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Foreword

Welcome to volume eleven and the third edition of 2015. We are happy to announce that our readership is increasing day by day. For a journal examining the topics of EFL/ESL, Literature and Translation studies, the growth and readership has been pleasing. Our bi-monthly Journal has attracted many readers not only from the Middle East but also from different parts of the world. In this edition, we have presented thirty five articles, discussing different issues of EFL/ESL, literature and translation studies. The first article of the issue is Violation of Conversational Maxims: Drivers' Excuses toward Traffic Police's Questions and is studied by Saman Ebadi, Ahmed Rawdhan Salman and Abdulbaset Saeedian. In the second article of the issue, Mahdieh Noori and Ali Akbar Jabbari have studied Contrastive Analysis of Sentence Patterns in English and Persian. In the third article of the issue, The Effect of Using Creative Drama on Developing Oral Proficiency of Iranian Advanced EFL Learners is presented by Ahmad Mohseny and Delaram Firooz. In the next article, Investigating the Relationship between Anxiety and Writing Performance among Iranian EFL Learners is studied by Naghmeh Jebreil, Akbar Azizifar, Habib Gowhari and Ali Jamilinesari. In the fifth article of the issue, Maliheh Khodabakhshi and Moslem Zolfagharkhani have presented A Gender-Based Study of Compliments and Compliment Responses in Persian Movies. The next article which is The Effect of Massed/Distributed Sentence Writing on Perception of EFL Learners: A Qualitative Study is done Elaheh Sotoudehnama and Fattane Maleki Jebelli. In the seventh article of the issue; Nava Nourdad has studied Responses to mediation for six levels of reading comprehension questions based on Bloom's taxonomy. In the eighth article of the issue, Contribution of SLA to the Brain Study: A Plausible Look is done by Nima Shakouri and Marzieh Rezabeigi. In the next article, Adel Dastgoshadeh and ShahinAhmadishad have studied Chaos/Complexity Theory in Applied Linguistics. In the tenth article, Bilingual vs. Trilingual; The Case of Learning Strategy Use in an EFL Context is studied by Ali Asghar Ahmadishokouh, Mohammed Parviz and Masud Azizi. In the eleventh article of the issue, Sedighe Vahdat and Atusa Gerami have presented Iranian EFL Teachers’ Attitudes towards Implementing Computer Assisted Language Learning in Writing Classes.
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We hope you enjoy this edition and look forward to your readership.
Title

Violation of Conversational Maxims: Drivers' Excuses toward Traffic Police's Questions

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Biodata

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Abstract

This study deals with the paradox of the communicative nature of drivers' excuses when they are caught red-handed by traffic police due to different violation of driving
regulations. This qualitative study aimed to find out which conversational maxims the drivers in Kurdistan province in Iran, driving from Sanandaj to Marivan and vice versa, violated when they infracted driving regulations and were stopped by police. Two DVDs, each containing one-hour traffic police interviews with a total of 10 infringing drivers, were analyzed to investigate the aim of the study. The data analysis of the study shows that all of the stops were for speeding and in most of the interviews the maxims of quality and quantity were violated by the infringing drivers while the maxims of manner and relation were observed.

**Keywords:** Conversational maxims, violation, traffic police, quantity, quality, relation, manner

1. Introduction

This study is concerned with the excuses that drivers make to answer traffic police's questions. The conversations between the infracted drivers (those who break the rules while they are familiar with them and know that disobeying them is a crime) and traffic police are analyzed in this study to find out if the conversational maxims are violated. The term "violating" has been preferred over the other terms such as flouting, opting out, and infringing because almost all drivers want to deceive traffic police when they are stopped. The distinction between them will be noted in the Literature Review.

Paul Grice who introduced the Cooperative Principles states, "Make your contribution such as it is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged (Grice 1975, pp.41-58)." Though phrased as a prescriptive command, the principle is intended as a description of how people normally behave in conversation. It can be stated, hence, that the Cooperative Principle describes how people interact with one another.

According to the Cooperative Principle, both speaker and hearer converse with the willingness to deliver and interpret a message. The speaker and hearer cooperate and that is why they communicate efficiently (Thomas, 1995). In order to show how we interpret meaning which Grice presented, in addition to the Cooperative Principle, four conversational maxims were introduced by him to show how we communicate efficiently in the light of certain rules. Thanks to Grice’s
maxims, we can interpret and understand the underlying implication of an utterance (Thomas, 1995).

Therefore, in order to show what goes on in conversation, Grice introduced four conversational maxims. A speaker might fail to observe a maxim but still get the intended meaning through to the hearer. Failing to observe a maxim is often referred to as ‘breaking a maxim’. Breaking these maxims may have several reasons such as creating "humor", emphasizing a message, creating irony or avoiding unpleasant situations; in other words, to communicate effectively (Dornerus, 2006), but in this article the reason for breaking maxims is "not being fined" by police traffic.

In this article the researchers examined how infracted drivers use these conversational rules in order not to be fined and to evoke traffic police's feelings to at least reduce the amount of fine. In this study, the main focus was on the reasons the infracted drivers give why they have driven too fast. We explored which maxims were most frequently violated in the different infracted drivers' responses to the traffic police's questions.

2. Literature Review
Violating, flouting, infringing, and opting out are the main key terms that while discussing Grice's maxims are used. Providing a distinction between these key terms is of utmost importance in this study in order to show which one has been focused upon and why.

2.1. Violating and Flouting
According to Thomas (1995) and Cutting (2002), there is a difference between violating and flouting in terms of speaker's intention. If a speaker attempts to deceive a listener on purpose or intentionally, they are, in fact, violating a maxim. While flouting occurs if there is no sign of deception in what a speaker states, that is, the speaker may unintentionally misleads the listener. For instance, Cutting (2002) provides an example of a person (girl or boy) whose mother has gone on a short vacation to reconsider her situation if it is better for her to divorce or not, but the speaker internally states that she has gone somewhere to relax. In this case, the speaker intentionally intends the listener not to understand the truth; therefore he violates (not flouts) the maxim of quality.

2.2. Infringing and Opting out
Infringing a maxim happens when a speaker does not have sufficient linguistic capacity to answer a question. This is more evident for those students who, for whatever reason, have not studied well,
and when they are asked by their teacher to answer a question, they fail to do it. In this case they
don't intend to mislead or deceive the listener, but their failure to answer the question is due to lack
of information or linguistic knowledge. There are also some other cases when a person rejects to
answer a question or says something. In this case that person is "opting out" of a maxim. This can
be seen among spies who are caught by their foe but also do not want to give any information to
them. Researchers also use (should use) "opting out" when they are asked to provide their
participants' personal information. This should be taken into consideration since it is concerned
with "confidentiality agreement they have with someone" (Paltridge 2006, p.65).

In this study, "violating" has been preferred over the other terms because infracted drivers, in
general, try to convince traffic police not to fine them by begging them or, in a clearer sense,
deceiving them intentionally. Before going any further, a short discussion of the four
conversational maxims can be helpful in understanding what the infracted drivers' violations of
maxims were based on. The four conversational maxims are as follows:

*The maxim of quantity*

The maxim of quantity requires the speaker to give the right amount of information when s/he
speaks. The provided information should not be either less or more than what is required (Thomas,
1995). An example of non-observance is when a speaker says: “I’m feeling good today, but
yesterday I was very ill, and the day before that, even worse”, when someone asks, by way of
greeting, “How are you doing today”? In the greeting context the utterance contains too much
information and the maxim is not being observed or it is violated (Dornerus, 2006).

Of course, this is not the one and only rule, that is, providing less information than what is
required to convey the intended message is also regarded as violation of this maxim. For instance,
in a study conducted by Engelhardt et al. (2006), they reported that speakers and hearers were not
sensitive to over-informativeness but their sensitivity to under-informativeness was crystal clear.
But in an empirical response to Engelhardt et al. (2006), the findings of Davies and Katsos' study
provided evidence that "speakers and hearers are sensitive to both Quantity maxims" (2013, p.78).
This has not been the end of the story, in a more interesting study, Engelhardt disagreed with
Davies and Katsos' understanding of their study and encourages further discussions to "a better
understanding of the situations in which people do and do not follow the Maxim of Quantity"

*The maxim of quality*
The maxim of quality is a matter of giving the right information. The speaker says nothing that s/he knows to be false or for which s/he lacks sufficient evidence (Thomas, 1995). The other maxims are dependent on this maxim since, if a speaker does not convey the truth then the utterance is false, even if the right amount of information is given or the speaker is clear and orderly when speaking (Finegan and Besnier, 1989). An example of non-observance is: “you look good with your new haircut” when one actually believes the opposite. The statement is then an untruth, the speaker fails to observe the maxim in order to be polite (Dornerus, 2006).

**The maxim of relevance**

The maxim of relevance requires the speaker to be relevant to the context and situation in which the utterance occurs (Thomas, 1995). For instance, a speaker should not say “I am on the phone” when someone asks if s/he wants dinner. Here the utterance meaning is irrelevant and the speaker fails to observe the maxim (Dornerus, 2006).

**The maxim of manner**

The maxim of manner is a matter of being clear and orderly when conversing. The speaker describes things in the order in which they occurred and avoids ambiguity and obscurity (Thomas, 1995). A speaker fails to observe the maxim of manner when s/he says “I went to bed and got undressed” when, of course, s/he undressed first and then went to bed.

There are some studies which have just taken one of these maxims into consideration to scrutinize the maxim under investigation more closely. For instance, taken the maxim of quantity into consideration, Young (1999) carried out a study under the title of "Using Grice’s maxim of Quantity to select the content of plan descriptions". The findings of that study showed the more the participants followed instructions produced by the cooperative techniques, the less and fewer execution errors they made and could achieve more of their goals. The three interesting studies of Engelhardt et al. (2006), Davies and Katsos (2013), and Engelhardt (2013) which have carried out in response to each other, have only taken maxim of quantity into consideration. Unlike these studies, this study investigates all four Gricean maxims, i.e., it does not specifically takes only one of them into consideration.

These maxims have been proved to be effective in teaching. For example, Lazăr (2013), in his study indicated that those students who had problems regarding comprehension of the authors' intended meaning while studying absurd literature had better performance if a transgressive point of view with regard to Grice’s conversational maxims is used to the absurd dramatic discourse.
3. Methodology

This is a qualitative study whose aim is to help the present researchers understand what excuses the infracted drivers give to the traffic police's question regarding overspeeding. In this qualitative study, ten such cases have been investigated closely while taking Gricean maxims into consideration. It is also worth mentioning that the transcription conventions which have been used in this study are made by the present researchers and have not been adopted or adapted from any specific study.

In order to illustrate how maxims are violated in the infracted drivers' responses, the present researchers first watched the recorded videos and then having transcribed them, they analyzed carefully the drivers' responses. Due to the scope of this study, only each driver's main response and the traffic police's suggestions are written here. For convenience, in all of the ten examples "D" stands for "Driver" and "TP" for "Traffic Police". Since all of these drivers have been stopped by traffic police for overspeeding, the police officer's question which was as follows "Excellency, why are you overspeeding?" was only written here and should be applied to all ten conversations. It is also worth mentioning that all of these conversations have been synopsized to a large extent, i.e., to save time and place only the most important statement of the infracted drivers has been written in this section.

**D1. I am late for an important appointment and I have to arrive on time.**

TP: Always leave enough time for your journey. You have to remember that if you drive too fast, you may be stopped by police and this will certainly cause you to be late.

**D2. I am late and behind schedule. I have to arrive in my destination on time.**

TP: What schedule? If you want to continue to have a schedule, SLOW DOWN [our capitalization]. Allow enough time for your journey.

**D3. I didn't realize what the speed limit was.**

TP: There is a reason for determining these speed limits. It's your responsibility to be aware of the limit you are in and to drive within it. Please remember just because the speed limit is, for example, 80 KPH it doesn't mean that you should drive this fast; it may be safer to drive more slowly and adjust your speed with road conditions.

**D4. I was affected by other drivers' performance. The traffic was moving faster than I normally drive.**
TP: Just because they do it do you need to do it too? Take control. You decide the speed you travel at.

**D5. I was feeling stressed because of something.**
TP: It is one of the driving regulations [in Iran, our words] that you shouldn't drive while you think you are not OK or you are angry because of something. Stress can make the situations even worse.

**D6. It was all because of the driver behind me who was driving too close to me.**
TP: Tailgating (following an automobile very closely) is a serious problem but speeding up simply puts you more at risk.

**D7. I was overtaking a vehicle, with slow speed, in front.**
TP: What if he has been driving within the speed limit. You should not be affected by others either inside or outside the car. Overtaking isn't an acceptable reason for speeding.

**D8. I was listening to loud/fast tempo music.**
TP: You can't go fast when listening to hospital radio! Research has shown that listening to loud or upbeat music tracks can influence your speed. No-one is asking you to stop listening to your favorite tracks in the car - but be aware of your speed when you are driving.

**D9. I was distracted by other people in the car.**
TP: Their safety is in your hands! Don't allow yourself to be distracted. If necessary, stop the car and deal with whatever is distracting you.

**D10. I was searching for the right direction because I was lost.**
TP: Make sure you don't get to the wrong destination in break speed time. If you're lost, going faster isn't going to help. It simply isn't an excuse for breaking the speed limit. Slow down, stop and ask.

What has been discussed in the Results is the summary of negotiation between the drivers and traffic police. It is of utmost importance to note that only the gist of the conversations has been written here because each conversation took about 15 minutes which needs a lot of place to be transcribed wholly. Hence, in some parts, mostly regarding maxims of quality and quantity, the results have been written based on what is said in conversations and has not been written here.

### 4. Results and Discussion

In this part the results of the ten above-mentioned conversations, though summarized, were discussed in separate paragraphs for each case as follows:
In the first conversation, the maxims of relation and manner are observed because the driver responds to the police in a relevant way and also he is not ambiguous at all, i.e., the reason for overspeeding is stated by this driver. However the maxims of quantity and quality are violated because he provides too much information which most of it is not necessary for the meaning to be conveyed and it was clear that he was not telling the truth because in one of his sentences he said that his wife is giving birth to a child which is not in line with being late for an appointment. Though concise, the police's tip was also as informative, relevant, unambiguous, and true as is required; hence it observes all the maxims too. The results of the first conversation is in line with the findings of Davies and Katsos (2013) but in contrary with those of Engelhardt et al. (2006) who reported that both speakers and hearers are sensitive to under-informativeness but not to over-informativeness.

The same description is true about the second conversation too. That is, the maxims of relation and manner are observed but the ones of quantity and quality are violated. The maxim of relation is observed because the driver's answer is in line with the traffic cop's question. Again providing a reason by the driver shows the observance of the maxim of manner. The police's tip observes all Gricean maxims as well. The aforementioned comparison between the results of this study and those of the mentioned studies is also true about this conversation.

In the third conversation the driver is absolutely violating the maxim of quality by stating that he didn't know the speed limit because he intended to mislead the hearer (the traffic police). The maxims of manner and relation are observed but the one of quantity is again violated due to the unnecessary speech of the driver. The police' tip violates the maxim of quantity by telling too much information such as an example, details, etc. but the other maxims are observed.

Regarding the fourth conversation it is worth mentioning that the driver tries to convince the traffic police that it's been other drivers' fault that he has driven too fast, though it may not to a large extent be true, hence he violates the maxim of quality. In harmony with the previous conversation, in the fourth conversation the maxims of manner and relation are observed but the one of quantity is again violated. In this conversion all of the maxims are observed by the police's tip.

In the fifth conversation the traffic police's sardonic response indicates that what the driver says is nonsense, ambiguous, and irrelevant. This shows that all four conversational maxims of relation, quality, and quantity, and manner are violated. Regarding the police's tips, it can be stated again
that all of the maxims are observed. As in conversation five, the police's tip in this conversation is in line with the observance of the maxims.

The sixth conversation is like the fourth conversation in which the driver tries to convince the traffic police that it's been other drivers' fault that has influenced on his performance, hence he violates the maxim of quality. In this conversation, the maxims of manner and relation are observed but the one of quantity is again violated. The police's tip also observes all of the maxims in this conversation.

The seventh conversation is the only one, so far, that has observed the maxim of quality, i.e., the driver stated that he had driven too fast because he wanted to overtake a vehicle. What he said is related to the question and it is not ambiguous at all. The maxim of quantity, though, is violated again due to the driver's resolute attempt to satisfy the police not to fine him. The cop wants to make the driver aware of his mistake and the driver seems to be confused because after "What if he has been driving within the speed limit.", the driver asked: "What do you mean?" Accordingly, it can be stated that the police's tip does violate the maxim of manner by being ambiguous and making the driver confused, but it observes the other maxims.

Unlike the fifth conversation, in the eighth conversation, all of the maxims are observed, i.e., none of them is violated. It seems that all of the maxims in this conversation are observed by the police too. In the ninth conversation the maxims of quantity and quality are violated and the other two are observed. The police's tip observes all of the maxims in this conversation and also in the tenth one.

In the last conversation the maxim of quality is violated because of "If you're lost, going faster isn't going to help." The maxim of quantity is again violated but this time because of brevity. The maxims of relation and manner are also violated in harmony with the fifth conversation. The results of the last conversation, that is, the violation of the maxim of quantity because of brevity corroborates with the findings of Engelhardt et al. (2006) but it contradicts the findings of Davies and Katsos (2013) which was a response to the previous study. The findings of Engelhardt (2013) are in line with the results obtained in this section.

In summary it can be stated that the most frequently violated maxim is the maxim of quantity. They drivers tried to convince the police not to fine them by expatiating. The second most frequently violated maxim is the one of quality. The drivers lie when they find no other way out of the discussion and they want to save face. The maxim of relation and manner are the least
frequently violated maxims in these conversations. Since all of the drivers were male in this study, it can be a good idea to do further research on cases in which the drivers are females and see what maxims they mostly observe and violate and if there is difference between them.

5. Conclusion
In conclusion, since our material consists of a small amount of data no generalization can be made as to which maxims are most frequently violated in drivers-traffic police conversations in general. However this study shows that being aware of maxims is important for traffic police in order to control their feelings and reactions toward what the drivers say and not to feel pity for them. In the conversation which we examined, maxims were violated in almost every interaction. Therefore, it is necessary for traffic police not to be deceived by the drivers who break the maxims in order to evoke the officers' feeling in their verbal interactions. Nearly all of the maxims are observed in the police's tips to these drivers which shows that they are trained enough how to deal with people properly, help them with their update information, and finally don't waste people's time either by asking them irrelevant questions or through elaborating on unnecessary and long responses. In a nutshell, without the help of Grice’s maxims, we would not be able to properly describe the dynamics of interaction and understand the phenomenon of cooperation and non-cooperation.

It is highly recommended for future researchers who are interested in this area to investigate the violation of maxims based on gender (male and female drivers) and also include other reasons why drivers are stopped by traffic police. In this study, the only question which the traffic police asked was regarding overspeeding which is not enough to overgeneralize the findings to other reasons of infringing driving regulations. Because this study was qualitative, the number of investigated cases was only ten. In future studies, the number of involved cases to investigate can be more those of this study to make the obtained results more generalizeable.

References


Title

Contrastive Analysis of Sentence Patterns in English and Persian: A Review Article

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Abstract

Hajizadeh (2011) in his article entitled as ‘Contrastive analysis of sentence patterns in English and Persian’ aims at presenting a general classification of clause structure in Modern Persian. To this aim, transitive and intransitive structures in Persian are discussed; five canonical Persian constructions based on valency and transitivity are enumerated, and the ways in which complements and adjuncts are distinguished from each other are analyzed. In addition, similarities and differences between English and Persian are described. However, the author’s contention in terms of the basic functions in Persian and English clause and sentence structure; transitivity, intransitivity, and ditransitivity in Persian; core and non-core complements in Persian do not seem to be well substantiated.

Keywords: Adjuncts, Complements, Intransitive, Predicate, Transitive

1. Introduction

Contrastive analysis as a branch of linguistics deals with the comparison of two or more languages or subfields of them in an attempt to identify their similarities and differences (Fisiak, 1981).
Though the field is concerned with the identification of both similarities and differences between languages, it mainly deals with the differences rather than similarities (James, 1980). Correspondingly, it is believed that the more differences exist between the two languages, the more difficult it is for the learners to learn a second language; on the other hand, the more similarities exist between them, the easier it is to do so. In the case of differences, either transfer would be adopted or language learning may be inhibited.

Accordingly, there are some significant similarities and differences between Persian and English. One of the areas of most difficulties for language learners of English or Persian is syntactic differences. This syntactic difference is mainly striking in terms of the clause structure i.e., complements, adjuncts and predicator in the respective languages. In addition, there are some significant differences in terms of canonical structures, order of the elements in the clause, accompanying elements with the indirect object, position of the predicate, flexibility of the word order in Persian but not in English, and ditransitivity.

On the other hand, there are some significant similarities between the two languages. In both languages, the basic functions of the clause are the same. The subject is the first element of the clause in both cases. Both English and Persian have the same behavior in terms of intransitivity, monotransitivity, and valency. Complements in the two languages are distinguished by factors of licensing, obligatoriness, category, and prepositional phrase which can differentiate complements from adjuncts.

In the following part, different functions of the clause structure i.e., complements, adjuncts, and predicator in English and Persian are elaborated. The next section deals with the canonical intransitive and transitive structure. The subsequent section illustrates the concept of valency. Different factors distinguishing complements from adjuncts are enumerated in the Section 5. The following section concerns the strengths and weaknesses of the article written by Hajizadeh (2011) entitled as ‘Contrastive analysis of sentence patterns in English and Persian’, which aims at presenting a general comparison and classification of clause structures in Persian and English based on valency and transitivity. The current review article ends with the concluding remark.

2. **Clause Functions in English and Persian**

In Persian and English, there are three basic functions in the clause i.e., complements, adjuncts, and predicator. The most central function in the clause is the predicator. Complements, which can
be distinguished based on their semantic grounds, are more closely related to the verb than
adjuncts. Adjuncts can be classified to adjuncts of frequency, time period, and location i.e., har
rUZ, do sâ ât, and dar xane, respectively.

In Persian, as in English, complements are classified into core and non-core appearing in the
forms of NPs and PPs, respectively. NPs functioning as core complements (e.g., payâm / name râ)
are directly related to the verb, but PPs functioning as noncore ones (e.g., be maryam) are only
indirectly related to the verb:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
C & C & C & P \\
\end{array}
\]

(1) a. payâm / name râ / be maryam / dâd-φ.
b. Payam gave the letter to Maryam.

The NP maryam which is governed by a preposition is traditionally called oblique. The preposition
be 'to' in be maryam determines the semantic role of maryam with regards to the verb dad.
In English the deciding factor determining a complement as core or non-core is the type of the
category of the complement (NP vs. PP) rather than its position in the clause.

(2) a. Kim gave Alice the letter. → core complement
b. Kim gave the letter to Alice. → non-core complement

The following example shows a significant difference between English and Persian.

