is referring to X ability in cooking Mexican food even though he never tastes it before. In his utterance, he praised that it must be good when an American cooks Mexican food. As a replied of that compliment, American speaker paid it back by using an agreement toward it, her agreement can be seen from her utterance “*Yeah..Thank you (laughing smoothly)*” The use of “Thank you” indicates an appreciation toward the complimenter’s utterance which suggests an Appreciation Token strategy. Furthermore, the use of Appreciation Token is not only indicated by using “thanks” or “thank you” but also the use of such terms of agreement like “Yeah”. Appreciation Token is commonly used by Western people in order to show their appreciation toward the compliment by simply saying “thanks”. Furthermore, the compliment responses is might be considered less polite toward Indonesia culture because they tend to downgrade or deny that kind of compliment because it feels like inappropriate replying with such acceptance in Indonesian culture which contradictorily with American culture where they think that paying it with a positive comment indicates the appropriateness of that compliment. Moreover, due to lack of understanding of the cultural value between them, there is no misunderstanding occurred in their conversation. Indonesian speaker accepted that compliment response in a positive way and jump to another utterance.

### ***The use of Comment Acceptance***

Comment acceptance is used when the complimentee accepts the complimentary force and offers a relevant comment on the appreciated topic. The use of this strategy is common in Western model of compliment responses including in American conversation. The data show that mostly Indonesian speaker use this strategy as the result of pragmatic evidence in responding compliments toward American speakers even though the percentage is not really the same with the use of Comment Acceptance by American speakers in which it occurs in Indonesian speakers utterances for 12 times and in American speakers utterances for 16 times. Some data are provided below:

- (4) X: Why are you at The Center so much? What is it that keeps you coming back?  
Y: Because I have a lot of friends here. I found many friends here actually, not from my school because I don’t have friend actually in school, like a best friend from The Center. See...that’s funny right?  
X: Ohh...I get it, that’s awesome...That’s cool.  
Y: *Yeah I know that’s cool.*

In the conversation above, X asked Y why he spends his day so much in The Center. He also asked why does Y keeps coming back to The Center. As a replied, Y said that he has many friends in The Center and found a best friend there where he could not find it in his school. As a comment of his explanation, X sent a compliment toward him which can be seen from his utterance “*Ohh...I get it, that’s awesome...That’s cool*” His utterance initiates that he praised personal thing about Y. He praised how Y got a best friend and made friends in The Center. Furthermore, he redressed the compliment to reduce the FTA toward Y in which he said “See.. That’s funny right?” He sent positive thing toward the addressee in order to comforting the situation and addressed the hearer’s positive face. At the end, Y agreed with the compliment which is given to him and paid it back by using agreement toward that compliment. It can be seen from his utterance “*Yeah...I know that’s cool*”. Here what he said is considered as one of type of agreement in compliment response named “Comment Acceptance” strategy. By using comment acceptance, it means that Y accepts the complimentary and offers a relevant comment on the appreciated topic. Furthermore, there is the indication of pragmatic transfer in Y’s utterance. The use of Comment acceptance does not fit with the reflection of Indonesian culture in responding compliment. Indonesian people commonly reject or disagree with compliment but here Y can put himself in complimenter’s culture by showing that he appreciates a compliment that he got. It suggests that Y can put himself in American culture in which he responded the compliment in an appropriate way by using the indication of “appreciation” in his utterance. Moreover, it does not trigger misunderstanding toward them.

- (5) Y: I do like singing R&B, I do like Jazz, I do like blues, I do like Rock&Roll.  
X: Wow nice! You can sing all kind of music.  
Y: *Oh yeah, I do.*

In the conversation above, Indonesian speaker said that she likes to sing R&B, Jazz, Blues, Rock&Roll. As a return, X gave a compliment toward her which can be seen from her utterance “Wow nice! You can sing all kind of music” Her utterance is referring to Y’s ability when she said that she could sing many kinds of music genre. From Y’s utterance, it can be seen that she accepted that compliment by paying it back with one type of agreement in responding compliment which can be seen from her utterance “*Oh yeah, I do*”. Here, what she said is indicated as Comment Acceptance strategy where she agreed with that compliment and appreciated it by saying an approval.

Comparing between both of their cultures, it is assumed that there no misunderstanding between both of the speakers above. Indonesian speaker can put herself in Western/American culture by using direct answer when she responded compliment which was given by X to her. This is so different with the reflection of Indonesian culture when they seem to reject or disagree with the compliment toward them especially with strangers. Furthermore, the selection of this strategy might be because of the influence of American culture which tend to be direct and friendly toward Indonesian speaker.

(6) Y: You wrote songs?

X: I wrote some songs.

Y: Wow you are awesome.

X: *Yeah, my friend asked me to help him to write a Cello part to go a long with.*

In the conversation above, Indonesian speaker initiated a question by asking whether X wrote a song because she can play Cello. As a replied, American speaker said that she wrote some songs. Furthermore, Y forced to give a compliment toward her ability because she felt amazed by it. Her compliment can be seen from "Wow, that's nice". Here, X recognized it as a compliment toward her so that she applied and agreement type in responding it. It can be shown from her utterance "*Yeah...my friend asked me to help him to write a Cello part to go along with*". This strategy is indicated as the same agreement type in compliment response theory which is Comment Acceptance where she accepted that compliment which is initiated by the word "Yeah" and give a commentary which is related with the appreciated topic. In the conversation above, it can be seen that X uses agreement in order to show modesty toward Y. This matter can be seen from the type of commentary that she made as a reason why she agrees with the NNS's compliment. By using modesty, one tries to show low self-esteem toward the addressee and tries to show a respect and polite toward the Indonesian speaker by replying that compliment with positive response. This strategy reflects that American people love to appreciate the compliment in order to establish solidarity or maintain social rapport. On the contrary, the use of that compliment response can be valued less polite toward Indonesian people because they tend to reject or deny the compliment as their response. Furthermore, Indonesian speaker did not find the difficulty to continue her communication when she found out that American speaker used compliment response by using Western model. This might be happened because there is an understanding of culture in Indonesian speaker's view toward American culture.

## CONCLUSION

This research is designed in finding out the types of agreement in responding compliments between Indonesian and American speakers in their conversation. American speakers tend to use Comment Acceptance in responding compliment toward Indonesian speakers. While the types of agreement that mostly occur in Indonesian speakers are Comment Acceptance and Appreciation Token strategy. This research also shows that there is an evidence of pragmatic transfer used by Indonesian speakers in responding compliments toward American speakers. It can be seen from the use of Comment Acceptance strategy which suggests that the occurrence of this strategy is almost the same with American speakers responses in responding compliments. Furthermore, Appreciation Token strategy is also used by Indonesian speakers as the second dominant strategy in responding compliments toward American speakers. This matter might be triggered by the influence of American culture in English club where they like to hang out. By using those strategies, it is clearly that there is cultural understanding occur in Indonesian speakers utterances in which they can fit themselves in another culture which is different with their own culture.

## Limitation of the Study

This present research only discusses about the use of agreement types in responding compliment which occur in conversation of Indonesian and American speakers. Furthermore, the use of agreement response is connected to the evidence of pragmatic transfer which occur in Indonesian speakers utterance in responding compliment toward American speakers. The evidence of pragmatic transfer from American speakers utterances are not discussed here because it is assumed that the possibility of pragmatic transfer do not occur in their conversation.

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