(3) a. Payam gave Ali the money/ Payam gave the money to Ali.
* b. payâm ali pul râ dâd-φ. / *payâm pul râ ali dâd-φ.
Sentence (3.b.) is nonequivalent in Persian because Ali should have been preceded by the
preposition be ‘to’. In English, a canonical structure can contain an intransitive verb with three
NPs as core complements but this is not the case in Persian. To express an equivalent clause in
Persian, we have to use two NPs and one PP, as in the following sentence:

(4) paâym pul râ be ali dâd-Ø.

Claiming that a non-core complement i.e., PP does not appear as an object, so there is no
ditransitive clause/verb in Persian (at least in the sense used in English).

Among the complements, the subject (e.g., payam) is external to the VP; however, the other
complements (e.g., be ali and pul ra) are internal to the VP. Unlike English, in Persian, the subject
mayor is not absent because the person/number ending is always attached to the verb in Persian.

(5) a. man âmad-am.
b. I came.
Any canonical clause has a subject as an external complement. However, based on the nature of its verb, a clause mayor may not contain a direct object as an internal object. So, clauses are classified as transitive and intransitive. A transitive verb takes an object while an intransitive does not. A clause containing a transitive verb is called transitive while a clause containing an intransitive verb is called intransitive. On the other hand, there are verbs appearing in both (in)transitive patterns. These verbs are called dual-transitive.

(6) a. livân Šekast-ø.
   b. The glass broke.

(7) a. puyâ livân râ Šekast-ø.
   b. Puya broke the glass.

Some verbs appear in patterns containing just a direct object. They are called monotransitives. Some other verbs appear in patterns with both a direct object and an indirect one. They are called ditransitives.

(8) a. u /name/ ra/xand-ø. → monotransitive verb
   b. S/he read the letter.

(9) a. man/ sib râ / be hasan/ dâdam-ø. → ditransitive verb
   b. I gave the apple to Hasan.

On the other hand, some verbs (e.g., goftan ‘tell’) appear in both monotransitive and ditransitive clauses.

(10) a. nimâ/ haqhiqhat /râ/ goft-ø.
    b. Nima told the truth.

(11) a. nimâ/ haqhiqhat/ râ/be /man/ goft-ø.
    b. Nima told me the truth.

Some intransitive verbs take a predicative complement, but this complement is more like predicators than ordinary complements i.e., it's subject-oriented. Similarly, some transitive verbs take a predicative complement which is more related to the direct object of the clause. i.e., it's object-oriented. Such verbs and clauses use PCs for complex-intransitives and PCo for complex-transitive.

S PCs P → complex-intransitive
(12) a. hamid bâhuŠ ast-ø. → related to the subject (Hamid)
    b. Hamid is sharp.
S DO PCo P → complex-transitive

(13) a. mehdi hamid râ bâhuŠ pendâŠt-ø. → related to the direct object (Hamid)
b. Mehdi considered Hamid as intelligent.

Oblique can also be used as predicative complements.

(14) a. man to râ be onvân-e modir bargozid-am.
b. I elected you as the manager.

3. Canonical Structures

In terms of intransitive and mono-transitive structures, both languages contain the same elements but in different orders. In English, the predicator occurs in the second position of the clause while in Persian it occurs in the final position. Unlike English, Persian does not contain an intransitive structure because in Persian verbs like dâd-ø 'give' obligatorily take a NP (core complement) and a PP (non-core complement). So, according to the proposed framework, a PP cannot function as an object.

4. Valency

The above classification is based on the objects and predicative complements. Another classification is based on the number of complements which is referred to as valency. So, a verb is monovalent if it takes just one complement, bivalent if it takes two complements, and trivalent if it takes three.

5. Factors Distinguishing Complements from Adjuncts

Five factors distinguish complements from adjuncts: (a) licensing, (b) obligatoriness, (c) anaphora, (d) category, and (e) prepositional phrases. The following two subsections elaborate two of these distinguishing factors i.e., licensing and obligatoriness.

5.1. Licensing

The verb as the decisive element of the clause determines (licenses) the permissible complements.

(15) a. rezâ xâne râ sáxt-ø. → licenses a direct object (xane ra)
b. Reza built the house.

But not:
(16) a. *reza xane ra rasid- φ. → does not license a direct object (xane ra)
b. Reza reached the house. → licenses a direct object (the house)

In contrast to the verbs, adjuncts are used with different types of verb. Subcategorization shows the dependence between the verbs and their complements. Therefore, verbs like raft-an (to go) and xord-an (to eat) are classified as intransitive and mono-transitive, respectively. Some verbs (e.g., seda kard-an ‘call’) may take different complementation patterns: in SOP as well as in S O PC P.

(17) a. man pesar ra seda mi-kon-am.
b. I call the boy.

(18) a. man pesar ra ali seda mi-kon-am.
b. I call the boy Ali.

In Persian, there are some verbs (e.g., xastan) that are used in four different patterns: in mono-transitive pattern, complex transitive, ditransitive, and in a pattern without any label i.e., a PP + a clause as complements.

(19) a. Man an ketab ra mi-xah-am. (mono-transitive)
b. I want that book.

(20) a. man an qatel ra zende mi-xah-am. (complex transitive)
b. I want that murderer alive.

(21) a. man in xane ra baray-e to mi-xah-am. (ditransitive)
b. I would like you to have this house.

(22) a. man az payam mi-xah-a ke ketab ra be-bar-ad. (PP + a clause as complement)
b. I ask Payam to take the book.

In the context of forms like the above-mentioned, two significant points need to be highlighted: the choice of preposition and the choice of subordinate clause. Concerning the choice of preposition, the verb determines which preposition can accompany it e.g., ‘goft’ takes the preposition ‘be’ but not ‘dar’.

On the other hand, in any complex sentence, it is the verb of the main clause which determines the type of the subordinate clause i.e., declarative, imperative, interrogative, exclamative, finite, nonfinite, etc.

(23) a. farid porsid ke/ hasan/ che goft-φ.
b. Farid asked what Hasan said.
5.2. Obligatoriness

In Persian and in English, complements are sometimes obligatory because their absence makes the clause ungrammatical whereas adjuncts are always optional. The complements in (24.a.) and (24.b.) are obligatory while the complements in (25.a.) and (25.b.) are not.

(24) a. hamid ketab ra avard-ø.
b. Hamid brought the book.

* b. Hamid brought.

6. Strengths and Weaknesses

In general, we are mostly in agreement with the author. The materials presented in this article are very interesting. As our search on the Internet showed, the article written by (Hajizadeh, 2011) which was entitled as ‘contrastive analysis of sentence patterns in English and Persian’ was the first and the only article written on the contrastive analysis of sentence patterns in English and Persian. The findings of this research can help EFL teachers to understand the problems that their Persian students may have in learning English as a foreign language. On the other hand, this article can give a better view of English structures and their differences with Persian ones to EFL Iranian students and hence facilitate their English learning. Moreover, this research can give some insights to researchers in both languages leading them to further research while revealing more similarities and differences between the two languages.

The authors’ contention in terms of canonical structures (i.e., intransitive, mono-transitive, and ditransitive patterns), same elements in different orders in the two languages, and flexibility of Persian in terms of word order seems quite acceptable. In addition, the author well argues the difference between English and Persian in terms of their indirect object behavior and the five factors distinguishing complements from adjuncts.

However, there seems to be some discrepancies in the above-mentioned article, which seems to be because of the few literature on the sentence pattern in English and Persian used. We are not sure that the author’s claim in terms of the same three basic functions in the clause in English and Persian is correct. Hajizadeh (2011) claims that in both Persian and English, there are three basic functions in the clause i.e., complements, adjuncts, and the predicator. However, in Persian, there are two basic functions in the clause and sentence structure: subject and predicate. In addition,
there are three more significant functions in the Persian sentence i.e., complement, object, and verb (Farshidvar, 1382). In English, object, predicate, and subject are considered under the category of complements (Anvari, 2012). Therefore, there remain two basic functions in the English sense: complement and verb (having the same function as predicate). Predicator refers to the function of the main verb in a sentence. Nevertheless, in the case of to be verb acting as the main verb of the sentence, other elements in the predicate play the role of a predicator (Farhadian, 2012).

(26) Mehdi saw him. → Predicator
vs.

(27) Mehdi is in the garden. → Predicator
(28) Mehdi feels fine. →Predicator

To us, the authors' claim in the sense of the two basic functions of the clause (complements and predicator) seems fine; however, the claim of adjunct as an optional element in both English and Persian modifying the verb as a basic function of the clause seems odd to us. On the other hand, the author has failed to recognize that there are significant differences between complements in English and Persian. The next two sections elaborate the ways in which the most common complements in English and Persian can be contrasted, respectively.

6.1. Complements in English

Complements are the part of the sentence which follows the verb and thus completes the sentence. According to Longman (2002), they can be classified into the following categories:

6.1.1. Subject complement

The complement linked to a subject by be or a linking verb.

She is a doctor.

6.1.2. Object complement

The complement linked to an adjective.

We made her the chairperson.

6.1.3. Adjective complement

The complement linked to an adjective.

I am glad that you can come.

6.1.4. Prepositional complement

The complement linked to a preposition.

They argued about what to do.
6.2. Complements in Persian

Complements are Ns or NPs that add something to the meaning of another word, or completes its meaning by means of a preposition as a complement maker. The difference between complements in Persian and English is that complements in Persian should take a preposition but the ones in English need not. Different complements in Persian are described as follows:

6.2.1. Verb complement

It completes the meaning of the verb by means of a preposition. It can be divided into two categories: a) object and b) adverbial complement. The object complement in Persian acts the same as its counterpart in English.

6.2.1.1. Adverbial complement

It is N or NP acting as an adverbial by means of a preposition adding something to the meaning of the verb. The difference between adverbial complement and object complement is in their meaning because both of them have a preposition. The adverbial complement is a kind of adverbial. The difference between an adverbial complement and an adverb is that an adverb does not have a preposition but an adverbial complement does have. Based on their meaning, they can be classified into some kinds i.e., a) place, b) time, c) quality and manner, d) reason, e) purpose, f) tools and means, g) nature, h) agreement, i) luck, j) accompaniment, k) privation, l) exception, and m) exchange. In our opinion, in some parts, adverbial complements and in other parts, adverbs in Persian correspond to adjuncts in English in which all of them modify the verb of the sentence in which they occur. Verb complement in Persian does not have an English counterpart.

6.2.2. Noun complement

It is an N or NP which adds to the meaning of an N by means of Ezafe construction. This complement does not correspond to any of the complements in English.

Adjective complement

Some adjectives either like N complements take an Ezafe construction (e.g., Nazire to ‘like you’, Negahdere Iran ‘guardian of Iran’) or take a preposition (e.g., Bikhabar az hameye Alam ‘ignorant of all the world’) or take both (e.g., Mokhalefe ba an ‘opponent to it’). Objects and Adverbial complements can be adjective complements. This complement in Persian can correspond to its English counterpart.

6.2.3. Adverb complement
Adverb complement acts like adjective complement because in Persian both adjectives and complements act as adverbs. This complement in Persian does not have an English counterpart.

(29) a. U bikhabar az hame ja vared shod.
b. He came in while he was ignorant of everything.

6.2.4. Sound complement

‘Sout’ or sound acting as a verb or a sentence sometimes takes a complement like a verb e.g., ‘Salam bar shoma’ Hello, ‘Vai bar man’ Woe to me, ‘Afarin bar to’ Bravo (Farshidvard, 1382). This complement does not have a counterpart in English.

Anvari (2012) claims that complements in Persian are related more closely to the verb or the whole sentence by means of a preposition but the adjunct acts as supplementary to the whole meaning of the sentence.

(30) Ali be khaneh raft. → complement

However, Hajizadeh (2011) claims that complements are divided into core and non-core ones and just the noun phrases functioning as core complements are directly related to the verb but those in the forms of PPs are only indirectly related to the verb. In our opinion, in Persian we have just non-core complements in the forms of PPs.

Another discrepancy is in the authors’ claim that there is no ditransitive verb (at least in the sense used in English) in Persian. On the other hand, in another part of the article (Hajizadeh, 2011, p. 6), he gives an example of a ditransitive verb ‘dadan’ in Persian.

Besides, the author fails to mention that there is ditransitive verb in Persian (e.g., dadan, gereftan) but this ditransitivity is different from English sense of ditransitivity. Fallahi (2007) argues that in English, an optional transformational rule can be applied to the ditransitive pattern to reverse the direct and indirect object and delete the accompanying preposition with the indirect object. But, in Persian, such an object switch transformation is not applicable. This means that we cannot delete the preposition in order to leave the two objects in sequence in the surface Persian structure. Consider the following contrast:

S/ IO / DO / P

(31) * a. man/ hasan /sib râ / dâd-am. → unacceptable in Persian
b. I/ Hasan/ apple comp/ give. ps-1sg
\( √ \) c. I gave Hasan the apple. → acceptable in English
In fact, Persian verbs are considered as ditransitive just because they take a DI and one or two IOs. However, in English in addition to the following criteria, another criterion is the acceptability of object transformation. In addition, Persian has a freer word order, which English does not have. So, Persian ditransitive verbs cannot be considered as their English counterparts. Also, the author fails to mention that the intransitive verbs in Persian can be transitivized by adding ‘andan’ or ‘anidan’ to the infinitive form of the verb e.g., Dow + andan = Davandan. On the other hand, the transitive verb can be further transitivized (Anvari, 2012). Consider the following example:

(32) Push+ andan = Pushandan → Madar lebas ra be bache pushanid.

Another discrepancy seems evident when the author in contrast to the ordinary and complex intransitive structures, which he has given on the same page (Hajizadeh, 2011, p.7), claims that unlike English, Persian does not contain an intransitive structure. He contends that this is because in Persian verbs like dād-an ‘give' obligatorily take an NP and a PP (non-core complement) which cannot function as an object. Nevertheless, in Persian, there is an intransitive structure. Some intransitive verbs (e.g., amadan) necessarily need a place adverbial complement to complete their meaning when object (NP) and adverbial complement (PP) come together. The verb needs both of them (Farshidvard, 1382).

The last discrepancy seems to be in the author’s claim of obligatoriness as a distinguishing factor differentiating complements from adjuncts. He argues that complements are obligatory but adjuncts are optional. In the first section, he mentions that there are three basic functions in the clause: complements, adjuncts, and predicator. How it is possible that something, which is optional in both English and Persian, can be the basic function of a clause! In contrary to our expectation, this question was unanswered during the whole article.

7. Concluding Remark

Overall, Hajizadeh (2011) successfully contrast English and Persian sentence patterns although in some parts, there seems to be discrepancies, failures, and little evidences found in its argumentation. However, it is essential not only for this author but also for any author especially in the field of contrastive analysis to support his claims with more evidences found in the literature.
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Title

The Effect of Using Creative Drama on Developing Oral Proficiency of Iranian Advanced EFL Learners

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Abstract

Improving oral proficiency in EFL classroom is usually a major goal for the most EFL instructors and an effective approach in teaching oral skill is the use of creative drama. This study aimed to examine the effect of using creative drama on developing oral proficiency of advanced EFL learners. This paper argues that using creative drama is more appropriate than using traditional method in teaching English in classrooms. It is also investigated how using drama effect their cooperative interaction. The forty-one homogeneous English students who were studying English at Hermes institute were selected as the as the participants of this study. This study utilized control & experimental group with two instructional hours per week for eight week and applied creative drama in experimental group. Before the teaching, the present researcher implemented an IELTS speaking as a pre-test to examine learners oral English proficiency and at the end of
experimental, a post-test and post-survey were carried out to examine whether significant difference existed or not. In addition, an attitude questionnaire about using drama was used at the end of treatment in experimental group. The data were analyzed by SPSS. The result of this study indicated that the participants had better learning outcomes in English speaking proficiency in experimental group. According to the results, this researcher suggested that using creative drama in the language classroom is generally a rewarding learning experience for EFL students and teachers; therefore, this researcher recommended creative drama as an effective technique in helping students in the process of improving their oral proficiency as well as their cooperative interaction.

**Keywords:** Creative Drama; Cooperative Interaction; Oral Proficiency

**1. Introduction**

This research explores the positive effect of using creative drama on oral proficiency of Iranian advanced EFL learners. By conducting this study, the present researcher wishes to explore the value of using creative drama on developing oral proficiency of learners.

Sun (2003) reported that “By doing creative drama in class, great benefits are found: It provides very comfortable classroom atmosphere where the students can open up their senses, and express themselves physically, emotionally, and verbally with spontaneity” (p.74). It creates a perfect environment to build communicative competence, and language learning occurs through making mistakes. It also allows more students to become involved in the learning process and guides them to experience emotional and non-verbal aspect of language. Therefore, teaching and learning are more enjoyable and fun for most of all.

In the dynamic and interactive process of communication (O Neill & Lambert, 1982), the meaning of drama is “built up from the contributions must monitored, understood, accepted, and responded to by the rest of the group”. Creative drama teaching opens a new way for English learning, but Traditional learning focuses on memorization, repetition, drill practice, and so on. Students learn English in order to pass the exams. Therefore, most of the students lose the interests of learning English.

Although English language now plays an important role in Iran, some problems that should not be ignored, still exists in the learning and teaching English. From student perspectives, English is regarded as a foreign language in Iran that many people have limited opportunities to use. After
all, it is not a necessary tool for daily communication for people in Iran. It is noteworthy using drama to teach English results in real communication, because it is involving ideas, emotions, feeling, appropriateness, and adaptability (Barbu, 2007).

The major consideration is that students even after years of English learning cannot gain enough confidence in speaking fluently in front of their classmates and teacher or speaking outside the classroom. The conventional English class hardly gives the students an opportunity to use language in this manner and develop fluency in it, because students lack the adequate exposure to spoken English outside the class as well as the lack of exposure to native speakers who can communicate with the students on authentic matters.

Another point is that most of the teachers emphasize on writing answers for assigned works and on producing grammatically accurate sentences in order students to pass exam. Thus, they do not find opportunities to use language orally from a teacher’s perspective. Many Iranian students are used to sitting quietly with limited opportunities to speak in the class. They mostly show a reluctance to speak English, due to their fear in losing face when making grammatical and pronunciation errors. Chen and Chang (2008) suggested that through using drama, students use language without feeling a shame to make mistakes in the class. Thus, they are enhancing their linguistic ability mainly their cooperation together during dramatic activities and oral production skill. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the present researcher has arranged the following questions:

**RQ1.** Does the use of creative drama improve the Iranian advanced EFL learners’ oral proficiency?

**RQ2.** Does the use of creative drama develop the Iranian advanced EFL learners’ cooperative interaction?

### 2. Review of the Related Literature

According to Byron (1986), drama is the most significant model of learning and a basic activity for learning. It is the way of helping learners to think about their individual or social problems. Learners can learn to explore issues, events, and connections by means of drama. In drama, learners draw on their knowledge and experience of the real world in order to create a make-believe world. Thus, drama is one of the few areas of the curriculum, built on dreams and voices. Fleming (2006) also said that drama being action, the verbal element in drama must also function primarily as action. In other words, drama as action is something of over simplification and within
the field of drama in education something of a cliché, according to Bolton (1984), mischievously highlighted in his title for a conference addressing: "Drama is not doing". Commenting on this, he goes on to invite readers to accept a paradox that is the central component of good drama generally and of good improvised drama in particular. It means that, when an action in drama achieves a moment of heightened significance, it does so because the meaning created is largely released from its dependence on that action.

O’toole (1992) proposed that writers on drama in education have recognized this as the embryo of drama in education and explored it in terms of the continuing dialectic that exists between the concrete and the abstract, the particular and the universal. They noted too that the meanings that emerge are to some extent collective. Drama, according to Maley and Duff (1978), released imagination and energy and this could be considered as an educational objective. It encourages students to exercise their sensitivity and imagination and thus makes learning more realistic and meaningful. As an educational tool, the use of drama fosters the social, intellectual, and the linguistic development of the child.

Moreover, Dougill (1982) concurred that drama centers around language development, personal awareness, group co-operation, sensory awareness, and imaginative growth. Drama increases motivation and provides the incentive to work hard. The activities using drama tend to be purposeful. Stern (1980) also believed that the student sees the need to communicate and concentrates on how to go about a task, because drama provides him with a meaningful context. Drama fosters a sense of responsibility and cooperation among the students. Drama activities normally take the form of group work and students cannot afford to stay passive for too long. There is a need to belong to the group and to complete the task. The students develop a sense of self-Worth of themselves, as they work together.

Brown (1994) defined learning to speak a foreign language requires more than knowing its grammatical and semantic rules. Learners should also acquire the knowledge of how native speakers use the language in the context of structured interpersonal exchange, in which many factors interact. Therefore, it is difficult for EFL learners, particularly adults to speak the target language fluently and appropriately. In order to provide effective guidance in developing competent speakers of English, it is essential to examine the factors, affecting adult learners’ oral communication, components underlying speaking proficiency, and specific skills or strategies used in communication. Nunan (1989) defined speaking a language is particularly difficult for foreign
language learners, because effective oral communication needs the capability to use the language completely and perfectly in social interactions. Moreover, various cultural assumptions about the goal of special interactions and expected results of encounters also affect communication, consequently owing to minimal exposure to the target language and contact with native speakers. Nunan (1989) further maintained that many people feel that speaking in the new language is more difficult than reading, writing, and listening skills to learn for two reasons. Unlike reading or writing, speaking occur in real time, i.e. The person you are talking to is waiting for you to speak right then. In addition, when you speak, you cannot edit and revise what you want to say, as you can if you are writing.

3. Methodology

Forty-one EFL learners, about 17-22 years of age who are currently studying English in Tehran participated in this study. Their L1 of participants was Persian and they were thirty-eight female and three male. After they took the Nelson Proficiency Test, the students whose scores fell within one standard deviation above and below the mean were chosen as homogeneous participants in this study. They were randomly assigned to control and experimental groups with twenty and twenty-one participants, respectively. The proficiency level of participants was advanced.

Three sets of test were administered to the participants, respectively, the Nelson proficiency Test (1978), and IELTS Speaking (Cambridge University Press, 2009) as the pretests, and a posttest contained five selected questions from the one Shakespearian Drama entitled *Othello*. An attitude questionnaire based on Likert scale by Inozu, Tuyan, and Surreli (2007), toward learners’ attitude about the Nelson Proficiency Test was administered to the population of the study for the purpose of homogeneity and measuring the participants’ level of proficiency. The Nelson proficiency test consists of 50 multiple-choice items, although the questions are not separated to different parts, they measure the examinees’ general knowledge on grammar as well as vocabulary and meaning.

IELTS speaking was administered as a pretest to both groups of students and they had 10 to 15 minutes to answer all the questions. The researcher asked seven general questions in the first part and students had one to two minutes to think and answer each question carefully that was recorded by the researcher. The instruction of the second part of IELTS speaking test was that students handed topics “Describe one of your school day, and they answered to different questions that
related to that subject and had one minute to think about it and made some notes if it needed then they spoke about it one to two minutes. Inter-rater reliability of speaking IELTS at pretest and posttest was 84.

Five questions based on *Othello*, a play by Shakespeare, were administered as a posttest to both experimental and control groups. Again, participants had 10 to 15 minutes to answer each question orally and the researcher recorded their voice.

Finally, an attitude questionnaire toward students’ opinion in using drama and its effect on their interaction was designed in a way that included, 15 parts in order to be a tool to collect the data related to the participants, before it was piloted and validated by some of professional professors at Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch then it was administered to the experimental group at the end of treatment. The reliability of the attitude scale was calculated by using the SPSS method. The participants were given the opportunity to answer the questions based on a Likert scale of five levels ranging from Strongly Agrees, Agree, Undecided, Disagree to Totally Disagree. Both the experimental and control groups received instruction over the eight-weeks of study in regular English classes. The general experimental procedures for both groups were administered to the 60 students in the following sequence and 41 homogeneous students were chosen through the Nelson Proficiency Test as advanced EFL learners for this study. The Nelson test consisted of 50 multiple-choice questions and the allotted time was 45 minutes.

The aforementioned participants were randomly split into two intact groups, there were 20 students in the control group and 21 students in the experimental group, and then an IELTS Speaking Test was used as pretest for both groups. During the administration of this test, students’ voice was recorded and they had 10 to 15 minutes to answered all questions, IELTS Speaking was estimated based on Weir's (1993) analytical speaking criteria and according to its fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammatical accuracy & interactional strategies, considered in speaking as a pretest. Next, in an eight-week course that used a Shakespeare's play entitled *Othello*, It was taught by the researcher who adopted using creative drama for the experimental group and the traditional method of teaching *Othello* for the control group, it means without using drama.

After the instructional period, a posttest, consisted of 5 questions from *Othello* for both groups was administered, the researcher asked the participants to answer all questions separately in 10 to 15 minutes and recorded their voice, in order to estimate students’ oral proficiency based on
Weir’s criteria as it was mentioned in pretest. Finally, an attitude questionnaire based on Likert-Type scale was adopted from a scale by Inozu, Tuyan, and Surreli (2007). It was piloted by some professional professors then it was given to the students in experimental group, in order to find out their attitude toward using drama and its effect on their interaction.

4. Result and Discussion

To ensure the homogeneity of the participants, the Nelson Proficiency Test was administered to 60 participants. Those students (N=41) whose Nelson score fell within one standard deviation above and below the mean were selected as homogeneous participants for this study. The descriptive statistics of the participants’ scores on this test are set forth in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Nelson Proficiency Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>30.45</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5.893</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average mean, median, and mode score for Nelson Test were 30.45, 30, and 29, respectively. These central parameters are not far from each other revealing normal distribution of the scores. The range was 27, and standard deviation was 5.89, showing a large dispersion of scores around the mean. Distributions of scores of the participants on the Nelson Test are displayed in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Normal Curve of Scores of the Participants on Nelson Test

In order to arrive at an answer to the first question that stated “Does the use of creative drama improve the Iranian advanced EFL learners’ oral proficiency”? First, two null hypotheses are used. In order to analyze the data to investigate the first null hypothesis one, two raters assessed the participants’ performances on oral proficiency pretest and posttest of control and experimental groups. Table 2 represents descriptive statistics of the scores of control and experimental by two raters on oral proficiency pretest and posttest.
Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics of the Scores of Control and Experimental by Two Raters on Oral proficiency Pretest and Posttest*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Rater</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRETEST</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Rater 1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.95</td>
<td>1.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rater 2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.25</td>
<td>1.446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>Rater 1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.43</td>
<td>1.326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rater 2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.52</td>
<td>1.569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSTTES</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Rater 1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.65</td>
<td>1.663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rater 2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.60</td>
<td>1.729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>Rater 1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.95</td>
<td>2.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rater 2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15.24</td>
<td>2.143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. The average mean scores are out of 20 points.

The table 2 manifests the raw scores of two groups on oral proficiency pretest and posttest. The inter-rater reliability between two raters marking oral tests was estimated using Correlation Coefficient. The results of this analysis are manifested in table 3.

Table 3. *Inter-rater Reliability between two Raters on Oral proficiency Pretest and Posttest*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>Control (R1-R2)</td>
<td>.833**</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental(R1-R2)</td>
<td>.848**</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>Control (R1-R2)</td>
<td>.827**</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental(R1-R2)</td>
<td>.853**</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

The inter-rater reliability between rater 1 and rater 2 in control and experimental groups at pretest were .83 and .84, respectively. In addition, the inter-rater reliability between rater 1 and rater 2 in control and experimental groups at posttest were .82 and .85, respectively.
The oral proficiency pretest means scores of control and experimental were 12.10 and 12.48, respectively. On the other hand, posttest mean scores of two groups were 13.63 and 15.10, correspondingly. The oral proficiency mean score of experimental group exceeded the control group. Figure 2 graphically depicts the comparison between oral proficiency pretest and posttest means score of control and experimental groups.

![Figure 2](image)

*Figure 2. Oral Proficiency Pretest and Posttest Means Scores of Control and Experimental*

Shapiro-Wilk Test also was utilized to test the normality of the oral proficiency scores of two groups at pretest and posttest. Table 4 represents the information on Shapiro-Wilk test of normality for scores of two groups on oral proficiency pretest and posttest.

**Table 4. Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality for Scores of Two Groups on Oral proficiency Pretest and Posttest**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>.947</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>.965</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.644</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>.971</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.768</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>.968</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.720</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is obvious in table 4-8, the normality test results showed insignificant Sig. of .32 and .64 for control and experimental at pretest. In addition, at posttest, the result of normality test revealed no significant Sig. of .76 and .72 for control and experimental.

The Sig. for both groups at pretest and posttest were more than selected significance, i.e. .05 ($p>\alpha$). Thus, it can be stated that four sets of scores have a normal distribution. As a result, the parametric Independent Sample Test was applied to compare the oral proficiency mean of two
groups at both pretest and posttest; otherwise, the nonparametric Mann Whitney U Test would be used.

An independent-sample t-test was used, because Mackey and Gass (2005) believed that “The independent t-test is used when one wants to determine if the means of two independent groups are significantly different from one another” (p. 272). The results of independent samples test to compare the oral proficiency pretest scores of control and experimental are set forth in table 5.

Table 5. Independent Samples Test to Compare the Oral Proficiency Pretest Scores of Control and Experimental

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td>-.905</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Independent Samples Test results did not show any significant difference between control and experimental (t = .90, p = .37, p > α), in which the t-observed was less than the t-critical of 2.02, and the p value was more than .05.

Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances in Table 6 demonstrates that the hypothesis of equal of variances between the oral proficiency pretest of control and experimental was proved, because Sig was .78 which is greater than the .05 significance level for this study (p > α).

Table 6. Independent Samples Test to Compare the Oral Proficiency Posttest Scores of Control and Experimental
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.082</td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>-2.551</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>-1.4702</td>
<td>.5764</td>
<td>-2.6362</td>
<td>- .3043</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Independent Samples Test detected significant difference between the two groups at posttest ($t = 2.55, p = .01$), in which the $t$-observed was more than the $t$-critical of 2.02, and the $p$ value was less than .05. Therefore, the first null hypothesis that stated that the use of creative drama does not improve the oral proficiency of Iranian advance EFL learners was rejected. Therefore, with high degree of confidence, it can be claimed that the use of creative drama improves the oral proficiency of Iranian advance EFL learners.

In order to arrive at an answer to the second question that stated “Does the use of creative drama develop the Iranian advanced EFL learners' cooperative interaction”? The second null hypothesis was used. In order to test this null hypothesis, the participants’ performances on attitude questionnaire were firstly assessed. Table 7 represents descriptive statistics of the scores obtained on attitude questionnaire.

**Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of the Scores Obtained on Attitude Questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max.</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>4.0219</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>.31232</td>
<td>.098</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean, median, and mode of the participants’ responses on attitude questionnaire were 4.02, 4.06, and 4.20, respectively, which are very close to each other suggesting normal distribution. Furthermore, the range and standard deviation were 1.21 and .31 which are relatively small showing small dispersion of scores around the mean. The figure 3 graphically demonstrates the relate results participants’ responses on interaction questionnaire.
In order to figure out whether the data is normally distributed, the present researcher used Shapiro-Wilk test. Table 8 manifests Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality for scores obtained on interaction questionnaire.

Table 8. Shapiro-Wilk Test of Normality for Scores Obtained on Interaction Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.954</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Sig. showed .40 based on the data which this researcher may consider that the scores are normally distributed, because $p$ value is more than .05 ($p<\alpha$). Therefore, the parametric One-Sample Test was performed to analyze the results. Table 9 clarifies one-sample test for participants’ responses on interaction questionnaire.

Table 9. One-Sample Test for Participants’ Responses on Interaction Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Value = 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One Sample Test results showed statistically significant difference ($t=14.99, p=.000, p<\alpha$) between the participants’ responses to five choices of the interaction questionnaire. The $t$-observed of 14.99 was more than the $t$-critical of 2.08, and the Sig. was less than .05. Consequently, the second null hypothesis that predicted that the use of creative drama does not develop the cooperative interaction of Iranian advance EFL learners was rejected. With high degree of confidence, it can be asserted that use of creative drama develops the cooperative interaction of Iranian advance EFL learners.
As to the first research question, in using drama, the major benefits might be seen in the fact that it can promote natural communication in the classroom and provide meaningful context for speaking. The basic elements that form the context are setting, role, feeling and shared knowledge, as the researchers’ work with the use of quasi-experimental research, by applying two groups of control and experimental. As it was mentioned before, in both groups, one of Shakespeare’s plays entitled *Othello* was used. In experimental group, dramatic techniques, action, and role-play are used. Therefore, this researcher proved the students’ improvement in speaking in a fun and relaxed environment.

This is in consistent with the finding from Sun (2003) in which stated “By doing creative drama in class, great benefits are found: It provides very comfortable classroom atmosphere where the students can open up their senses, and express themselves physically, emotionally, and verbally with spontaneity” (p. 74). It creates perfect environment to build communicative competence, and language learning occurs through making mistakes.

In control group, the present researcher did not apply any drama, role-play in teaching *Othello* and it was taught in traditional way. Students performed weak when they speaking English, this is in consistent with the finding from Chen (2001) in which proposed that traditional method is learning in one-way (teacher to student). Therefore, students speak little and just teacher is dominant in speaking. Keiny (1994) also believed that the only way to improve students speaking ability, however to make them speak more with classmates. Under traditional method, such as grammar translation method, not all students receive enough feedback to speak as much as needs. As to the second research question, the finding from an attitude questionnaire toward using creative drama on students’ interaction revealed that dramatic techniques were effective on developing students’ cooperative interaction. This incident is in accordance with Davis’ study (1997) posed that group work is defined as an activity consisting two or more students in which, for a time, the teacher does not have to directly intervene. Bruffee (1984) also defined that collaborative work as a form of indirect teaching in which the teacher poses a problem and organizes the students to solve problem collaboratively. Furthermore, according to Brook (1992); pica & Doughty (1985), recognizing that the negotiation of meaning and the expression of personal ideas most naturally occur in-group situations.
It can be concluded that using creative drama and dramatic activities are effective on developing oral proficiency (speaking) of advanced EFL learners. In addition, it can be applicable for the teacher of English seeking to improve cooperative interaction among students.

5. Conclusion
The findings showed by participants, were the combination of the sense of community and the freedom to express their feeling. Therefore, they could produce spoken language in order to complete the tasks given. Working in team as a group work leads to better communication among students. It can develop opportunities to talk about their ideas, remember more than writing things down, get feedback for their thinking, and hear other points of view. Therefore, many students were found highly interested in doing drama in English.

Group work and collaborative interaction could help to increase speaking ability. It is also suggested that students do dramatic activities in order to be familiar with one another personally outside the classroom such as having lunch (Words, 2003). The finding of the questionnaire study toward the attitude of students in using drama also indicated that working in groups had a positive impact, because the students generally worked in groups like in all scenes of Othello by Shakespeare. It helped them to speak more easily and enabled them to acquire knowledge by seeing others behaviors, receiving different opinions, and understanding others points of view. When students helped each other, they learn more; therefore, working in-group as a team leads to the better communication among students.

References


Investigating the Relationship between Anxiety and Writing Performance among Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract

The current study attempted to explore the relationship between the students’ anxiety and their writing performance among Iranian English Foreign Language students. This study was conducted with men and women EFL learners. Using random sampling, a number of 55 EFL learners were selected as the participants. The instruments to collect data were: a) Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) (Cheng, 2004) b) writing
performance test. Both descriptive and inferential statistics including Pearson Correlation formula were run to analyze the data. Statistical analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The results of the study showed a significant negative correlation between anxiety and writing performance. Accordingly, students who reported higher anxiety had lower writing proficiency grades than those who reported lower writing anxiety. The results suggested that by taking advantage of the facilitative aspect of anxiety, the students’ writing performance will be improved.

**Keywords:** Anxiety, Writing Performance, EFL Learners

### 1. Introduction

The affective aspect that has received the most attention in SLA is anxiety. (see, for example, full-length books by Horwitz and Young (1991), Arnold (1991) and young (1999). Teachers and learners found that anxiety is an important factor in second language learning. Choropotia and Barlow (1998, P.3) mentioned that anxiety is “a state of conceptual or central nervous system characterized by activity of the behavioral inhibition system”. Language is an effective way of communication of our thoughts. Writing is one of the four main skills of the English language. Good writing was done from a set of roles and principles. Providing a classroom under a worrying-free environment has become many teachers’ responsibilities. Moreover, although it is asserted that writing anxiety is common among first, second, and foreign language writers (Cheng, 2004; Daly & Miller, 1975a; Daly & Miller, 1975b). However, far too little studies have been attached on the relationship between subcategories of writing and subscales of writing anxiety. Therefore, the current study attempted to explore the relationships among subcategories.

### 2. Review of Literature

#### 2.1 Definition and Types of Anxiety

Anxiety as “a subjective feeling of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry associated with an arousal of the automatic nervous system” (Horwitz et al, 1986, p. 125).

In psychology, anxiety is broadly defined as, “the awareness of threat” (Tyrer, 1999, p. 11). Cope and Horwitz (1986) defined anxiety as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (P.128).
A distinction can be made between: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. Trait anxiety is relatively stable personality characteristic, ‘a more permanent predisposition to be anxious’ (Scovel, 1978). While state anxiety is a transient anxiety, responses to a particular anxiety provoking stimulus such as an important test (Spielberger, 1983; cited in Horwitz, 2001)). It is a combination of trait and situation-specific anxiety. This later type consists of the anxiety which is aroused by a specific type of situation or event such as public speaking, examinations, or class participation. This kind of anxiety related to language learning context and it can play a main role existing individual differences in language learning. In the field of language learning, situation specific anxiety refers to apprehension caused by learners’ inadequate knowledge of language (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). This kinds of anxiety related to language learning context and it can play a key role in existing one’s differences in language learning. In general, anxiety has been found to have a negative and positive effect on performance. Facilitative anxiety leads to enhanced willingness with concomitant advantages for learning. On the other hand, debilitating anxiety motivates learners in assuming an avoidance attitude, tending to escape from the learning task (Scovel, 1978).

2.2 Definition and Types of SLWA

Writing anxiety, as asubject and situation specific anxiety was defined as “a general avoidance of writing behavior and of situations thought to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing” (Hassan, 2001, P.4). Cheng (2004) offered a multidimensional L2 writing scale – the Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) which conforms to a three-dimensional conceptualization of anxiety, such as Somatic Anxiety, Cognitive Anxiety, and Avoidance Behavior. Somatic Anxiety refers to one’s perception of the physiological effects of the anxiety experience, as reflected in increase in state of unpleasant feelings, such as nervousness and tension (Cheng, 2004). Cognitive Anxiety refers to the cognitive aspect of anxiety experience, including negative expectations, preoccupation with performance and concern about others’ perception (Cheng, 2004). Avoidance Behavior refers to the behavioral aspect of the anxiety experience, avoidance of writing (Cheng, 2004). Cheng (2004) also pointed out that the negative relationship between test anxiety and L2 writing performance is primarily due to the negative components rather than somatic components or avoidance behavior. Studies by Chen and Lin (2009) and Saito and Samimy (1996) indicate that writing anxiety is negatively related to performance on writing tasks."score lower on writing portions of standardized tests,"
write less, write less effectively, and create written products that are evaluated as lower in quality than less anxious writers” (Daly & Wilson, 1983, p. 328). Saito and Samimy (1996) conducted a study on the anxiety levels and the language performance of 257 American undergraduates studying Japanese at three proficiency levels. The results of this study confirmed the theory that anxiety has a negative effect on performance. Additionally, results showed that this effect became more pronounced at levels of more advanced language instruction (Saito & Samimy, 1996).

2.3. Research Question
Despite the many findings cited above, there is still pressing need to conduct research on anxiety and writing performance in EFL contexts. The study aims to answer the following research question:

1) Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL students’ anxiety and their writing performance?

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample
A total number of 45 male and female students constituted the subjects of this study. The participants were English language students majoring in English language teaching from Azad University in Ilam, science and research branch (a city in Iran).

3.2. Instrumentation
In the present study, two instruments were used, with the purpose of collecting questionnaire data. The first questionnaire was Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI). It consists of 22 items, based on the SLWAI (Cheng, 2004), which was design to assess if there is ESL writing anxiety among Iranian EFL learners and to what level. The next instrument was writing performance based on IELTS writing which was measured by subjects’ grade. Regarding the reliability of the questionnaire, the internal consistency of the SLWAI reported Cronbach’s coefficient alpha of .91 (Cheng, 2004).

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis Procedure
After the introductory studies and needs analysis, above mentioned instrument was selected to glean the data. Then, a pilot study was run to revise the questionnaire. After that, the necessary revision and modifications were done and some factors were added to make the items more clear and detailed. Then, after permission was given by the university in February, 2013, the
questionnaire was administrated in Ilam. In general, it took two weeks to distribute and collect data. The time allocated for completing questionnaire was roughly 15 minutes, and about writing performance, the participants were asked to write an English composition within 60 minutes in class, which was administrated and evaluated by their teacher. Each composition was graded on a 5-point scale which includes five aspects: Scrawl, Misspell, Grammar, Neat writing, and Punctuation.

In order to increase the credibility of the responses, the researcher asked the students to be sincere in their responses and provide genuine answer to each of the items on the questionnaires. Finally the participants were assured that the results of the questionnaire will be kept confidential. Data from all returned surveys were entered into and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). To compare relationship among variables Pearson Product-Moment correlation was used. To ensure the quality of the analysis and interpretations, consultations with statisticians were made.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 reveals the descriptive statistics gained regarding the learners’ scores on the two scales used in the study, as well as their performance on each of the five subscales of writing performance questionnaire.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the students’ Performance on the Sub-scales of Writing Performance and Anxiety Questionnaires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Scrawl</th>
<th>Misspell</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Neat writing</th>
<th>Punctuation</th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Writing Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>12.73</td>
<td>12.31</td>
<td>10.04</td>
<td>10.55</td>
<td>9.53</td>
<td>55.9111</td>
<td>50.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>106.12</td>
<td>489.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>minimum</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.0</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maximum</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>68.00</td>
<td>91.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>573.00</td>
<td>554.00</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2264.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As illustrated in this table, the mean scores gained by the participants on the sub-scales of scrawl, misspell, grammar, neat writing, and punctuation equal 12.73, 12.31, 10.04, 10.55, and 9.53 respectively. Additionally, the mean score gained on the entire scale of writing performance is 50.31; whereas the one relevant to anxiety questionnaire equals 55.91.

4.2 Investigating the research question of the study

The significance of this study is that it can shed light on Iranian EFL students’ problems regarding anxiety and writing performance. Any relationship between these two variables (anxiety and writing performance) can help both learners and teachers in the process of learning and teaching.

RQ1: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL students’ anxiety and their writing performance?

To address this research question in a proper manner, the researchers need to first go about the analyses of its five subdivisions. Thus, in what follows an attempt is made to provide a sufficient account of how each of these five questions were dealt with and how their collective result helped come up with a generalized view regarding the research question.

4.2.1 The Relationship between Anxiety and Scrawl

RQ1a: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL students’ anxiety and scrawl?

As table 2 reveals, there exist a significant correlation between the participants’ degree of anxiety and their scrawl ($r = 0.01 < 0.05$), this piece of findings is parallel with what might hold true in reality as anxious students are more likely to be characterized as inclined toward possessing higher levels of scrawl.

Table 2. Correlation between students’ Anxiety and their Scrawl

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Anxiety Correlation</th>
<th>Writing Anxiety</th>
<th>Scrawl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2 The Relationship between Anxiety and Misspell

RQ1b: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL students’ anxiety and misspell?
As table 3 reveals, there exist a significant correlation between the participants’ degree of anxiety and their scrawl ($r= 0.000< .05$), so that students with high degrees of anxiety were tended to take high misspell in their writing performance.

4.2.3 The Relationship between Anxiety and Grammar

RQ1c: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL students’ anxiety and grammar? In keeping with the gained upshots (summarized in table 4), the researchers are drawn to claim that learners’ anxiety does significantly correlate with their grammar in writing performance ($r= 0.000< .05$).

4.2.4 The Relationship between Anxiety and Neat writing

RQ1d: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL students’ anxiety and neat writing? As table 5 reveals, there exist a significant correlation between the participants’ degree of anxiety and their neat writing ($r= 0.004< .05$). Therefore, under normal circumstances, it is expected that higher levels of anxiety should correlate with a less level of neat writing.
4.2.5 The Relationship between Anxiety and Punctuation

RQ1e: Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL students’ anxiety and punctuation? Pearson-Moment correlation analysis provided the researchers with another piece of favorable finding (Table 6), implying that students’ anxiety does significantly correlate with their punctuation in writing performance (r= 0.015 < .05).

Table 6. Correlation between students’ Anxiety and their Punctuation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Anxiety</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Writing Anxiety</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of statistical analysis showed a significant negative correlation between writing anxiety and writing performance. The results analysis in Table 2 to 6 reveal that there is a meaningful negative relationship between Scrawl (r= -.028, p<.05), Misspell (r= -.016, p<.05), Grammar (r= -.145, p<.05), Neat Writing (r= -.424, p<.05), Punctuation (r= -.038, p<.05) and anxiety. Given the significance of the negative relationship between Scrawl, Misspell, Grammar, Neat writing, Punctuation and anxiety, it can be said that students with higher anxiety had lower writing proficiency grades than those with lower writing anxiety. This finding is in part in line with the results of (Cheng, 2004; Hassan, 2001; Horwitz et al., 1989; Horwitz, 2001; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991) indicating that high levels of anxiety could have negative effects on students’ language performance overall and for specific language skills. It should be pointed out that ESL writing anxiety can have other negative effects, for example on learners’ behavior; it may also cause physical symptoms. Studies by Chen and Lin (2009) and Saito and Samimy (1996) indicate that
writing anxiety is negatively related to performance on writing tasks. More specifically, anxious writers: “score lower on writing portions of standardized tests, write less, write less effectively, and create written products that are evaluated as lower in quality than less anxious writers” (Daly & Wilson, 1983, p. 328). According to Naveh-Benjamin (1991) the deficit model is based on the argument that anxious learners display low performance due to deficiency in the acquisition stage, that is, they are deficient; therefore; they are more anxious. As for correlation analysis, anxiety correlated with all dimensions of writing performance such as Scrawl, Misspell, Grammar, Neat Writing, and Punctuation. This means the subjects were affected by the anxiety. The present study provided specific evidence for the negative effects of ESL writing anxiety on EFL students’ grades on their writing performance.

One of the main axioms underlying the current survey was the researchers’ fervent endeavor in catering for the concerns of a fairly neglected group of individuals in classroom settings, i.e. anxious learners. High Anxiety can lead to students’ discouragement, loss of ability, and escaping from participation in classroom activities. Studies have shown that learners with high anxiety often show low achievement which in turn can lead to more anxiety about learning. The researchers’ quest for the possible correlation between anxiety and writing performance ended up with there is significant correlation between the components of writing performance questionnaires and anxiety. A piece of findings which seems consistent to expectations. Although the study is correlational, it may be concluded that most of the students need some degree of anxiety and suggest that writing requires some kind of concentration that facilitate anxiety. So, it is suggested that the teachers may pay more attention to students’ levels of foreign language anxiety that this is associated with the class environment, employing more affect-friendly approaches in order to help lower students’ anxiety. Also teachers might revise their writing procedures in a way to put the learners in a more relaxed state, hence the improvement of their performance. After all, it ought to be asserted that since the current survey was done with a fairly low number of learners, the results gained can’t be utterly generalizable to other contexts, and hence other similar studies are called for to investigate different other noteworthy aspects of the issue at hand.

References


Title

A Gender-Based Study of Compliments and Compliment Responses in Persian Movies

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Biodata

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating frequency distribution patterns of complimenting among characters of Persian movies. It also elaborated on the contrasts between males and females in their use of compliment and compliment responses. In order to gather most authentic data, 15 Persian movies with family or social themes were analyzed. The results indicated that gender would impact on the complimenting patterns of Persian speakers. It was revealed that while appearance was the most frequent topic in male-female compliments, it was ability which was used mostly as compliments in female-male interactions. Moreover, men tended to praise other men’s ability but women preferred to compliment each other’s appearance. At the same time, the findings of the study suggested that “No acknowledgement”, “Appreciation token” and “Formulaic expression” were three major response types of both males and females, respectively. Finally, it was observed that their responses to compliments were mainly influenced by cultural norms.

Keywords: Compliments, Compliment responses, Gender, Persian movies
1. Introduction

Language is affected by our social life. It means that the way people talk is influenced by the social context in which they are talking. Over the last few decades, the study of speech act behavior (such as apology, request, compliment and compliment response, refusal and complaint, etc) has increased our understanding of pragmatic norms of different cultures. The speech event of compliment and compliment response has been extensively explored because in this way useful information can be obtained about the rules of language use in a speech community and the value system of individual speakers as well as the context of culture and situation (Cheng, 2003).

Holmes (1988) defines a compliment as “a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some ‘good’ (possession, characteristics, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and hearer.” (p.55). In analyzing the American data, Manes and Wolfson (1981) pointed out that the primary function of compliments is “the reinforcement and / or creation of solidarity” between the speaker and addressee (p. 124). However, Holmes (1988) proposed that while complimenting usually regarded as a positive action, it could actually be a face-threatening act if not being used or interpreted appropriately. Farghal and Haggan (2006) also maintained that many factors such as the complimenter’s intention, complimentee’s perception and cultural norms would be influential in interpreting compliments as a face-threatening act or a face-saving behavior. To maintain a mutual social relationship among interlocutors, it is evident that a compliment should include a compliment response, too. Compliment responses can be uttered in different forms based on different situational and socio-cultural factors. Thus, people require both linguistic and sociolinguistic skills in order to give compliments or respond to them appropriately in different social contexts.

The investigation of compliments and compliment responses in general, and female/male differences in particular, can provide language learners with the necessary information about the cultural values of the society. For example, the high frequency of compliments on personality in a particular country is an indication that moral goodness is highly valued in that culture. Several studies revealed that there were some differences between males and females in their realization patterns of compliments and compliment responses. Two important studies that focused on gender differences in complimenting and responding to compliments were those by Holmes (1988) and Herbert (1990). They found that men and women used different syntactic patterns and lexical
choice in their speech. Based on the findings, they assumed that females used compliments for keeping solidarity while males regarded compliments as potential face threatening acts (FTAs) or actual assertions of praise.

Although a lot of research has been carried out on compliments and compliment responses but they were mainly conducted in English-speaking countries. There have been few investigations in this domain in Persian context (e.g. Beeman, 1986; Sharifian, 2005; Yousefvand, 2010) but there is no study which analyzed compliments and compliment responses across gender in Persian movies. For these reasons, the present study aimed at investigating the frequency distribution of different patterns of complimenting among a group of characters in Persian movies. Accordingly, the observed compliments and compliment responses were classified and analyzed based on using Holmes (1986) classification of compliments and Herbert’s (1986) taxonomy of compliment responses. Compliments and compliment responses were investigated with a focus on the gender of the characters. More specifically, the purpose was to investigate the following research questions:

1. What kinds of compliments are being used among a group of characters in Persian movies?
2. What kinds of response strategies do the characters use when they receive compliments?
3. Does gender affect the compliment and compliment response patterns of characters?

2. Review of the Related Literature

2.1. Compliment

Wolfson and Manes (1980) conducted early studies on compliments, examining a corpus of compliments uttered in daily conversation in American English. They observed that compliments seem to fall naturally into two general categories with respect to topic—those which refer to appearance and/or possessions, and those which have to do with ability and/or accomplishments. Based on their data, the greatest number of appearance/possession compliments were given and received by acquaintances, colleagues, and casual friends, especially by females. Upper-status males rarely received compliments, and these were nearly never associated with appearance. By
contrast, women were the recipients of the great majority of compliments on appearance/possession.

In subsequent studies, Holmes (1986/1988) and Herbert (1990) incorporated Wolfson and Manes’s (1980) general findings, focusing on the gender difference in compliment forms. They both found that women used the *I like/love NP* formula much more than men, and that women’s compliments were more personal in focus, while men complimented on ability and performance. In her study on compliments in New Zealand, Holmes (1986) identified that the vast majority of compliments were about few topics such as appearance, ability/performance, possessions and some aspect of personality or friendliness, with the first two accounting for 81.3% of the data. So, her study showed that people in both New Zealand and America had the same topics of compliments in their speech. In another study, exploring the distribution of compliment topics across gender, she (1988) observed that while 61 percent of the compliments between women were found to be appearance-based, only 36 percent of men complimented each other based on appearance. So, women rather than men liked to compliment each other based on appearance most often. Men rarely complimented each other based on appearance in both the New Zealand and American data. Instead, men favored to compliment each other based on possessions more often than they complimented women based on possessions.

In addition, Holmes and Brown (1987) identified that cultural differences were also influential in what constitutes a socially appropriate topic for a compliment. For instance, in their study, while a Pakeha woman [New Zealander of European descent] interpreted weight loss as a compliment, it was an expression of concern for a Tokelau woman [a territory of New Zealand].

Research indicated that most compliments occur between status equals. As Wolfson (1983) puts it, “the overwhelming majority of all compliments are given to people of the same age and status as the speaker” (p.91). Many other researchers also reported the same pattern (Knapp, Hopper & Bell 1984; Holmes 1988; Herbert 1990). However, compliments also occur in encounters between status unequals. In New Zealand data, Holmes (1986) found that higher status females were twice as likely to receive compliments as higher status men, and that men were even more likely to compliment women of higher status than women were. Thus, in New Zealand, it was more acceptable to compliment high status women than high status men since according to Holmes (1988), higher status women were perceived as more receptive to compliments than men and moreover women were generally regarded as socially subordinate and less powerful and
influential than men in society as a whole. Based on the results, Holmes (1988) concluded that in New Zealand, women tended to use compliments as solidarity signals, but men liked to treat them as FTAs.

2.2. Compliment Responses

The first study which examined compliment responses in an English speaking context was Pomerantz’s (1978). She claimed that responding to a compliment is a challenging act for the complimentees since they were required to choose among two opposing conversational maxims: “agreeing with and/or accepting compliment” or “avoiding self-praise”. Likewise, Herbert and Straight (1989) pointed that “compliments pose a dilemma. Accepting compliments means engaging in self-praise, while rejecting them means engaging in other-disagreement” (p.41).

Having being studied across different cultures in the last few decades, there exists a number of categorization of response types.

Holmes (1986/1988) developed three main categories of compliment responses: “accept”, “reject”, and “deflect or evade”. Herbert (1986, p.71) also distinguished 12 types of compliment responses which were subsumed within three broad categories: “agreement”, “non-agreement”, and “other interpretations”. While the “agreement” part subsumed into appreciation token, comment acceptance, praise upgrade, comment history, reassignment and return; the “non-agreement” category includes scale down, question, disagreement, qualification and no acknowledgment. The category of “other interpretation” contains only the subcategory of request interpretation.

Based on Herbert’s (1989/1990) contrastive study on American and South African compliment responses spoken by college students, it was found that Americans used a high frequency of compliment-expression but a low frequency of compliment-acceptance. Conversely, South Africans exhibited a low frequency of compliment-expression but a high frequency of compliment-acceptance. He explained that the source of contrast was rooted in the ideological differences between Americans and South Africans. That is, the high frequency of compliments and the low rate of acceptance in the U.S. data reflect American notions of equality and democratic idealism, whereas the low frequency of compliments and the high rate of acceptance are tied to elitism in South Africa.

Examining the compliment response strategies used by American English speakers and Chinese speakers, Chen (1993) declared that based on Leech’s (1983) Agreement Maxim, the American
English speakers tended to use *acceptance* strategies in their responses, whereas the Chinese speakers’ strategies were characterized by *rejection* motivated by Leech’s (1983) Modesty Maxim. According to Chen (1993), this could be explained by social values in the two cultures: The norm in American society expected them to accept the compliment gracefully but the social norm in Chinese context was to appear humble. In another study, Ye (1995) applied Discourse Completion Test (DCT) in order to explore compliments and compliment responses between interlocutors of equal status and those in close relationships. Based on her data, she found that while males preferred to use acceptance with amendment as their first compliment response to both males and females, females tended to use the same strategy toward females but acceptance toward males. Moreover, she concluded that Chinese rejection of compliments is not a real denial but a cultural choice of modesty.

3. Method
   
3.1. Materials of the Study
   To carry out the investigation, the researchers made use of 15 Persian movies (see appendix A). In this study, Persian movies were selected randomly among many films with social and family themes. Movies, rather than texts, were chosen because they have the potentiality of offering utterances created by interlocutors within the context of informal relationship. Furthermore, as Rose (2001) claimed, language in movies is undoubtedly the most representative of naturally-occurring speech forms, especially from a pragma-linguistic perspective. It should be also pointed that “movie” is primarily an unexplored resource of research on discourse and pragmatics.

3.2. Design of the Study
   This study followed non-participant observation research method which is predicated on the ground of qualitative research design. In non-participant observation, the researcher only observes but does not participate in the activity being observed (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1996). To be more precise, this investigation applied content analysis research method which is one type of non-participant observation. In content analysis, written or visual materials are investigated for the purpose of identifying specific characteristics of the materials (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 1996). Here, not only qualitative descriptive approach was used to conduct the study, but also it provided some statistics accompanying with figures in order to make the readers understand better.
3.3. Procedure
The procedure of the analysis was started by observing and listing all the compliments and compliment responses produced by all characters of the observed movies. Next, being separated across gender, all the data were classified and tabulated based on Holmes (1986) topics of compliments and Herbert’s (1986) types of compliment responses. After that, the frequencies of each type of compliments and the compliment responses were counted and listed in both tables of findings. Finally, the types of compliments and the compliment responses produced by the characters were revealed and discussed by determining the most frequent types produced.

4. Results and Discussion
4.1. Compliment Topic
In this study, compliments fall into four main categories: those having to do with “appearance”, those comment on “ability/skill”, those on “personal traits” and those on each other’s “possessions”. The researcher observed very limited number of compliments which were not related to these main topics or were a mixture of them, so she added one additional category named “other”. For more clarification, examples of the observed compliments on each topic are mentioned below:

A. Appearance [Chaharshanbeh Souri (Fireworks Wednesday), 2006]
Male (Abdolreza): “Chi kar kardi? Che khoshgel shodi!?”, “What did you do? You become so beautiful”.
Here, the husband realizes that his wife has changed a lot and then compliments her beauty.

B. Ability [Bazi (Game), 2008]
Male (Shopkeeper): “Maloomeh shoma to kare atigheh khaili khebreh hastid…, “It is evident that you are an expert in antique affairs…”.
The context here is an antique shop in which the shopkeeper admires a male customer’s skill in recognizing antiques because of his choice of an ancient statue at first glance. However, the shopkeeper’s intention is not a real compliment but to deceive the customer to buy a forged statue not a real antique one.

C. Personality [Kafeh Setareh (Star Café), 2006]
Male (Suitor): “Khanoom, najib, ba shakhsiat”, “Ladylike, noble and personable”.

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In this case, a male character compliments his beloved personality in order to attract her attention and satisfy her to get married with him.

D. Possession [Kalagh Par (Flying of Crow), 2007]

**Female (Mrs. Darayi): “Che angoshtare zibayi!”**, “What a nice ring!”.

The context here is a party in which a female character compliments a woman’s possession of a nice ring. They have acquainted with each other just a few minutes ago and this expression utters after their greeting in order to start and maintain the conversation.

E. Other [Herfeiha (Professionals), 2009]

**Female (Sara): “To behtarin pedare donyayi”, “You are the best father of the world”**.

This expression of praise utters in the context of a restaurant where a girl constantly admires her father because they have recently found each other after years of separation. In this movie and also in Sara’s view, he is a rich, successful and also a man who gives her comfort. She believes that his father is exactly the same as the image of her imaginary man. Thus, the researcher categorized this compliment as “Other” since it includes a mixture of compliment topics (possession, ability and personality).

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of compliment topics given by both male and female characters of observed movies (For more clarification, see also Figure 1).

Table 1 *Gender and Topic Distribution*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Female-Male</th>
<th>Male-Female</th>
<th>Male-Male</th>
<th>Female-Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Compliment Topics</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance</td>
<td>20.93% (9/43)</td>
<td>38.09% (8/21)</td>
<td>30.76% (8/26)</td>
<td>41.66% (5/12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>32.55% (14/43)</td>
<td>23.80% (5/21)</td>
<td>38.46%(10/26)</td>
<td>25% (3/12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>16.27% (7/43)</td>
<td>28.57% (6/21)</td>
<td>23.07%(6/26)</td>
<td>8.33%(1/12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possession</td>
<td>13.95% (6/43)</td>
<td>4.76% (1/21)</td>
<td>7.69%(2/26)</td>
<td>8.33%(1/12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16.27% (7/43)</td>
<td>4.76% (1/21)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16.66%(2/12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal Number</td>
<td>42.15%(43/102)</td>
<td>20.58% (21/102)</td>
<td>25.49%(26/102)</td>
<td>11.76%(12/102)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Number of Compliments : 102
As it can be seen, “appearance” and “ability” are two major topics being complimented by both male and female Persian speakers in this study. In other words, more than half of the compliments (60.78% containing appearance 29.41% and ability 31.37%) being uttered by both genders are related to these two categories and the remaining compliments refer to the other three categories (personality 19.60%, possession 9.80% and other 9.80%). This finding is in line with what other researchers (Wolfson & Manes, 1980; Wolfson, 1983; Holmes, 1988) found in both U.S and New Zealand data that the vast majority of compliments fall in two categories of appearance and ability.

As Table 1 indicates, women tend to compliment others more than men with the percentage of (53.91%) for females against (46.07%) for males. This finding was expected since the main function of compliments is to keep solidarity and interest among others and due to the fact that women as opposed to men tend to be more cooperative and friendly, rather than competitive and hostile. Wolfson (1983) found the same pattern in both the American and New Zealand data that women tend to give and receive compliments much more frequently than men do. As it is observed, while female-male compliments are the most frequent of all compliments (42.15%), female-female compliments are the least (11.76%). It means that women tend to compliment men more than women. Moreover, the findings show that (42.15%) of all compliments are given by females to males while (20.58%) of males’ compliments are received by females. It is also revealed that men compliment each other more than women does; in other words, while (25.49%) of male compliments are received by other males, women compliment other women only with (11.76%) of all compliments.

Regarding the distribution of compliment topics across gender, it should be pointed out that while appearance is the most frequent complimentary topic given by males to females; it is the ability which is complimented most in female-male relations. However, it can be seen that
possession is regarded as the least frequent topic in both male-female and female-male compliments. Likewise, it is revealed that men mostly compliment other men’s ability while women’s appearance is the most frequent topic in complimenting each other. These observed findings could be explained by various existent cultural, situational and also religious norms in Iran. First, since it is a general expectation among both genders that women place greater emphasis on physical appearance, it is more likely expected that women should be given and received compliments based on this quality. Second, based on some cultural and religious beliefs, women tend to be more cautious in complimenting other men’s appearance, for the fear of not being interpreted as being too forward and romantically assertive. Next, due to the fact that men have the dominant role in managing and supporting the family for years and since they are always encouraged, even in childhood, to be severe, powerful and skilled, it is evident that they are mostly complimented based on the ability.

These topic distribution patterns are more or less consistent with those discussed by previous authors in other cultures, such as Wolfson (1983), who found that women usually received the vast majority of compliments on appearance as opposed to men whose compliments were not usually appearance-related. However, it was observed that New Zealand men also receive some compliments on appearance (40% of all) but they were mainly given by women rather than men. American men rarely received appearance compliments and it occurred only when the male were much younger than female ones. Similarly, Holmes (1988) found in the New Zealand data that twice as many male-to-female compliments were about appearance.

4.2. Types of Compliment Responses

In daily conversations, when people give compliment to each other, they would also receive the response. Among English speakers, it is generally agreed that the polite thing to do is to accept the compliment. In practice, however, compliments are not always accepted. People have to juggle two conflicting conversational rules: “Agree with the speaker” or “Avoid self-praise”. In Persian movies, it was found that there were two major types of compliment responses used by different characters based on their specific gender: “No Acknowledgement” and “Appreciation Token”. The researcher also observed some culture-specific formulaic expressions which are not included in Herbert’s (1986) taxonomy of compliment responses, so another category was added named “other”. The results are illustrated in Table 2 (For more clarification, see also Figure 2).
Table 2  Gender and Compliment Response Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of CR</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.06%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praise Upgrade</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment History</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reassignment</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Return</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale Down</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagreement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualification</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request Interpretation</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>48.48%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As it is shown in Table 2, in this study, No Acknowledgement responses occur most frequently in both males (66/66%) and females (48/48%) compliment exchanges. According to Herbert (1989), No Acknowledgement is one of the types of compliment responses in which the addressee gives no indication of having heard the compliment. The addressee either responds with an irrelevant comment (i.e. topic shift) or gives no response (p. 208). For example: [Herfeiha (Professionals), 2009]

Female (Sara): “To behtarin pedare donyayi”, “You are the best father of the world”.

Male (Pedar): “Ghazato bokhor”, “Eat your meal”.

The second frequent type is Appreciation Token which makes up (17/39%) of all males responses and also (15/15%) of all females one. Appreciation Token is one type of compliment responses that refers to the acceptance of the compliment by saying “Thanks” and “Thank you”. For example: [Herfeiha (Professionals), 2009]

Male (Behrooz): “Che fresh shody, Azin!”, “You become so fresh, Azin!”.

Male (Azin): “Moteshakeram, Moteshakeram”, “Thanks, Thanks”.

In this study, (12/12%) of all women’s and (8/69%) of all men’s responses are related to a category named Other. This category includes a set of culture-specific utterances or formulaic expressions which can not be fit into Herbert’s (1986) categorization of compliment responses. For example: [Mehman (The Guest), 2006]

Female (Madar): “Ghado balaye shah damado beram!”, “You look very handsome as a groom”

Male (Majid): “Nokaretim”, “I am at your service”.

As it is observed, other kinds of compliment responses constitute only a few portions of total compliments used by Persian characters. Scale Down is another type of compliment response with
the percentage of (6/06%) for females and (2/89%) for men. It is a type of compliment response in which the addressee disagrees with the complimentary force, claiming that the praise is overstated. In fact, it is used instead of rejecting the compliment by saying flat no and reveals people’s modesty. Here, female characters are more modest than men that might be originated by the fact that in Persian culture, especially ancient Persian culture, women are subordinate to men.

The conversation is mentioned below: [Az Ma Behtaroon (Better than Us), 2009]
Male (Ahmad): “Matlabetton khaili jaleb bood”, “Your press release was very attractive”.
Female (Nasim): “Albate chize khasiam nist”, “Of course, it is not very especial”.

Another type found in Persian movies is Praise Upgrade which includes only (6/06%) of males and (1/44%) of females’ responses. In this case, the addressee accepts the compliment and asserts that the compliment force is insufficient. Females use this strategy more since they naturally want to be praised more especially by men; again, it might relate to their subordinate status in Persian culture. For example: [Herfeiha (Professionals), 2009]
Male (Pedar): “Khoob bood,khoob ”, “It was good, good”.
Female (Sara): “Faghat khoob?!”, “Only good?!”.  

It can also be recognized that a male character use the strategy of Request interpretation in responding to a compliment. In this case, the addressee interprets the compliment as a request rather than a simple compliment. Here is the conversation: [Faseleh (Distance), 2009]
Female (Maryam): “Bezanam be takhte az har angoshetoon ye honar mibare! Che booye kababi miad.”, “You have a lot of arts, What a pleasant kebab smell!”.
Male (Ostad) : “Naghabele,Tashrif dashte bashid”, “It is trifling, stay here”.

As it is shown, Question is another type of compliment response being used by only a female character in responding to another female one. It is used when the addressee are not sure about the truthfulness of the compliment. For example: [Chaharshanbe souri (Fireworks Wednesday), 2006]
Female (Mojdeh): “Taze shodi aroos”, “Now, you become a real bride”.
Female (Rooh Angiz): “Avaz shodam?”, “Am I changed?.

It is also revealed that one female character responds to a male compliment by a Return. In this case, the addressee agrees but responds to a compliment by praising the same quality being complimented. For example: [Herfeiha (Professionals), 2009]
Male (Pedar): “To dokhatare bahooshi hasti”, “You are an intelligent girl.”
Female (Sara): “Khob be shoma raftam”, “Since I am alike you.”

Finally, as you can observe in this analysis, four types of compliment response are not used by characters such as Comment History, Reassignment, Disagreement and Qualification.

In the analyzed data, the three most frequent compliment responses among both male and female characters are No Acknowledgement, Appreciation Token and Other (formulaic expression). Thus, regarding gender differences in compliment response manners, there is no difference in choosing the appropriate response to the complimenter in Persian speakers. However, it can be seen that, based on quantity, men choose “No acknowledgment” and “Appreciation Token” a little more than women but women instead tend to use other types of compliment responses, too. Interestingly, in this study, women rather than men use more formulaic expressions in their responses.

Silence or shifting the topic is the most frequently used strategy by Persian speakers which reveal their inclination to be modest based on Leech’s (1983) Modesty Maxim. Persian speakers also respond to compliments more by saying “Mamnoon or Moteshakeram”, “Thank you”. This can be explained by the fact that Persians prefer to agree with complimenter. They think that it might be rude not to accept and reject others’ idea or compliments. Sometimes, Persian speakers use some formulaic expressions in response to a compliment in order to avoid mere rejection or acceptance. Responding to a compliment, Persian speakers rarely agree or disagree with the compliment in a flat way, but tend to make a comment to show their modesty or politeness. A most frequent culture-specific expression in responding to a compliment is “Cheshmatoon ghashang mibine”, “Your eyes see beautifully” which is used mostly by Persian women in responding to a compliment about appearance and possession and again reveals the respondent’s tendency to be modest and polite. “Nokaretam” or “Chakeram”, “I am at your service” are other examples being used in responding to compliments, especially by men. Yousefvand (2010), pointed to some of these expressions in her study: “Khahesh mikonam”, “shoma lotf darin”, “Khejalatam nadin”, “Sharmande mikonid”. She believed that these terms generally mean no. Here, the quality of the object or content of the compliment is only denied, but not the illocutionary force of complimenting. In other words, the speaker tries to reject the proposition but accepts the complimenting force, thus emphasizing the value of modesty (Yousefvand, 2010). Therefore, it can be concluded that Persian speakers inclined to respond to compliments with non-agreement terms that reflects their modesty. However, they tried to disagree with the complimenter in a polite
manner with their silence or shifting the topic not with the mere No. These findings thus give weight to Sharifian’s claim that Persians have a strong tendency to deny or downplay a compliment in line with the cultural schema of shekasteh-nafsi (Sharifian, 2008).

Regarding cultural differences in this respect, the findings presented here indicate more or less discrepancy to Herbert’s (1990) findings for American English speakers’ compliment responses. Herbert (1990) in his study on American college students, indicated that the proportion of agreement responses, (66%, comprising 29.4% appreciation token, 6.6% comment acceptance, 0.4% praise upgrade, 19.3% comment history, 3% reassignment and 7.3% return), was much higher and made up two-thirds of the total responses. On the other hand, the findings of this study are in line with what other researchers (Chen, 1993; Daikuhara, 1986; Gajaseni, 1994; Holmes, 1988; Shih, 1986; Ye, 1995) found in East Asian speakers (Chinese, Japanese, Malay, and Thai). They observed that compliments were usually not accepted among speakers of these countries but they were mainly rejected as compared to English speakers (as cited in Yousefvand, 2010).

5. Conclusion

Since the speech act of complimenting is very crucial in social and interpersonal relations, it should be regarded and handled carefully by interlocutors. Moreover, it has been claimed that compliments reflect cultural values and norms of behavior (Manes, 1983). Despite the fact that the main function of compliment in Iran is to keep solidarity, maximize friendship and minimize the probable interpersonal distance, the researcher in this study encountered with a situation when the produced compliment created negative feelings in the complimentee. In this case, the compliment is used as sarcasm in that the speaker’s aim is not to compliment the listener but to criticize him indirectly for some fault or inability in doing something. For example, in this study, a person whose driving was awful was praised and entitled as “Schumacher” (a German Formula One racing driver). This kind of compliment which is occurred mostly between close friends and members of the family might have both positive and negative outcomes. Although it might discourage the listener and as a result impact their relationship destructively, it can have the advantage of persuading the listener to try his best to improve his weakness or lack of skill in something. Naturally, responding to this kind of compliments is more challenging than a real compliment. In this study, the complimentee tried to ignore it and responded politely with shifting the topic of speaking. In real life, it was also observed that this kind of compliments will be answered by
referring and pointing to the complimenter’s own faults. Thus, the act of complimenting is so complicated that might be investigated and discussed in different dimensions.

The present study on compliments and compliment responses uttered in Persian movies indicated that while Appearance was the most frequent topic in male-female compliments, it was ability which is used more as compliments in female-male interactions. Moreover, men tended to compliment other men by referring to their ability and skill in a specific domain. As rooted in their gender, female characters complimented other females’ beauty and appearance more.

At the same time, results revealed significant features in Persian participants which supported the argument that modesty, an important component of Persian politeness, plays a significant role in Persian speakers’ complimenting and compliment (Beeman, 1986; Sharifiyan, 2005). To be more precise, in the present study, No acknowledgement, Appreciation token and Formulaic expression were the three (out of 13) major response types being observed. Moreover, it was observed that both males and females used No acknowledgement as their first compliment response preference. We can conclude that “non-agreement”, which is meant to avoid self-praise, is the driving force behind Persian speakers’ responses to compliment. For the second frequent type of compliment response, both male and female Persian characters in this study used “Appreciation token” in order to agree with the complimenter. It was also found that for the third frequent kind, both men and women preferred some compliment patterns in Persian movies which were culture-specific. Hence, one must bear in mind that the speech event of complimenting, and responses are “dependent on shared beliefs and values of the speech community coded into communicative patterns, and thus can not be interpreted apart from social and cultural context” (Saville-Troike, 1982, p. 44). Therefore, the results show the strong effects of both culture and gender on responding to a compliment.

Owing to cultural differences in complimenting patterns in different countries, the findings of this study might be helpful for foreign tourists, students or whoever decides to live in Iran temporarily or permanently. Establishing a good social interrelationship in society, a thorough knowledge of appropriate norms of complimenting is required for peoples of each society. Moreover, everyone should be aware of existent gender differences in their complimenting or responding to it if he/she wants to have a good influential communication in family or society. As Yousefvand (2010) declared, the information obtained about compliment response patterns, should provide a useful source for a teacher of second language to raise students’ awareness of cultural
similarities and differences between L1 and L2. Moreover, the conflicting patterns should be 
explained and regarded in order to avoid any probable communication breakdown or offence.

Finally, we should also remind that since this study was only carried out in the context of some 
Persian movies, generalizing should be performed with great care. This study also did not take into 
account the character’s age, ethnicity, educational background and social status. Thus, a more 
extensive study which includes these variables might be useful in understanding the compliment 
patterns of Persian speakers.

References


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21(3), 523-546.


and language acquisition* (pp. 82-95). Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House.


Appendix

List of Persian Movies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agar Bararn Bebarad [If It Rains]</td>
<td>Seyyed Rouhollah Hejazi</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atashbas [Cease Fire]</td>
<td>Tahmineh Milani</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Az Ma Behtaroon [Better than Us]</td>
<td>Mehrdad Farid</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bazi [Game]</td>
<td>Soroush Sehat</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaharshanbeh Souri [Fireworks Wednesday]</td>
<td>Asghar Farhadi</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damade Khosh Ghadam [ Happy Feet Groom]</td>
<td>Kazem Rastgoftar</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Title [Subtitle]</td>
<td>Author(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Faseleh [Distance]</td>
<td>Kamran Ghadakchian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Herfeiha [Professionals]</td>
<td>Pooran Derakhshandeh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kafeh Setareh [Star Cafe]</td>
<td>Saman Moghadam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kalagh Par [Flying of crow]</td>
<td>Shahram Shahhosseini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Mehman [The Guest]</td>
<td>Saeed Asadi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Sandalie Khali [Empty Chair]</td>
<td>Saman Sterki</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Title

The Effect of Massed/Distributed Sentence Writing on Perception of EFL Learners: A Qualitative Study

Authors

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of the massed/distributed sentence writing as the post task of a noticing activity on the perception of Iranian EFL learners. Forty female adult upper-intermediate English students from a state university in Tehran in 2 groups participated in noticing the words whose production was not as easy as their comprehension. Then, they were involved in a 4 weeks process of massed/distributed sentence writing; the participants’ perceptions regarding the treatment were explored by triangulation through interviews with all the participants of the study and the 3 professors of that university observing the process of the study. The participants were also asked to write a journal about the process at the end of each week of the treatment phase about how they experienced the process in that week in class or out of that. The researchers’ field notes were used, too. The data were coded systematically and analyzed through content analysis. As the participants mentioned, conducting the post task of noticing activity was effective in enhancing their productive lexical knowledge. Also, they considered the dictionary’s examples useful to do a productive task. As they stated, the distributed way of
practice was boring, and the massed way of learning was easier than the distributed way to handle a task. However, they believed the distributed way of learning caused more attention to learning.

**Keywords:** Massed, Distributed, Sentence writing, Perception

### 1. Introduction

Presenting a task as a productive task and adhering to its effect on facilitating more noticing and learning is the issue of some controversies (Alizadeh Kolagar, 2012; Mirab, 2009; Song & Suh, 2008) that requires more investigation. On the other hand, regarding the effect of distributed/massed ways of learning (i.e. spaced presentation of materials to the learners or learning the materials through the crammed and intensive courses), some controversies are seen in the literature. As Scott and Conrad (1992) stated, tension and tiredness are considered as bothering factors among the learners receiving massed and intensive learning, but the learners experiencing these types of learning showed more concentration on the learnt materials. Contrary, Ausubel (1966) mentioned that distributed practice draws the learners’ attention and concentration more to the process of learning. Moreover, Willingham (2002) believed that the distributed learning increased the learners’ memory of learnt materials.

Considering the literature, the present study as a new research in this field explored the effect of a productive task (i.e. massed/distributed sentence writing) as the post task of noticing activity from another view. Indeed, one of the features distinguishing this study from the previous literature is qualitatively exploring the effect of presenting a single task as the post task of noticing --different in time interval-- on perception of the EFL learners. Also, it was tried to qualitatively investigate which way of learning (massed vs. distributed sentence writing) was more effective in drawing the learners’ attention to learning and consequently in enhancing the effect of noticing the learners’ comprehended vocabulary knowledge and its conversion to their productive lexical knowledge. Related to the aforementioned point, the present study tried to answer the following question: -How do the participants perceive, prefer, and experience vocabulary learning through the massed/distributed ways of sentence writing?

### 2. Methodology

#### 2.1. Participants
The participants of the study were 40 Iranian female upper-Intermediate B.A students of English of two intact classes from a state university in Tehran with age range of 18-40 years old. They participated in the study in two homogenous groups of massed vs. distributed. The distributed group included 21 participants out of 28 and the massed group contained 19 participants out of 29.

2.2. Instrumentation

To decrease the problem of biased conclusions (Maxwell, 2005), and to be assured of “trustworthiness” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290) regarding the techniques of “credibility”, “transferability”, “dependability” and “confirmability” (p. 300) of the study, the researchers conducted the qualitative study through triangulation which includes utilizing several techniques and views in the process of the study (Dornyei, 2011).

2.2.1. Semi-Structured Interview

A “semi-structured interview” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 173) was used as the main way of data collection in the study.

2.2.2. Audio Recording

Not to miss any single point, every interview was recorded, listened to over and over and transcribed carefully.

2.2.3. Journal Entries

Journal entries including the participants of both groups’ reflections about how they experienced the process of sentence writing in every week of the treatment were utilized as a complementary source to collect data.

2.2.4. Observations

In the process of the study, the researchers could participate in 10 treatment sessions for the group who experienced the distributed treatment and in 4 sessions for the group who experienced the massed treatment.

2.2.5. Field Notes

Following every session of interview, observation, and after reading the journal entries, a collection of “field notes” (Friedman, 2012, p. 184) were written by the researchers.

2.3. Data Collection

Since the study was conducted in a state university in Tehran, the process of the research lasted for about one university semester. In this regard, at first, a TOEFL test (2004) which was retrieved from Ebteda Publication (2010) was conducted to ensure the participants were homogeneous. In
other words, after taking a TOFEL test (2004), 40 participants of two intact classes at upper-intermediate proficiency level were assigned to two groups. To do so, 28 of the participants in one group and 29 of them in another group were checked for their homogeneity, and 21 participants of one class and 19 participants of the other class whose scores were in the range of 1 SD above or below the mean of every group were selected for the study.

One week later, the noticing phase was conducted; a passage taken from Acklam and Crace (2006), named (i.e. who comes first?) was given to the learners of both groups. They were asked to select 25 of the most problematic words in the text that they could not produce well. In other words, all participants were consciously aware of the words in the text which they comprehended well, but were not able to produce appropriately in that text. Thus, in this way, noticing was conducted equally among all the participants.

Indeed, the procedure conducted up to this level, is similar to what Abednia and Tajik (2012) did in their quantitative study, considered as a prerequisite for the treatment (i.e. massed sentence writing vs. distributed sentence writing) of this qualitative study. Then, redoing the noticing phase was essential for the treatment procedure.

One week after the noticing phase, the treatment phase for both groups started to be carried out. The participants of both groups made sentences with the noticed words. As a result, not only were the participants aware of the noticed words but also they practiced the noticed words. This process for both groups was conducted 4 times during 4 weeks. Hence, the participants of both groups were treated and they were involved in the process of sentence writing as the post task of a noticing activity, but the difference was in the kind of the treatment.

In fact, every week, the participants of one group were asked to write 4 sentences with the noticed words without any time interval in the process of their sentence writing. To ensure that the time factor was not involved in their treatment, every week, the researchers participated in one of the classes that the participants of this group were present and asked them to write the sentences in the class and then deliver them to the researchers. Since some of the students were absent in some sessions, the researchers informed them about those words via email after the class, and asked them to send the sentences in that day. Therefore, every week the researchers received the 4 written sentences, once in one day, i.e. this kind of writing was considered to be the massed sentence writing. However, the members of the other group wrote every 4 sentences with time interval; every day they wrote only one of the sentences and delivered it to the researchers in that
day. Then, every week, the process of the treatment in the distributed group took 4 consecutive
days.

It is necessary to note, during the process of the study, the researchers tried to participate in one
of the participants’ classes to collect the sentences and to observe the participants while they were
writing the sentences. As a matter of fact, the time of observation in each session was so short.
Also, because the researchers presented the sentences to the participants and then merely they
observed them during the process of sentence writing to see what happened in those moments, a
“nonparticipants” or “unstructured observation” (Dornyei, 2011, p. 179) was conducted leading
the researchers to take detailed field notes. As it was observed, some of the participants checked
the dictionaries to help them write the sentences. Indeed, as the researchers were not allowed to
participate in some of the classes (i.e. due to the time limitation of the class), they waited out of
the class and then collected the sentences after the time of the class or by the help of the professor
of the class. Thus, they asked all the participants to write the sentences by referring to their own
knowledge and not by copying the dictionary examples.

As some of the participants were absent from the class in some sessions of the treatment, the
researchers could not observe them during the process of sentence writing to know how they wrote
the sentences (i.e. whether they thought about the sentences that they wrote or they wrote them
only by referring to the dictionary). Therefore, the researchers asked every participant of both
groups to write a journal about how they experienced the treatment and about their perceptions
regarding this process at the end of every week of the treatment.

At the beginning of the fourth week of the treatment, the researchers started to have interview
with the participants of both groups about the process of their writing, about how they had written
the sentences in every week of the treatment, during 4 days or in 1 day, and also their perceptions
about this process. As Friedman (2012) suggested, the researchers, based on the observations and
field notes, prepared some questions, and then piloted the questions in some of the first interviews
to edit the problematic questions. In other words, after piloting the questions in the first 4-5
interviews, the participants were asked about the following points:
- Their perceptions regarding boredom vs. enjoyment with continuing the process of sentence
  writing.
- Their perceptions regarding effectiveness of the method of the treatment in improving their
  lexical knowledge.
- Their preference about selecting a type of learning (massed vs. distributed).
- Their perceptions regarding the type of learning easier to deal with (massed vs. distributed).
- Using/not using a source to help them write sentences, and how they experienced it.

Then, all of the participants were interviewed individually or through “focus groups” (Boeije, 2010, p. 63) including 4-6 participants. Every interview conducted individually took about 15-20 minutes and every group interview lasted up to 1 hour. In short, the interview process lasted for 3 weeks. The 3 professors of English department of the university who were present at the time of the process of sentence writing in the class and were observing this process or were dealing with the participants of the study at the time of conducting the study were interviewed, as well. Needless to say, all the interviews were recorded and transcribed carefully.

3. Data Analysis and Discussion

To consider the similarities and differences between the gathered data (i.e. the tape scripts of interviews with the participants, as the main gathered data, and the tape scripts of interviews with professors who observed the process of the study, the journals entries written by the participants of the massed/distributed groups weekly during 4 weeks, the observation notes, and the field notes written by the researchers), the qualitative data were coded systematically, i.e. by “initial coding” (Dornyei, 2011, p. 251), and “second-level coding” (Dornyei, 2011, p. 252), and were investigated through “content analysis” (Dornyei, 2011, p. 245); the instances of the common points were counted and categorized into special classifications.

One of the points, common in the answers to the questions in the interviews, in the journal entries, and in the observations was bout the participants’ boredom vs. enjoyment with continuing the process of sentence writing. As the result of the interviews with all the participants, 81% of the participants of the distributed group and 63% of the participants of the massed group mentioned that the process of the treatment bored them.
Possibly, these results were due to point that the process of the treatment (i.e. sentence writing) lasted for 4 weeks, in which the participants of the distributed group were involved 4 days in each week, but the massed group experienced this process once in every week. The following example would clarify this point more.

The process of sentence writing in this week was good like the previous weeks; I learnt how to use the words. But, it was a little bit boring because it was the 4th week that we wrote sentences.

Sample excerpt, distributed group, journal

As one of the reasons causing boredom, the participants further stated that since the process of the treatment was the same during 4 weeks and no variety was included in each week of the treatment, it led them to boredom. The following instance is helpful, in this regard.

The process was good, but if there was included a kind of variety in the 4 weeks, it would be better. For example, if [in] one week a sentence is written for each word, and [in] the next week, a sentence is written with the 4 words, it provides a sort of variety.

Sample excerpt, massed group, interview

As a matter of fact, being so involved with the courses and projects at university caused some of the participants not to enjoy the study, and possibly to become bored with the process of the treatment. The explanatory excerpt is as follows:
Possibly, if it was the last semester, this would not be the situation. But, [because] in this semester, we had lots of thing [to do], concentrating on this process was a bit boring.

Sample excerpt, distributed group, interview

As another source indicating that the participants of both groups, especially those of distributed group, became tired and bored at the end of the last two weeks of the process of the treatment, the statements of the 3 professors can be mentioned.

- Basically, when these kinds of things [the researches] happened; [you] would confront the students’ objection. They do not like very much to mix their classes with these things.
- I do not suppose that the students liked it at all; none of them, I suppose. They always said “we have a lot of other things [to do], we don’t have time.” Some [of them] said that it took the time of their class.
- Either one night, or four nights. One night is boring, four nights is more boring.

Sample excerpts, the 3 professors, interview

In fact, this issue was observed by the researchers, too. As it was observed, the students of the distributed class were more bored at the end of every week after the second week of the treatment than the students of the massed class. It is necessary to mention, on the basis of this finding, the curriculum developers of the university courses will be informed that the EFL learners at university level would not like to prolong any type of activity, since it makes them bored.

Another perception of the participants regarding the process of the treatment (i.e. the massed/distributed sentence writing), common in 72% of answers to questions in the interviews with participants of the distributed group and 69% of those with the participants of the massed group and also in the other collected data, was about the effectiveness of the method of the treatment in improving lexical knowledge.

Figure 2. The Effectiveness of the Method of the Treatment in Improving Lexical Knowledge
As a matter of fact, they mostly believed that the process of the treatment was effective, in general. The following excerpts of both groups’ journal entries would clarify this point more.

- To do the process, I had to realize their part of speeches; then I started to make sentences with them. This process helped me a lot to learn the usage of the words in the sentences.
- Of course there was a good feeling inside me, because in making sentences, we became aware and noticed more precisely if they were nouns or adjectives. In addition, my vocabulary knowledge increased because I learnt how to use them in a context.

Sample excerpts, distributed/massed group respectively, journal

The positive aspect of working with sentence was referred to in the interview as follows:

- I think what is important is that if an individual knows one thousand words; he/she knows how to use them in a sentence. Because of that it is so good that you tell us [that] they [the words] should be used in a sentence.
- There were some words that I did not know their usages and it caused my vocabulary knowledge to be increased, and also I understood that how I could make a sentence with a word grammatically. So this was a good experience.

Sample excerpts, distributed/massed group respectively, interview

As this finding indicated, both types of sentence writing as the post tasks of noticing activity were influential in promoting the effect of noticing and in enhancing the learners’ productive lexical knowledge. It is worth noting, this finding could help the EFL teachers know that the learners have positive view regarding experiencing sentence writing as a type of post task of noticing activity to activate their passive lexical items.

After mentioning their perception about the treatment of the study, 80% of the participants of the distributed group and 73% of the participants of the massed group in their interviews stated that if they had the opportunity to select one class whose activity included massed or distributed sentence writing, they would have the preference for the distributed class over the massed one.
**Figure 3.** Having the Preference for a Way of Learning (Massed vs. Distributed)

The common reason to support their claim was the issue that through the distributed way of learning, more attention and concentration would occur. The following excerpts of the interview with the distributed group would explain this point more.

- I prefer some days in the week, because if we tend to experience four words in a day, we wouldn’t specify time for that, [and] we wouldn’t concentrate. But, if we would like to have beautiful sentence, these all depend on the method. I think, in that way [the massed way], we only tend to write to finish it and to let it go.
- I preferred one word in each day. Because learning is less with four words. But, with one word, I concentrate only on that one word, and I can learn more.

Sample excerpts, distributed group, interview

In this vein, the following example of the participants of the massed group is worth exploring.

- [In the method] with one word, the attention would be increased. Because [in that way] I would only write one sentence, so it should be better. Because of that I take part in the class [which would] be held 4 days in the week.

Sample excerpt, massed group, interview

Having received the participants’ comments regarding their preference for the massed/distributed ways of learning, to make this common point more clear, the researchers interviewed with one of the professors, present at the time of the treatment, too.

- I suppose, when the words are one in each day, possibly, more concentration would be devoted to every sentence; when the words are not related to each other, learning each of them once in every day causes the students to concentrate more on those words. But, [with] 4 [words], possibly, they [the students] would devote less time to concentrate and to know how to put the 4 words in the 4 sentences.

Sample excerpt, the professor, interview

Indeed, what she mentioned was in line with the ideas of the participants in both groups regarding their preference for the distributed way of learning over the massed way and also with the researchers’ observation; as it was observed, mostly, the participants of both groups preferred the distributed way of learning, because they believed that the distributed way of learning led them to
more concentration, and drew their attention more to the learning --productive vocabulary learning in this case-- than the massed way of learning.

In fact, this finding will guide the EFL teachers to select an effective type of learning technique which could draw the learners’ attention more to the process of language learning, especially for acquiring productive vocabulary items. As the researchers asked the participants to explain more about their preferences, the participants added some points about the type of learning (massed vs. distributed) easier to deal with; nearly all the participants, (i.e. 91% of the participants of the distributed group, and 95% of the participants of the massed group in their interviews), considered the massed way easier than the distributed way to cope with.

Figure 4. The Ideas of the Participants of the Both Groups Regarding the Way of Learning (Massed vs. Distributed) Easier to Deal with.

As the participants’ comments indicated, since the task can be handled in shorter time in the massed way than in the distributed way, this type of learning was easier and less challenging than the distributed way, and it caused less tiredness. The following excerpts of interview with the massed group would be more explanatory.

- The task that is done once is easier; the task that takes less time. I mean, once a week that takes less time.
- The task done once is easier. In other words, four words in one day are better.

Sample excerpts, massed group, interview

Besides, the following examples of the interview with the participants of the distributed group are worth investigating.

- Four days in the week are more challenging. Because I thought that I got so tired. But, once in a week is easier, and less tiring.
- I was more satisfied with one day in a week. I suppose, it would be easier due to time. [In this way], we wouldn’t be involved in each day. We would do it in one day and it would finish.
Having analyzed the data, the researchers could clearly observe a common point among them about using/not using a source to guide the participants to write sentences, and also about the issue that how they experienced it, for this aim. As a matter of fact, what most of the participants in the interviews (i.e. 77% of the participants of the distributed group, and 64% of the participants of the massed group), and in journal entries named as a source helping them to write sentences was dictionary.

**Figure 5. The Ideas of the Participants of Both Groups about Using/Not Using a Source to Write Sentence**

As the participants mentioned, they used the English to English dictionary to check its sentence examples, the part of speech, the prepositions, and the collocations of the words to know how the words could be used in the sentences. They stated that they did not try to copy or to deliver the same examples in the dictionary to the researchers but they merely used the dictionary as a source helping them write the sentences. What they stated was in line with the observations of the researchers. Some excerpts indicating the perception of the participants of the distributed group are as follows:

- All in all, I used the dictionary twice. I intended to check the word that you said with the context that I had in my mind, to see if it was right or not. Because of that I checked it with the dictionary to see if the dictionary used that context or not. Then, I wrote myself [my own sentence].
- I checked some of them [the words]. I saw the dictionary’s example. I didn’t like it [to copy the sentences]. I’m that much creative that if I see the examples, I write my own sentence.

Sample excerpts, distributed group, interview

The perception of the participants of the massed group is indicated in the following example.
For example, I knew what [the meaning of the word] was, but I didn’t know how I should use it, so I checked how the word was used in an example, then I paid attention to it, after that I wrote my own sentence. I liked to know how a word having other meanings was used with those meanings in sentences.

Sample excerpt, massed group, interview

The following document of the journal entries denotes this point, as well.

I used online dictionary and also mobile phone dictionary to get some clues for writing and also I used them to know about related information to those words and specific information about the structure and the suitable collocations.

Sample excerpt, distributed group, journal

As this finding indicated, despite the researchers’ insistence on not using the dictionary, they mostly used English to English dictionary to check the syntactic features of the words, the collocations of the words, and also to see how each word was used in the sentence. Therefore, they believed checking the dictionary’s examples could be helpful to do a productive task. This finding will guide the teachers to know about the positive view of EFL learners regarding using dictionary to do a productive task.

4. Conclusion

According to the findings, the process of the treatment was effective, in general. But, the distributed way of learning led to more concentration and more learners’ attention to the process of doing the task. Besides, most of the participants, especially those of the distributed group considered the process of the treatment boring. Therefore, it can be concluded that the long duration of process especially in the distributed group, and also the pressure of university courses can be the issues leading to the boredom. In fact, although the participants called the distributed way of learning boring, they mentioned that they mostly preferred the distributed way of practice due to the effectiveness of the distributed method in providing the learners with more concentration and attention to the process of learning. However, they believed that the massed way of learning was easier than the distributed way to cope with a task. Furthermore, most of the participants considered the dictionary’s sentence examples useful in using the vocabulary items in a productive task.
References


Title

Responses to mediation for six levels of reading comprehension questions based on Bloom's taxonomy

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Abstract

This qualitative study reports on an investigation of interactive dynamic assessment (DA) undertaken by 47 adult EFL learners. It aimed at finding out how mediations provided through DA for six types of reading comprehension questions classified according to Bloom et al.'s (1956) cognitive taxonomy affected the readers' development. It was revealed that mediations were more beneficial for higher order questions than the lower order ones and as the cognitive level of the questions raised mediations led into more development and transcendence of the reading ability. Due to high instructional value inherent in DA these findings can be used by language teachers and assessors in developing and applying appropriate mediations for questions with different cognitive loads to improve higher order thinking ability of EFL readers.

Keywords: Reading comprehension ability, Interaction, Mediation, Dynamic assessment, Bloom's taxonomy

1. Introduction

Reading has been invented by human beings only a few thousand years ago, and it has certainly changed our means of communication as well as our intellectual abilities. People's abilities in reading may vary from reading basic text to much higher level of comprehension, learning new conceptual information, synthesizing, critic reading, and even reinterpreting texts. Reading is a complex and incremental process in which readers attempt to comprehend the text through decoding the writer's intended meaning. Comprehension is not a unitary phenomenon but its basis
is on the ability to mentally interconnect events in the text and reach to a coherent representation of the whole text (Kendeou, et al, 2007, p.28-9). That is to get the meaning of the text the reader goes through various processes at the word-, sentence- and text-level. The reader first tries to identify a series of letters as a word, access the meaning of words, and integrate individual word meanings or sentence meanings into coherent sentence- and text-level representations (Best, Rowe, Ozuru, & McNamara, 2005).

The problem is not just the complexity of the reading comprehension process but also the complexity of choosing the most appropriate instructional method, teacher orientation and learner engagement among the various possibilities. Determining the most efficient and effective instructional approach for reading improvement which can achieve the institutional goals is one of the major issues facing teachers, teacher trainers, curriculum developers, administrators, and materials writers (Grabe, 2008, p.329). There are many contexts in which foreign language learners develop their reading abilities. As Grabe (2008) correctly puts it L2 learners learning reading in different settings and institutions with varying levels of training and different goals can't have a single "one size fits all' reading instruction and curriculum, therefore, "L2 reading instruction should be sensitive to the students' needs and goals and the larger institutional context" (p.19).

2. Review of the Related Literature
2.1. The Importance of Reading Assessment
Considering the higher sensitivity of assessment the above mentioned fact about sensitivity to needs, goals and context is true and even more required for reading assessment. All assessments have consequences and regardless of their contexts should be handled with care, purpose, and expertise. Since assessment practices can both benefit the learning environment or inflict great harm, great care, attention, and respect is required. Teachers are to understand the uses and aspects of the reading assessment and consider its consequences, because reading assessment has a great power to inform researchers, teachers, administrators, and policy makers (Grabe, 2008, p.352). It is essential for all teachers and in particular teachers of reading to gain an understanding of the principles and uses of assessment. (Snow, Griffin, & Buns, 2005, p.179).
Reading assessments are used for many purposes .Grabe (2008, p. 353) identifies five purposes for the reading assessment:

1. Reading-proficiency assessment
2. Assessment of classroom learning
3. Assessment of curricular effectiveness
4. Assessment of research purposes
5. Assessment for learning

Among these five the last one is more in line with the scope of the present study. It aims at supporting and improving student learning. In the case of reading assessment it is intended to improve reading abilities. The goals is not evaluating students' ultimate performance or recording the outcome but the main purpose is providing immediate feedback on tasks and teaching learners to engage in more effective learning. The key property in this kind of assessment is the follow-up feedback, and the interaction between the teacher and the students. It engages learners actively in their own learning and responds to indicators of nonunderstanding or weak understanding with continuous support, remediation, and fine-tuning of mediation and instruction. Assessments for learning can double the rate of student learning (William 2007-8). It uses assessment information as major opportunities for learning and the development of more effective skills over time. Among various types of assessment for learning, dynamic assessment (DA) is considered as the most prominent and flourishing type.

2.2. Dynamic Assessment

One of the most successful approaches to assessment for learning as opposed to assessment of learning is dynamic assessment. DA with its broad outlook toward instruction and assessment meets the requirements of the both poles simultaneously and kills two birds with one stone. It is, in fact, more of a philosophy toward teaching and student learning than a separate set of assessment practice.

While traditional assessment is product-oriented and identifies just the level of student performance, dynamic assessment aims at both product and process. The focus, therefore, is not only on the level of learning but also on the rate of the learning. So through its wider and deeper student observation DA provides detailed information about students' current competence and next steps so that students are not evaluated unfairly. An assessment procedure set out to particular needs of individual learners can be accomplished solely through dynamic assessment. Timely instruction can save many poorly performing learners from falsely being interpreted as unsuccessful learners. In fact data from dynamic assessment can help identify the type and amount of required mediation for academic success. The point is not that non-dynamic assessment (NDA)
is inappropriate but that DA is a means of learning about difficulties and then working to address these difficulties. DA is not limited to assessing the individuals but is also an instructional activity provided that appropriate mediation is presented to the learner. The basis of prediction about future performance in DA is on the kinds and amount of mediation required and learners' responsiveness to the mediation.

2.3. Mediation

The main and unique feature of dynamic assessment which distinguishes it from traditional non-dynamic assessment is mediation. For Vygotsky (1978) mediation is the main driving force of development. He claimed that the secret of effective learning lies in the nature of the social interaction between two or more people with different levels of skills and knowledge. This involves helping the learner to move into and through the next layer of knowledge or understanding. Individual's performance in cooperation with others is an indication of their future independent performance because when the performance with mediator is internalized they form the individual's abilities. Therefore, mediation is an indispensable part of the procedure to reveal the full range of abilities. Mediation can be defined as the assistance provided to the testees during the assessment session to better understand and more accurately measure the ability of learners and at the same time help them improve abilities within their zones of proximal development (ZPD).

ZPD is considered as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, p.24). ZPD, in fact, captures the learners' cognitive skills that are being matured and this is possible by the assistance of a more skilled person. So to be effective, mediation "must be aimed at those abilities that are in the process of ripening" (Poehner & Lantolf, 2010, p.317).

According to Kozulin & Grab (2002) Vygotsky introduced the following parameters of dynamic assessment: (a) interactivity (b) emphasis on developing functions (c) the gain score based on comparison of the results of aided and independent performance. Poehner (2008, p.15) believes that collaboration with individuals during the completion of assessment tasks is necessary to have a complete picture of their abilities and also extending independent performance to levels they could not reach by themselves. Collaboration with the examinee which is crucial to learning can range from prompts and leading questions to hints and explanations (Poehner, 2005). In DA
an atmosphere of teaching and helping replaces the conventional attitude of neutrality which was prevalent in traditional non-dynamic assessment (Sternberg & Grigorenko, 2002, p.29). Therefore, one of the major roles of the assessor in DA procedure is to identify the participants' actual and potential levels of development in order to provide them with appropriate mediation which may eventually lead to their development. In DA, the relationship between the examiner and examinee is thus transformed, with the examiner intervening during the assessment (Poehner, 2008, p.15). This modified role of the assessor has caused the terms "examiner" and "examinee" to be replaced by "mediator" and "learner".

Dynamic assessment can, therefore, promote learner abilities through appropriate mediation and graded support. Block and Pressley (2002) believe that "instruction should include modeling, scaffolding, guided practice, and independent use of strategies so that students develop an internalized self-regulation of comprehension processes" (p.3).

2.4. Characteristics of Effective Mediations
Not any kind of support, help, or guidance forms the mediation because the mediation should be appropriate in level and type to move learners toward internalization and independent performance. Mediation in DA is defined as any move made by a mediator that focuses on learner development, but Poehner and Lantolf (2005) argue that interactions do not always lead to development.

In order to provide the most effective mediation, mediators' correct and comprehensive understanding of development theories is required. If not the mediation provided to the learner may lead to results other than cognitive or linguistic knowledge or ability development. In some cases false mediations may support the learners affectively which makes them feel good about their performance and has many positive effects on them but mediation which is limited to the interaction with words of encouragement and affective support deviated from original kind of mediation defined in DA does not lead into individuals' cognitive development. The main reason of this unfulfillment is inability of these mediations in explaining the reason of learner performance failure and offering the appropriate remedial instruction for a better performance in future (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005).

Another type of false mediation is in which the focus of mediation is on supporting individuals in getting through the task rather than developing abilities that transcend any later given task. As experienced by everyone many tasks can be completed with others' support and
guidance but the point is that whether the mediation has been of a kind to successfully coconstruct the learners ZPD and result in their cognitive development and independent performance of a similar task which is called transcendence.

To this end responses from teachers should (a) address skills needed to improve learning, (b) encourage greater student awareness of what successful outcome would look like, and (c) provide opportunities to help students become more successful (Grabe, 2008, p.364). The key is not to provide answers but to enhance learning, to work through misunderstandings that are apparent from student performance, to develop effective learning strategies and to encourage student self-awareness and motivation to improve. The appropriate mediation should guide the learner toward autonomy by inviting the individuals to challenge and think on their responses, and discussing the concepts and principles. Mediations should be discussed explicitly and encourage learners to provide reasons for any step taken during task completion procedure. Learner autonomy as the ultimate goal of mediation can be achieved through learner’s ability to develop cognitively and reach to higher order thinking ability. Bloom was the first psychologist to introduce the hierarchy of cognitive development as the basis of identifying educational goals and objectives for teachers. His taxonomy therefore can form the most suitable basis for both mediation and scaffolding.

2.5. Bloom’s Taxonomy
In 1948 Benjamin Bloom the American psychologist defined three domains of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor to be important in the learning process. He provided a taxonomy as a classification of different learning objectives that educators set for students. The subcomponents of his taxonomy are as follows:

2.5.1. The affective domain
This domain is based on feelings, emotions, and attitudes. It focuses on learners’ emotional reactions and emphasizes on feeling others’ joy and pain. Affective domain includes the following five levels from the lowest to the highest.
1. Receiving: This is the most basic level of affection which is limited to passive attention of the learners in order to receive the presented data.
2. Responding: At this level learners not only attend to the stimulus, but also have reactions to them in some way.
3. Valuing: Learners identify a value for the observed objects, events, or received pieces of information.
4. Organizing: Learners order various pieces of information, values, and ideas within their schemas through comparing, linking, and elaboration.
5. Characterizing: The beliefs and values held by learners direct their behaviors and turn to be a characteristic.

2.5.2. The psychomotor domain
This domain is related to physical skills mainly done by body. Psychomotor objectives focus on the development of psychical skills but, unfortunately, no specific subcategory is identified for it by Bloom.

2.5.3. The cognitive domain
Years after presenting the main classification by Bloom, a group of his colleagues headed by Bloom himself investigated the cognitive domain more deeply. They presented their taxonomy of educational objectives as a basis for planning educational objectives, teaching-learning activities and assessment items. This taxonomy can help teachers move their teaching practices in direction of higher levels. Bloom et al. (1956) defined these six levels for the cognitive domain.
1. Knowledge: As the lowest level of cognitive domain, knowledge is defined as just remembering previously learned material without any additional thinking process.
2. Comprehension: It is the ability of the learner to grasp the meaning of the material by explaining, summarizing, or predicting the result.
3. Application: Through application learners use the acquired knowledge in a new situation by applying rules, methods, concepts, principles, laws, and theories in a related situation.
4. Analysis: Analysis includes identifying the component parts of the given material to understand its organizational structure. It is fulfilled through identifying the parts, analyzing the relationship between them and recognizing the principles organizing them.
5. Synthesis: Synthesis is the ability to assemble the constituent parts to form a new whole, the result of which is creative behavior or formulation of a new structure or pattern.
6. Evaluation: Through evaluation learners can judge the value of the presented materials based on some internal or external criteria. This ability is the highest in hierarchy and specifies the ability in the previous five levels as its prerequisite.
Considering the detailed and clear explanation of each hierarchical layer of the taxonomy and focusing on its educational orientation it can be concluded that Bloom’s taxonomy can form the basis of planning educational objectives at various stages from curriculum development to teachers’ actual teaching practice in the classroom and even to its following assessment procedures. Course designers can consider the learners’ developmental stages in preparation of textbooks and developing tasks, teachers can take the advantage of them in their class activities and tasks based on needs of the particular groups of learners and their developmental stage, and testers can have a more vivid and valid picture of learner abilities by developing their test items or assessment tools based on classifications of this taxonomy and even provide a positive washback effect by driving the teaching practices in direction of higher order thinking abilities.

Considering the monoistic approach of dynamic assessment toward teaching and assessment the importance of applying this taxonomy increases even more. Mediations of dynamic assessment, if based on Bloom’s cognitive taxonomy, can lead to the development of higher order thinking abilities and transcendence of them in the learners. Unfortunately, dynamic assessment as a result of its relatively short history in the language assessment has not benefited from theory-driven frameworks in its mediations. The domain of reading competence, on the other hand, has rarely been subject to investigations in the framework of dynamic assessment. Besides, despite the research evidence suggesting that automatic comprehension processes play a critical role in reading success and the acknowledgement that mediation must become efficient, little attention has been devoted to developing instructional and assessment methods that might foster automaticity of comprehension process and autonomy of readers.

There have been a limited number of qualitative and quantitative studies on the effect of DA on reading comprehension (Brown & Palincsar, 1989; Grab & Kozulin, 1998; Kozulin & Grab, 2002; Ajideh, Farrokhhi, & Nourdad, 2012; Ajideh & Nourdad, 2012a & b; 2013); however, as far as the researcher is concerned, there is almost no study on the quality and quantity of appropriate mediations for various reading tasks. The present study as a response to this need in the related literature aimed at taking the cognitive taxonomy of the Bloom as the basis of interactional mediations and finding out to what extent the interaction with readers for various levels of comprehension tasks would be efficient and whether or not these interactions would lead to transcendence in them.
3. Method

3.1. Participants
The participants of the present qualitative study were nine adult male and female EFL learners with high, mid and low proficiency levels. The selection procedure of these participants was as follows: 47 EFL learners who were the researcher’s students at university voluntarily took part in a PBT TOEFL test. These learners were classified into three proficiency levels of high, mid, and low based on their scores. Three learners in each proficiency group were then selected randomly to undergo the mediation sessions and interviews making up the nine participants.

3.2. Instruments
A PBT TOEFL test was used at the beginning of the study to classify the learners into three proficiency levels. Then during mediation sessions appropriate reading comprehension tests were given to the participants based on their proficiency levels. The tests were selected from IBT TOEFL for high group, and from advanced and intermediate levels of reading test books published by National Organization of Educational Testing which conducts university entrance exams in Iran for the other two proficiency groups.

3.3. Research Design
Since dynamic assessment is mainly process-oriented, this study applied qualitative data gathering procedures. And to reach into an in depth understanding of the processes interactionist model of dynamic assessment was used in mediations, interviews, and think-aloud procedures.

3.4. Procedures
PBT TOEFL test was given to a group of 47 EFL learners who were the researcher’s students at university and voluntarily took part in the exam. These learners were classified into three proficiency levels of high, mid, and low based on their scores. Those whose scores were 1SD above and 1SD below the mean score of the test were grouped respectively as high, and low proficiency and the ones with scores between these band scores were those of the mid proficiency.

Each participant had an interview with the researcher during which the nature and purpose of DA were introduced briefly. The participant was then asked to take a reading comprehension tests based on his/her proficiency level. To address particular needs of individual learners the oral mediation provided to the participants was individualized due to ZPD differences among various individuals. Dynamic assessment with interactionist mediations by the researcher herself included five sessions each session lasting 30 to 60 minutes. Each session focused on one layer of Bloom
et al.’s (1956) cognitive taxonomy with the first and second layers combined for the first session. Each participant was required to go through the test as if s/he is doing it by him/herself but utter whatever goes on in the mind. During the first interview this think-aloud procedure was introduced in detailed and modeled to each participant with a two-paragraph text following five multiple-choice comprehension questions. The researcher mediated the participant whenever facing a problem in any stage of comprehension. These mediations were related to general comprehension strategies applicable to various texts regardless of the vocabulary range or grammatical structures of specific texts. Required guidance and support were provided to the learners in any language they preferred. The mediation was limited to development and did not include affective support or task-completion assistance. That is the focus was on developing reading comprehension ability rather than solely aiming at successful task completion. Later the learners were asked to participate in a private interview with the researcher to reflect on the dynamic assessment procedures, and mention their feedback about DA presenting their idea, feelings, and experiences.

All the 45 mediation sessions for the nine participants which included 270 reading comprehension test items were voice recorded, transcribed according to He's transcription conventions (1998, cited in Soria, 2001) and later coded. Cognitive domain of Bloom’s taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1956) was used to categorize the reading comprehension questions. It is one of the three domains that were introduced by Benjamin Bloom in 1950s and has been widely accepted as a guideline in designing reasonable examination questions belonging to various cognitive levels. This taxonomy is very welcomed and widely used in educational fields (Chang & Chung, 2009), constructing questions (Lister & Leaney, 2003), and to ensure balancing and student cognitive mastery (Oliver et al., 2004). Findings of the analysis which identify the amount of learners’ responsiveness to dynamic assessment mediations in each reading task type are provided in the following section.

4. Findings and discussion
The goal of the researcher in this study was to imply dynamic assessment and as a result treat the process of reading as a product. The challenge was to provide the required and appropriate mediation for each reading question to explore a new way of capturing the readers' interactions and processes and retaining them as products. Considering the complexity, uncertainty and representation of multiple realities in reading process, continuous interactions and required
mediations matched to the needs of each reader in specific reading comprehension question were provided. In the case of unsuccessful trials, the assessment included a sequence of mediations with increasing explicitly and well-defined useful strategies which gradually led to the correct answer if it was within the reader’s ZPD.

This study included analysis of 270 reading comprehension items of which 154 items were answered correctly by the participants without any need for mediation. The reasons for correct choices were asked to control guessing or chance factors. Mediations adjusted to the needs of readers were provided for the remaining 116 problematic items. Indeed, not all the mediations provided to the participants resulted in development because due to the nature of the problem in some mediations development was not the case and the focus was just obviating the barriers. These items included the ones with vocabulary items without any clues in the texts for inferring the meaning or items answered wrongly not due to lack of knowledge but as a result of carelessness. In the remaining cases, which made up almost 65 items; however, learners were able to take the advantage of mediations and develop their reading abilities if the task and the provided mediation were within their ZPDs. Transcendence also was not the case in all problematic items because it could only make sense for the items with positive development. Therefore the items with no development or the ones for which development was not possible or meaningful were not considered in transcendence analysis. Table 1 presents the amount of responsiveness to mediations during development and transcendence stages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Learners’ responsiveness to mediations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness to mediation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcendence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As presented in Table 1 in most cases (i.e., 70.77 percent) the mediation resulted in examinee development and only 29.23 percent of the mediations did not lead into internalization of the point. The provided percentages can be indicative of the efficiency of DA in development of reading ability. Also most of the mediated points (i.e., 87.88 percent), led into independent performance of the participants in other similar or even more difficult tasks and only 12.12 percent failed to do so.

Bloom et al.'s taxonomy (1956) was used in this study to distinguish each question type and provide the proper mediation. It is a classification system that identifies different levels of
cognition defining both lower and higher order thinking. It consists of the following six levels: 1. knowledge, 2. comprehension, 3. application, 4. analysis, 5. synthesis, and 6. evaluation. Table 2 represents the percentages of the learners’ responsiveness to mediation in terms of both development in reading comprehension ability during dynamic assessment of each question type and transcendence of the developed ability.

**Table 2 Learners’ responsiveness to mediations in each question type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question type</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th></th>
<th>Transcendence</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Knowledge</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.87</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Comprehension</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13.04</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Application</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15.22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Analysis</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Synthesis</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21.74</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Evaluation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21.74</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>29</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As presented in Table 2 the development and transcendence percentages are almost increasing from lower order question type (1) to higher order question type (6). The reason may be related to the nature of each question type.

Interaction in knowledge questions resulted in 10.87 percent development and 10.34 percent transcendent which are the lowest percentages among question types. Knowledge questions are those that deal with manifesting memory of the learned materials by recalling facts, terms, basic concepts and answers. It includes specific facts or pieces of information provided in the text, the ways and means of dealing with them in categories, hierarchies, sequences, methods, etc., and major principles, generalizations, rules, and structures mentioned explicitly by the author. A question like “Which of the following is NOT mentioned in text?” can be a representative of knowledge type question.

Comprehension questions as the second order questions aim to reflect the reader's understanding of facts and ideas through organizing, comparing, contrasting, linking, giving descriptions and interpreting. A sample comprehension question may be “The primary idea of the passage is …”. Development and transcendence percentages as a result of mediation for these questions were 13.04 and 10.34 respectively which were higher than and equal to the percentages of the first order questions.
Mediations in application questions resulted in better results both in terms of development (15.22 percent) and transcendence (13.79 percent). Application questions require the reader to use the acquired knowledge to provide solutions for problems in new situations. It is fulfilled by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques and rules in new and different ways. A question like “Which of the following facts can be true in this context?” is considered as this kind of reading question.

Analysis questions force the reader to go through the text and break information into parts based on stated or implied reasons or causes. The reader is then to make his/her inferences and identify evidence to support the ideas. Questions such as “What are different types of …” and “Which one is considered as the most efficient one?” are considered as analysis type questions. As a result of interaction percentages of both development (17.39 percent) and transcendence (20.69 percent) were higher than the previous question types.

Synthesis questions make readers compile information together in a new way by combining elements in a different pattern or reaching into new solutions. An example question can be “The mentioned commonly believed idea is rejected by the fact that …”. Mediations for these questions resulted in better development (21.74 percent) than their lower order questions but the transcendence percentage (17.24 percent) was lower than that of analysis question type. It indicates that the participants were not that much autonomous in applying the appropriate strategies for synthesizing the provided information in later similar tasks by themselves without mediation.

Development rate in evaluation questions was the same as synthesis questions and the highest (21.74 percent) but transcendence of these questions was the highest among all question types (27.59 percent). In evaluation questions the readers are to identify and criticize opinions by making judgments about information and validity of ideas not on personal taste but based on a criteria or evidence provided by the author. A question like “What is most probable about this issue?” is considered as an evaluation type.

All in all as presented the effects of mediations were more articulated in difficult questions than in easy ones. The degree of development in reading comprehension ability was higher in higher order questions than in lower order questions. Mediations provided for higher order questions also resulted in more transcendence than for lower order questions and readers were able to internalize the skills and mechanisms required for higher order thinking questions and to use them in other similar reading questions with no need for any further mediation.
The findings of this study can be interpreted in several ways. First the lower development and transcendence percentages of easier questions can be attributed to the less need for mediation in these questions. That is even students with poor reading comprehension skills were able to answer concert questions of knowledge and comprehension type because the answers to these questions are almost explicitly presented by the author and readers can recall them or easily find the required details in the text. As the most basic reading ability finding the stated information is usually less difficult for readers. However, the number of readers having difficulty in summarizing information, comparing and contrasting the pieces of information provided in different parts of the text, using new information to make inferences and reach into new conclusions, identifying the totality of the concept provided in the text, distinguishing opinions from facts, identifying the author’s tone, perspective, and view, also realizing basics in the written material are normally higher. These reading questions are usually difficult for most readers and in cases impossible to answer. Therefore, the number of readers benefiting from mediations in terms of development and transcendence is higher for these question types.

The second aspect can be related to the nature of the questions and the value of the provided mediations. In higher order thinking questions readers go beyond rote memorization of facts and knowledge. They are actively doing something different with the acquired facts. They attempt to understand the text deeply and view the information from a new perspective. To answer higher order questions, readers have to manipulate the text, find connections between facts, and combine the pieces in various ways applicable in multiple problems to find new solutions. These question types required not only knowledge and understanding of the text which is a prerequisite for lower order questions, but also making sense of the read text and using the new information to make sense of the world through analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Unlike the first reason which deals with the number of required and possible mediations, here the success of mediation in relation to question type is considered. As the reading questions become more demanding the readers try to take the most advantage of the mediations. They consider the provided cognitive guidance carefully and try to develop proper responses both in the given question and later coming questions of the same nature. The result is therefore more development and transcendence in highly complex and difficult questions after mediation.

The third explanation can be related to the processes and strategies undertaken in answering the question by poor and successful readers. Since successful readers are more familiar with
cognitive, metacognitive, and socioaffective strategies of language learning in general and reading comprehension in specific, mediations provided to them is more in line with their previous experience and more familiar to them and are therefore more rapidly decoded and applied by them than by poor readers. The results will consequently be more flourishing in terms of both development and transcendence for higher order questions which are answered mainly by successful readers.

The last reason for the findings is rooted in the Feurstein’s (1990) criteria for selection of assessment tasks. According to him the selection of assessment task is based on the assumption that generally tasks are divided into two major types based on the resources required for solving them. The first type tasks are those that mainly depend on more concrete and conservative functions such as memory, automatized skills and background knowledge. The second type tasks are those performing of which depends on learners’ cognitive strategies. These two task types can be parallelized with Bloom et al.’s (1956) six level categorization of thinking applied in this study. The success of mediation in higher order questions can be attributed to the learners’ cognitive strategies required in performing these tasks. Because according to Feurstein (1990) the tasks of second type appear to properly fit into mediations of dynamic assessment.

As explained in findings the flexible nature of dynamic assessment made it possible to capture unanticipated outcomes. As Stake (1979) rightly puts it, traditional tests are insensitive to much of the issues educationally important especially with regard to teaching purposes. In this study the nature of the readers’ involvement in reading process, their responses to mediations in various reading comprehension questions as they were creating, inhabiting, and maneuvering within the text worlds were analyzed. It was revealed that the higher the cognitive level of the task, the more the improvement on that task. The researcher was able to mediate the rules and strategies for solving specific problems on an individual basis, and assess the level of development as well as transcendence to other similar tasks with an increased level of complexity, novelty, and abstraction. And the success of mediations were more for higher order question types.

Unlike passive acceptance of a reader’s disability in non-dynamic assessment, dynamic assessment considered the complexity of the reading process, emphasized on cognitive aspects of reading and through appropriate mediations made active modifications and proved to be successful in revealing the readers' disabilities in various question types and developing learning and thinking skills on the one hand and problem solving ability on the other hand. Due to its inherent nature DA
managed to assess the cognitive process of reading comprehension at both micro and macro levels. At micro level which dealt with the surface structure (to use Chomskian terms) of the comprehension the scope was mainly intrasentential or between a limited number of adjacent sentences. It mainly dealt with facts or ideas presented by words of a single sentence. At macro level which was totally intersentencial and required inferring, deep structure (again borrowing Chomskian terminology) of the comprehension was considered. At this level the readers’ attempt to connect several ideas presented across the test and applying background knowledge to complete the missing pieces of the comprehension puzzle were assessed. Providing appropriate and efficient mediations within dynamic assessment of reading requires analyzing the above mentioned micro and macro level cognitive processes and considering priority of the readers’ needs at these levels to reach into both assessing and instructional goals in a more direct way within less lime. All these findings prove high instructional value of the DA reflecting that it can enhance the delivery of instruction in learner populations.

The results of after mediation interviews indicated that DA encouraged the participants’ self-awareness, control of learning to read for comprehension and motivation to improve. In line with Grabe’s (2008) idea on the great power of reading assessment in informing researchers, teachers, and policy makers, a kind of task analysis was conducted in this study through transparent body of dynamic assessment and the results reflected DA as an appropriate instructional method for the complex nature of reading comprehension which can help language teachers, teacher educators, curriculum developers and material designers to be more sensitive to the needs of learners and goals of educational institute. Because this assessment type has the great ability of transforming the covert aspects of cognitive ability which are usually lost between the lines of text into overt and identifiable ones. It not only evaluates ultimate performance of the participants, their skill knowledge, and learning potential, but is also beneficial in supporting and improving reading abilities especially for cognitively higher order questions. It can identify the conditions under which improvement can be made through activating and applying effective reading strategies.

Results of DA can provide during assessment information as a major source of teaching and fostering learning in terms of level of learning, rate of learning, and also aspect of learning. Teachers can benefit from these results in identifying the amount and type of cognitive support for academic success of their learners, considering the particular needs of the learners in teaching the skills needed to improve learning, and creating conditions conductive of progress in reading and
overcoming text comprehension problems. This can help them in developing appropriate instructional and assessment materials and methods that leads into learner autonomy which is the concern of the present post method era in the specific domain of reading ability as well as the general domain of language leaning.

To put it in a nutshell, the goal of dynamic assessment is to reveal the readers’ learning potential through an ongoing analysis of the reading process and to formulate optimal educational intervention. The assessor should be sensitive to readers’ underlying potentials, cognitive modifiability, specific needs, problems, questions, responses, pauses, wrong responses and responsiveness to mediation. Reading ability can be fostered with the help of good quality training programs. Readers need to be provided with the most appropriate mediation and learn to apply the acquired points beyond here-and-now given task. The precise differentiation among readers’ responsiveness to various reading questions can very effectively help smooth the process of planning the proportionate remedial tutorials for improving reading ability. Applications of dynamic assessment in reading domain has traditionally focused on mediation sessions which are embedded between a pre- and a post-test. But there has been no priority in the nature of the mediations. With regard to a reader’s responsiveness to hints and feedbacks findings of this piece of research can suggest an arrangement of mediation sessions based on question type so that better results can be achieved in a one session or time-limited train-within-test framework.

5. Conclusion

Content areas such as reading are usually described as “crystallized” (Carroll, 1993) and resistant to short term changes. Considering the complexity of reading process finding relatively immediate solutions for reading comprehension problems can be of great importance. Based on Kozulin and Grab’s (2002) emphasis on the importance of and great demand for domain specific DA in cases such as reading, the prime concern of this study was to investigate the extent of responsiveness of EFL learners to mediations provided through dynamic assessment for different types of reading comprehension questions. The precise differentiation among question types can help smooth the process of planning appropriate remedial tutorials for different individual learners. In fact the basic goal of dynamic assessment is to reveal the hidden aspects of learning processes and potentials in order to formulate optimal educational intervention. Based on these underlying potentials specific
needs of the learners, their cognitive modifiability and responsiveness to mediations and interactions are recognized.

**References**


Title

Contribution of SLA to the Brain Study: A Plausible Look

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Biodata

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Abstract

Presumably, streams of research devoted to the structural change of the brain are voluminous. However, little has been paid to the contribution of second language acquisition (SLA) to the brain study. Although disagreement among SLA experts has frustrated second language (L2) practitioners (Yazan, 2012), this paper proposes that by understanding the stance of SLA in the brain study, L2 teachers can be better able to enhance the effectiveness of their instruction in the classroom. In this regard, the present paper makes an endeavor to reflect upon the contribution of SLA to the brain studies.

Keywords: Bilingualism, Brain, Neuroplasticity, SLA

1. Introduction

Later exposure to SLA is better! It seems a myth to state that early exposure to two languages can cause delay and confusion in SLA. In fact, even being compatible with such a myth results in underestimating the role and stance of SLA in the structure and function of the brain. Werker (2012), in this regard, asserts that there is little evidence of language confusion. Although bilinguals perform the processing of L2 more slowly and make more mistakes than monolinguals,
they show considerable advantages over monolinguals in executive functions (Werker, 2012). Executive function, also known as cognitive control, is an umbrella term for the regulation of cognitive processes, including working memory, reasoning, and problem solving (Elliott, 2003). In fact, the benefits of learning a second language are much broader than simply the ability to speak in another language. As Skehan (1989, cited in MacIntyre, 2003) notes, the idea that one must talk in order to learn a second language has been presupposed yet elusive for researchers.

From the 1970s, SLA, like most human accomplishments, has become a complex phenomenon that cannot be explained by looking only at one aspect of it (Sanz, 2005). Nevertheless, understanding "the epistemological disparity existing in the realm of SLA research contributes to the explanation of the considerable differences in the ways SLA scholars understand how an L2 is learned" (Yazan, 2012, p. 14). In a sense, Yazan goes on to hold that different research orientations in SLA which undergirds the notion of knowing from positivistic to poststructuralist epistemic perspectives leads to the same disparate methodologies in SLA.

Although less has been paid to the contribution of SLA to brain activities, interest in neurolinguistic aspects of SLA is not a recent phenomenon. To several scholars, notably Klein (1998) "second language researchers are bottom dwellers in the language sciences" (p. 529). Klein argues that this low status is not due to the weakness of methodology, but the field rates low because it has nothing to say to people in other areas. Nevertheless, the purpose of the present paper is to create a dialogue about the possible potential contribution of SLA to the brain study. The study takes a somewhat different stance from those studies conducted in the brain field. Mostly, researchers are interested in locating what changes both structurally and functionally in the brain occur when one is learning L2. The present study, in contrast, is keen on investigating what contributions SLA has to brain changes.

2. Theoretical Background

SLA is a deep puzzle that theories and machines struggle to solve. And in the same line, the brain is a complex organ; theories and machines struggle to discover how it works. So much is known about the brain and SLA, but, as to Hatch (1983, cited in Spolsky, 1989, p. 85), "while we have learned to name all the parts [of the brain], we still do not truly understand what happens to language input or how language output is formed". Coltheart (2006) claims that neuroimaging studies about the brain have not provided us with a tool to distinguish between competing
psychological theories. SLA scholars are flooded with neurolinguistic findings difficult to assimilate. Seliger (1982) warns "often guilt for the misapplication of such research must rest with the researchers who present findings as if they are absolute and conclusive and ready for direct application to the language classroom" (p. 307).

2.1. Neuroplasticity of the Brain and SLA

In recent years, neuroscience of SLA has become a heated debate. However, regarding the contribution of SLA to the plasticity of brain hemispheres is less taken heed of. That SLA can contribute to the plasticity of the brain is conceivable (Doidge, 2007; Gur et al., 1999; Mundkur, 2005). Plasticity of the brain refers to the same structural and functional changes in the brain resulted from experience and training (Mundkur, 2005). The question that still remains unanswered is that how SLA contributes to the plasticity of the brain.

Understanding brain plasticity is of considerable interest to both understanding the development of the brain and enhancing insights into the contribution of SLA to the same complex system. The plastic changes in the nervous system, as to Gur et al. (1999), can be investigated from two dimensions: structural and functional. Structurally, what makes the females' brain distinct from males' is that the density of white and grey matters in females' corpus collasum makes the process of language acquisition easier and faster than males (Gur et al., 1999). In this regard, Gur et al. contend that the female brain has a higher percentage of grey matter in the left hemisphere which aids language skills.

From the other side, the functional perspective, investigating brain differences physiologically, maintains that female brains have been found to metabolize glucose at higher rates and to experience greater blood flow in comparison to males (Gurrian & Stevens, 2004, cited in Magon, 2009). Because the structure and function of the human brain is not readily available for empirical studies at the physiological level, there has been amazing growth and vitality in the field of human brain function (Posner & DiGirolamo, 2000).

Tjokro (2010), in this regard, asserts "[brain] hemispheres are shaped by our daily experiences" (p. 83). As to Tjokro, the experience of new word learning shapes the activity of the brain, for instance. Generally speaking, "new word learning is a crucial skill that helps define us as human beings" (Tjokro, 2010, p. 83).

Unfortunately, a few neuroimaging studies, as to Van dent Noort et al. (2010), can be counted regarding the contribution of SLA to brain structural change. Among them we can refer to Mechelli
et al. (2004) and Coggins, Kennedy, and Armstrong (2004). The former (i.e., Mechelli et al.) found structural variations between L1 and L2 individuals in the inferior parietal cortex, while Coggins et al. (2004) observed the structural changes in the L2 learners. Klein (1998) puts forth, "[SLA] status within the various linguistic disciplines is very low" (p. 527). Also, Maftoon, Shakouri, and Nazari (2013) assert "the impact of SLA on human brain organization is poorly studied" (p.36). Still, in the recent decade, several scholars (e.g., Osterhout et al., 2008; Wilson, 2013) make endeavor in order to pave the way towards consolidating the contribution of SLA to the brain. Osterhout et al (2008) indicate that "the brain of an adult L2 learner is a highly dynamic place, even during the earliest stages of L2 learning" (p. 519). And the study of the very complex system entails comprehensive reflection upon what happens to the brain when one learns L2.

Recently, Li, Legault and Litcofsky (2014) carry out a study dealt with how structural neuroplasticity of the brain occurs as a result of SLA. What the research shows is the fact that the brain ability to change occurs in relation to the input received from the environment (Shaw & McEachern, 2012). In fact, the neuroplasticity of brain reduces if the brain is not mediated by experience. As Doidge (2007) puts forth “if we stop exercising our mental skills [for instance], we do not just forget them; the brain map space for those skills is turned over to the skills we practice instead” (p. 59). Marian and Shook(2012) assert that to hold the relative balance between two languages, the bilingual brain focuses on executive functions, a regulatory system of general cognitive abilities that includes processes such as attention and inhibition. Due to the fact that a bilingual person’s language systems are constantly active and competing, that person uses these control mechanisms every time he or she uses the languages. This ceaseless practice makes the control mechanisms stronger and changes the related brain regions.

Regarding SLA, therefore, it is plausible to contend "the more we use and practice the L2 we want to learn, the more brain map space is allocated to it. The less we use our L2, the more brain map space goes to other activities that we practice more" (Maher, 2013). In fact, when SLA occurs, “a learned response… has been built up through the consistent mapping of the same input to the same pattern of activation over many trials” (McLaughlin & Heredia, 1996, p. 214). Also, Li et al. (2014) go on to hold "second language experience-induced brain changes, including increased gray matter density and white matter integrity, can be found in children, young adults, and the elderly; can occur rapidly with short-term language learning or training" (p. 301).
Maftoon et al. (2013) assert that language experience, inevitably, has a tremendous effect on the function of the brain. Put differently, "our brains shape and reshape themselves in ways that depend on what we use them for throughout our lives" (Hawley, 2000, p. 4). In a nutshell, changes in bilinguals' brains are an example of plasticity. In the same line, Li, et al. (2014) are steadfast in their belief that neuroplasticity of brain results from SLA. Schlegel, Rudelson, Tse (2012), also, showed that "white matter reorganizes progressively across multiple sites as adults study a new language" (p. 1664). "Their results indicate that plasticity of white matter plays an important role in adult language learning" (p. 1664).

Although the impact of SLA on the anatomy of the cortex is not yet clearly understood (Richardson & Price, 2009), there appear to be several L2 factors including age of acquisition (Mechelli et al., 2004) and attained proficiency (Perani et al., 1998) that influence cortical differences. Mechelli et al. (2004), having used a whole-brain unbiased technique, known as voxel-based morphometry (VBM), found out that the gray matter density in the left inferior parietal cortex was greater in bilinguals than monolinguals, and that a higher L2 proficiency and an earlier age of acquisition correlated with greater GMD in this region.

2.2. SLA Functions as Software

Seen from this stance, it is a truism that the brain, per se, acts as a hardware system. In effect, any hardware system, itself, cannot be conducive to any change (Maftoon et al., 2013) and function. As to Maftoon et al. (2013) "most of the changes that contribute to the efficiency of brain functioning are because of the employment of an appropriate software" (p. 36). The study done by the writers of Neurolinguistics Approach: A Plausible Paradigm in SLA indicates that SLA, as a software system, can contribute to changes in brain functioning.

The increase in gray matter among bilinguals compared to monolinguals can, also, be a strong evidence that bilinguals take advantage of structural changes (Mechelli et al., 2004). In the study carried out by Kovelman, Baker, andPetitto (2008), the findings indicate that the processing of L1 and L2 occur in much the same tissue. However, the study shows that when an L2 starts learning a language more activity in the right hemisphere bilinguals are reported, especially in the dorso-lateral prefrontal cortex. Nevertheless, one of the central issues that has been criticized by contemporary neurologists is lack of attention given to the right hemisphere (Poeppel & Hickok, 2004; Stowe, Haverkort, & Zwarts, 2005). Presumably, since the right hemisphere does not appear to be doing much more than watching the left one, it needs to be activated (Seliger, 1982). The
research carried out by Genesee (2001) pursues the issue that there is an increase in the activity of right hemisphere in early language learning, but the involvement gets less in later learning. Along the same vein, Wilson (2013) concluded that the SLA can enlarge one's hippocampus, the part of the brain that also helps long term memory forming.

Wilson's study, in line with the findings of several scholars (e.g., Munte, Altenmuller, & Jancke, 2002; Osterhout, et al., 2008), maintains that SLA can change both the function and the structure of the brain. Coggins et al. (2004), also, in the study conducted in order to investigate the structural variations between monolinguals and bilinguals found out that corpus callosum is specifically engaged in the process of SLA. Von Plessen et al. (2002, cited in VandenNoort, et al., 2010) puts forth that the fibers from the language areas in the Wernickes' area which exist in the superior temporal gyrus travel through a specific part of the corpus callosum, namely, the isthmus of the corpus callosum engaged in language processing. Coggins et al. (2004) were among the first to investigate the significant differences in the corpus callosum of monolinguals and bilinguals. In their investigation 19 right-handed male and female teachers participated. There were 12 bilinguals and seven monolinguals. The findings indicated that there is a significant difference in their corpus callosum. On a word, the anterior mid body to total corpus callosum midsagittal area was significantly larger in bilinguals in comparison with that of monolinguals.

It goes without saying that brain neuroplasticity generally decreases as a person gets older; that is, the brain gets less able to change itself in response to experiences. Several studies (e.g., Alladi, et al., 2013) in the field of neurolinguistics suggest that SLA can slow this inevitable age-related cognitive decline or delay the onset of dementia. In the study conducted by Alladi et al. the medical records of 648 Alzheimer's patients in Indian city of Hyderabad were investigated. The findings showed that the bilinguals developed dementia later than monolinguals, by an average of four-and-a-half years.

Neurobiology of bilingualism also shows that SLA increases a person's ability to concentrate. Brain scans of bilingual individuals done by Mechelli et al.(2004) found out that grey matter density in the inferior parietal cortex in the brain left hemisphere is greater. As to Mechelli et al., the density of grey matter is high in people who are more proficient in L2. Although bilinguals have lower formal language proficiency in comparison with monolinguals (e.g., they have smaller vocabularies and weaker access to lexical items), they exhibit enhanced executive control in nonverbal tasks (Bialystok &Craik, 2010). In most cases, bilinguals perform better on tasks, such
as stroop tasks, that need conflict managementskill. In a classic stroop task, individuals usually see a word, and then are expected to name the color of the word’s font. When the color and the word match (i.e., the word “red” printed in red), people correctly name the color more quickly than when the color and the word don’t match. The reason behind this is the word itself (“red”) and its font color (blue) conflict (Marian & Shook, 2012).

In the study done by Garcia-Penton et al. (2014), the anatomical connectivity in early Spanish-Basque Bilinguals and native Spanish monolinguals is investigated. The study, using DTI-based tractography technique and network-based statistics, revealed that the level of connectivity among bilinguals is high. The connectivity in two networks is between, frontal, parietal, and temporal and another involves left occipital, temporal, and parietal regions as well as right superior frontal gyrus. As put by Stein, Winkler, Kaiser, and Dierks (2014), the connectivity in brain networks contributes to the more efficient information flow.

3. Conclusions

The benefits of SLA extend from early childhood to old age. Although bilinguals face certain linguistic limitations (e.g., increased naming difficulties and weaker access to lexical words), L2 learners are associated with improved metalinguistic awareness. Besides, as Winkler, et al. (1999) contend SLA "gives rise to long-term plastic changes of the brain mechanisms of phonetic analysis in adults" (p. 640).

In a sense, the impact of SLA on a person's ability to concentrate, for instance, is highly correlated with higher gray matter volume in the left inferior parietal cortex. Wecertainly hope that all L2 researchers will try to remain abreast of some of the major findings that are being discussed in neurolinguistics, especially those results which may offer keener insights into how language learning might be enhanced and accelerated.That SLA acting as software has a tremendous role on the structure of the brain is plausible; henceforth, it is a myth to state that later exposure to SLA is better. Last but not the least, the brain cannot prescribe what we teach but can illuminate our insights in order to make provisions for individual differences in learning styles by providing alternative grouping arrangements, instructional materials, and so forth.

In a nutshell, what the paper has addressed is the vestiges of change that occur in the brain when one learns L2. Although considerable attention has not been paid to the structural and
functional changes in brain related to SLA, more future studies are needed to strengthen the existing evidence and to directly measure the impact of SLA on the plasticity of brain structure.

More importantly, future studies might be able to address important issues, including, which neural paths do females and males pursue in SLA? Moreover, such a question that entails neuroimaging study reminds us of the study done by Niyogi (2006) that no SLA theory is going to be complete until it can fully incorporate the evolutionary aspects of language learning. Investigating the evolution of a phenomenon entails an optimal period of time. In other words, as to Van dent Noort et al. (2010), neuroimaging studies appear to be conducted in a short period of time result in an imperfectly acquired language knowledge, which again reduces the average fitness. And if the learning period is too long, it reduces the reproduction rate due to learning costs (Komarova & Nowak, 2001, cited in Van dent Noort et al. 2010).

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Title

Chaos/Complexity Theory in Applied Linguistics

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Abstract

One of the reasons for complexity is that language is a complex system consisting of various interrelated and interacting components and also language learning is a complex and unpredictable process. Fortunately, a new concept, complexity science, literally the study of system with multiple interrelated parts is an over-growing approach. Complexity science’s true emergence is with the rise of computers, advances made in mathematics after world war II. On the other hand, some principles of the theory such a dynamical, non-linear development, and self-organization which are in common with those of SLA process will be discussed later in the article.

Keywords: Chaos, Complexity, Applied Linguistics

1. Introduction

It is better to start with answer of a very important question to find what the complexity means and indeed why. There are a lot of reasons to express the reasons for complexity, first of all language is a complex system consisting of various interrelated and interacting components and also language learning is a complex and unpredictable process. Similarly, language teaching is a
complex and dynamic profession requiring knowledge of language, communication, learning process, testing and researching language, etc. consequently, whoever we are: linguists, language learners, language teachers, language testers, syllabus designers, language researchers, etc. We need to know what a complex system is and how it works.

In Applied Linguistics, lack of knowledge of complexity of these different but interrelated areas has resulted in proposing various specified and fragmented and sometimes conflicting theories and approaches of language, language acquisition, and in turn, language testing and research.

2. Conflicting Theories

- Do learners have Chomsky’s built in language acquisition device (LAD)?
- Do learners require Krashen’s (1985) i+1 level of input in order to learn, or perhaps Schmidt’s (1992) noticing?
- Does the brain operate more like a computer, storing and processing information accordingly (McLaughlin & Heredia, 1996)? (non-symbolic theories: PDP, Connectionism, emergentism)
- And what aspect of a language learner (LL) is most appropriate for investigation, their physical brain (psycholinguistics), how they formulate and produce grammar (generative linguistics/syntax), how they conceive of and construct language (cognitive linguistics), how they form meaning (semantics), or the role of context (pragmatics) or society (sociolinguistics)?

As you found SLA approaches are reductionist, atomizing the object of concern and then studying one atom at a time, often through single treatment, pre-testpost-test designs. Identifying the causal factor in SLA e.g., comprehensible input at an i+1 level. Such approaches considered variability as noise or measurement error or attributed it to “outliers.” They treated context as an irrelevant construct, removed from the main action. They failed to observe the dynamicity of processes. They perpetuated the practice of dichotomizing: form versus meaning (a false dichotomy) or social vs. psychological (Larsen-Freeman, 2007).

Fortunately, a new concept Complexity science, literally the study of systems with multiple interrelated parts, is an ever-growing approach being applied to ecology (Wu & David, 2002) and epidemiology (Galea, Riddle, & Kaplan, 2010) to economics (Westerhoff, 2003) and sociology (Hoffer, Bobashev, & Morris, 2009), and many more besides. In addition, over the past 20 years a
steadily increasing load of activity regarding this approach in the field of applied linguistics has
been observed as well.

3. Background of the Theory
Complexity science’s true emergence is with the rise of computers, advances made in mathematics
after World War II. (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron, 2008), leading to catastrophe theory and chaos
theory, as well as work on cybernetics (Wiener, 1948) and artificial intelligence (Ashby, 1960). In
applied linguistics, one of the first published works concerning complex systems was Mohanan’s
(1992) work on emergent complexity in phonological development. A short time later, Larsen-
Freeman (1997) published her seminal paper formally introducing complex systems to the field of
applied linguistics.

4. Principles of the Theory
First of all, defining principles in complexity theory seems really beneficial and indeed crucial.
Complexity is a variety of multiple interconnected parts which connect and interact in different
and changing ways. Secondly, dynamical this is changing over time, becoming rather than being.
As the third principle, Sensitive dependence on initial conditions is one of the most distinctive
characteristics of dynamic systems is their sensitive dependence on the initial condition. In chaos
theory this feature is called the ‘butterfly effect’ and refers to the fact that relatively small
differences in the initial conditions can in theory cause surprisingly large variations on the behavior
of the system. e.g., changing the first items on a test might cause significant changes in test takers’
performance on the test.

Then, the next principle is Non-linear nature of development, non-linear, means that a change
in one element does not produce a proportional change in other elements. In other words, the
resultant system behavior is disproportionate to its causal factors (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron
2008).

After them, one of the other principles is self-organization that refers to ‘the spontaneous
formation of patterns and pattern change in open, nonequilibrium systems. (Piaget’s assimilation
& accommodation). New input destabilizes the system and creates chaos and then the system
attempts to get to a new but balanced status-attractor-through self-organization. And, Attractor
and repeller states which is finding that even in highly complex systems that display a great deal
of variation and change over time, there are times of seeming stability, but if an outside influence, or perturbation, that is sufficiently strong, well-timed, or well-placed enough (within the learner’s ZPD) to disrupt the entire system, subsystems will most often adapt to the change by entering a new attractor state while the overall system ecology remains relatively stable. (Vygotsky’s ZPD). This new state indicates a qualitative shift in the system’s functioning, and, indeed, every dynamic system can be viewed as a series of shifts between periods of stabilization and periods of destabilization (Howe & Lewis, 2005).

In addition, historicity means that complex systems display behavior over a range of timescales. Language learners acquire the ability to communicate not only with other human beings (native speakers, nonnative speakers, students in the same classroom, teachers), but also with imagined and remembered interlocutors (imagined selves in their diaries, imagined and remembered others on line, on face-book, over the phone, constructed others in novels, plays and poems). That is, the learner operates on different timescales: the adult relearns the ways of the child and at the same time learns to become a multilingual adult (Kramsch, 2009). The next one is feedback sensitivity that refers to a specific feature of any system in which the output or the result affects the input of the system, thus altering its operation. A feedback does not greatly influence a linear system, while it can generate major changes in a nonlinear system.

Noise is important. The highly individualistic nature of CCT would suggest that in traditional quantitative statistical methods of data analysis group means and not idiosyncratic details were important. In contrast, in the dynamic systems such details are crucial for the understanding of what really happens. De Bot, Lowie, and Verspoor (2007) also concluded that: “It is very well possible that if we look closely enough, we find that the general developmental stages that individuals go through are much less similar than we have assumed thus far.”

This means, in effect, that what has been considered as ‘noise’ in quantitative studies does matter and should not be eliminated through the quantitative focus on the central tendency at the group level.

5. CCT Resolves SLA Problems

In complex systems, processes are more important than products, for their dynamic nature prevents them from reaching a final state. This characteristic of complex systems questions the possibility of SLA ever reaching a final state, that of the so-called ultimate attainment, or native-likeness.
Rather, complex systems theory views SLA as an ongoing, dynamic and never-ending process. Even the term target language is questioned in a dynamic perspective, for complex systems simply do not have an end-state target.

Fossilization, for instance, may be seen as an attractor. Although demanding a lot of energy, it is always possible to get out of this attractor state. Fortunately, and contrary to what is implied by the jargon fossilization, attractor states are not an end in themselves; they are potentially temporary and transitory. Consequently, it results in interlanguage development which is gradual and, at times, has abrupt changes, which show the (re)structuring attempts of the system through self-organization and/or attractors.

Some attractors for L2 learners might reflect L1 influences (an attractor) or generalizations of L2 rules (an attractor), but they cannot be predicted or explained by these characteristics, for attractors are the result of the constant changes and interactions of each learner’s variables. From a more qualitative approach, research on motivation as part of an ongoing longitudinal study, showed the variation of student motivation in an EFL setting at the university level. From their complexity-based research, the researchers found that many interacting factors, not just one, contributed to change in student motivation. This is not surprising, but supporting language learning as a CCT. A model of LL motivation which captures the dynamic change exhibited by learners was made by Csizér, Kormos, and Sarkadi (2010).

Looking at past research on Critical Period, we find a lot of noise in the results and not enough empirical research supporting the existence of a critical period. Because of the interaction of a host of internal and external factors and conditions, our parallel chronological, biological, and cognitive ageing/development can be seen as the most complex system dynamics in the whole SLA domain, characterized by a great deal of seemingly unpredictable individual-level variation.

Therefore; a basic premise of CCT is that in complex systems nothing is permanent or absolute, and even seemingly solid equilibrium states are changeable as they can be moved from their preferred positions by a large enough push. The ‘younger-is-better’ tendency is not only cancelled out but is completely reversed under certain environmental conditions (by changing the learning context from naturalistic SLA to formal school learning) (Dornyei 2009).

A dynamic systems approach seems attractive in that it is able to accommodate several of the issues concerning individual differences namely their lack of stability, their context dependence,
their genetic base, their multicomponential nature, and their multiple interactions with each other and the environment, resulting in non-linear dynamics.

6. CCT in language classroom
From CCT’s perspective the language classroom highlights interaction across interconnected levels of organization – from individual minds up to the socio-political context of language learning – and interconnected timescales – from the minute-by-minute of classroom activity to teaching and learning lifetimes.

In class, the language that is the aim and content of instruction is a moving target for learners. Moving targets are difficult to hit, so students must be assisted in several ways so that they can cope with the dynamism and complexity of the target language through the provision of feedback – implicitly or explicitly, through teacher-initiated, peer-initiated or self-initiated means, in a manner that is affectively and socially supportive while being judiciously targeted. Intervention to increase learning is a perturbation to a system stuck in an unhelpful attractor, attempting to move it into new paths on its landscape of potential.

7. CCT and Critical Applied Linguistics
CCT challenges the excessive emphasis placed on individual, competitive performance in the name of freedom and democracy. It also challenges the increasing pressure to standardize the criteria of performance for greater economic profitability and for greater control of the workforce, in the name of efficiency and productivity. Complexity theory also presents a threat to a scientific community in search of credibility and legitimacy. While it enhances the validity of SLA research, it makes the findings of such a research less reliable and ultimately less predictable because it makes it more difficult to isolate variables and to establish causal relationships between the phenomena under study.

8. CCT and Research
The issue of cause–effect relationships: within a dynamic systems framework there are no simple cause–effect explanations between variables examined in isolation, which is a common focus in most quantitative applied linguistic research. As Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) emphasize, dynamic systems are by definition not fully predictable and, therefore, rather than pursuing a
reductionist agenda, the processes of self-organization with regard to the whole of the interconnected system should be emphasized.

Focus on context and environment: we have seen above that CCT takes a socially grounded approach in which neither the internal development of the organism nor the impact of the environment is given priority in explaining behavior and its change—the context is part of the system (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2008). Accordingly, research paradigms need to extend beyond focusing merely on the L2 learner and his/her L2 learning achievement so that we can also gain adequate measures of the role of the context and the environment.(3) Qualitative research is particularly useful for the ‘longitudinal examination of dynamic phenomena’ (Dörnyei 2007) (language development is longitudinal); and (4) Qualitative research takes an individual-level analysis.

For these reasons, Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) conclude that ‘In many ways, qualitative research methods, such as ethnography, would appear to serve the understanding of language as a complex dynamic system.’ providing a ‘thick description’ by also offering analysis and explanation.

Focus on mixed methods research: mixed methods research, that is, the meaningful combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, offers a new strand of research methodology that suits the multi-level analysis of complex issues, because it allows investigators to obtain data about both the individual and the broader societal context. (For an example of a mixed-methods study of dynamic L2 development, see Larsen-Freeman 2006.)

Focus on longitudinal research: Menard (2002) argues that longitudinal research should be seen as the default when we intend to examine any dynamic processes in the social sciences. Such dynamic processes are obviously involved in human learning/growth or social change, but they can also be associated with various interactions of different levels of an issue (e.g. Intra and inter, micro and/or macro) or of different types of variables (e.g. learner traits and learning task characteristics).

9. Conclusion
CCT perspective on the limited end state typical of adult L2 learners results from dynamic cycles of language use, language change, language perception, and language learning in the interactions of members of language communities (Ellis, 2008). Any new language learning, teaching,
research, use, identity, and Needs Analysis model should at least account for the dynamicity, non-linearity, complexity, both locality and universality of the language development. In other words, a theory about theory-meta-theory like CCT.

As language teachers:
1. We need to cater for the jargon of “multiple” multiple intelligences, multi-literacies, multilingualism, multiculturalism and multiple critical periods in our syllabus design, teaching and assessment.
2. Our input should be well-placed, well-timed, and strong enough, i.e., within ZPD.
3. We need to use different mediation and scaffolding mechanisms like teacher, peer, and artifacts, maximum use of the ecology principles.
4. Dynamic assessment system (testing & teaching simultaneously) should be employed.
5. Teachers need to expand their knowledge of applied linguistics, psychology, sociology, neuroscience, and communication and information technology.
6. Teachers should develop and establish the most powerful attractor for the system and that attractor I think should be transforming self and community- self-actualization.

We think the theories and models which account for complexities of human mind, brain, and behavior should be applied to study natural sciences not vice versa

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Title

Bilingual vs. Trilingual; The Case of Learning Strategy Use in an EFL Context

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Abstract

Learning strategies have been extensively studied before, but it seems that the difference between bilingual and trilingual learners of English in the use of such strategies has not been appropriately investigated so far. A total number of 64 Iranian undergraduate learners of English as a foreign language, selected using convenience sampling took part in the present study. From among them, 33 learners (12 male and 21 female with a mean age of 20.43) were learning English as their second language with Persian being their L1 or mother tongue. For the other 31 learners (13 male and 18 female participants with a mean
age 21.26) Persian was their L2 with Kurdish or Azari being their mother tongue, making English their third language. Oxford’s (1990) 50-item Likert scale Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was used for data collection. The results of the analysis revealed that the two groups significantly differed from each other in the use of all types of strategies, with trilingual reporting significantly more uses of all learning strategies examined by SILL. However, for both groups, metacognitive and social strategies were the most commonly used strategies. Learners for whom English is the third language seem to already have more opportunities to practice such strategies when learning their second language. As a result, their strategic competence has already been sufficiently developed and they are quite experienced in facing the problems they may face during the process of learning a third language.

Keywords: Bilingual, Trilingual, Learning Strategy, SILL

1. Introduction

Until the mid-1970s, the primary focus of research in applied linguistics and education was the classroom-based language teaching methodology, with the possible significance of alternative learning contexts and individual learner variables such as motivation, learning style, and language learning strategies being largely overlooked. Since the mid-1970s, there has been a shift of focus from methods and products of language teaching to language learners, with an increase in the line of scientific inquiry into how language learners process, store, retrieve, and use target language materials. One dimension of this inquiry involved attempts to discover how language learners could manage their own learning and the strategies they employed as a means of enhancing their target language competence (Hurd & Lewis, 2008).

Researchers in Iran have conducted numerous studies on the language learning strategies (Alavi & Kaivanpanah, 2003; Riazi & Rahimi, 2005; Yamini & Dehghan, 2005; Ziahossein & Salehi, 2008; Zare & Nooreen, 2011), but they mainly focus on the links between strategy use and gender, success, language proficiency, motivation, etc. and very few studies so far, to the best of the researchers’ knowledge, have addressed the type of strategies preferred by bilingual and trilingual students. Hence, considering the limited number of studies on contrasting language learning behaviors and thoughts of bilingual and trilingual learners and due to the fact that a great number of students attending Iranian universities are bilingual EFL learners, there is a need for
information on how instruction in English is best facilitated for bilingual and trilingual groups of learners. Thus, the present study attempted to cast light on this issue by addressing the gap felt in the literature.

The findings of the present can contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the variables affecting learners’ choice of strategies in the EFL context. Moreover, the results of the present study can help teachers and practitioners improve their teaching methods, develop appropriate teaching methodologies, and raise their awareness of their language learners’ strategy use and needs in order to be able to facilitate the language learning process more effectively.

In so doing, the following research questions were posed:

1. Is there any significant difference between Iranian learners of English as the second and third language in terms of employing language-learning strategies?
2. Is there any significant difference among the Iranian learners of English as the second language in employing language learning strategies?
3. Is there any significant difference among the Iranian learners of English as the third language, in terms of employing language learning strategies?

2. Review of the Related Literature

Learning strategies and learner strategies as two key variables affecting language learning are no longer new terms to many teachers and educators. Today, learning strategies are becoming widely recognized through education in general and language learning in particular. These strategies are "specific behaviors or thought processes" (Oxford, 1990a) that language learners can employ to promote their language learning. Learning strategies are defined as “specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task used by students to enhance their own learning” (Scarcella& Oxford, 1992, p. 63). Oxford (1990) believes that appropriate language learning strategies enhance proficiency and boost learners’ self-confidence. According to her, language learning strategies are among the main factors helping to determine how and how well our language learners learn a second or foreign language (Oxford, 2003). Therefore, to promote students’ language learning and to facilitate learner autonomy, language-learning strategies are key factors for teachers and instructors which should receive enough attention. Chamot (2005, p. 112) defines learning strategies broadly as “procedures that can facilitate a learning task.” According to Chamot,
strategies are most often “conscious and goal-driven, especially in the beginning stages of tackling an unfamiliar language task” (p. 112, 2005). In a rather similar vein, Cohen (2012) defined language learning strategies as “thoughts and actions, consciously chosen and operationalized by language learners, to assist them in carrying out a multiplicity of tasks from the very onset of learning to the most advanced levels of target-language performance” (p. 136).

Different lists and taxonomies of strategies have been developed as a result. O’Malley and Chamot’s (1985) distinction between metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective strategies, and Oxford’s (1990a) *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (SILL), which consists of two different but related groups of strategies; direct strategies (memory, cognitive and compensation strategies) and indirect strategies (metacognitive, affective and social) are among the most famous and commonly used typologies in the literature. Chamot (2005) argues that most descriptive studies have been based on Oxford’s (1990a) classification. More recently, Cook (2008) stated that SILL is a benchmark for strategies research for many years. Hence, Oxford’s classification of learning strategies as an instrument has been extensively used to gather data on large numbers of language learners (see Cohen, Weaver, & Li, 1998; Olivares-Cuhat, 2002; Oxford, 1990; 1996; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995; Wharton, 2000). Based on Oxford and Crookall’s classification (1989, p. 404), these strategies can be described as follows:

- **Cognitive Strategies**: skills that involve manipulation or transformation of the language in some direct way through reasoning, analysis, note taking, functional practice in naturalistic settings, formal practice with structures and sounds, etc.
- **Memory Strategies**: techniques to help store new information in memory and retrieve it later.
- **Compensation Strategies**: behaviors used to compensate for missing knowledge of some kind such as guessing while listening or reading, or using synonyms or circumlocution while speaking or writing.
- **Metacognitive Strategies**: behaviors used for centering, arranging, planning, and evaluating one’s learning. These strategies are used to provide “executive control” over the learning process.
- **Affective Strategies**: techniques like self-reinforcement and positive self-talk which help learners gain better control over their emotions, attitudes, and motivations related to language learning.
Social Strategies: actions involving other people in the language learning process. Examples are questioning, cooperating with peers, and developing empathy.

Supporting the importance of learning strategies, Chamot (2005) maintains that learning strategies in second language learning are important for two major reasons. First, by examining the strategies used by language learners during the language learning process, we gain insights into the metacognitive, cognitive, social, and affective processes involved in language learning. The second reason supporting research into language learning strategies is that we can teach less successful language learners new strategies, thus helping them become better language learners.

Today, many experts believe that language learners could benefit from employing strategies to compensate for what they do not know or are unable to perform in the process of language learning. More recently, Goh (2013) asserts that by employing strategies language learners can attain their learning potential and become individuals who could learn and use language flexibly and independently. Goh (2013, p. 69) further adds that by employing strategies, “language learners could become more self-regulated in their own learning by making decisions about how and when to plan, monitor, and evaluate what they learn and the ways they learn”.

A number of studies have also been carried out regarding Iranian learners’ use of learning strategies. However, they reported radically different results. Amini Farsani, Nikoopour and Neishabouri (2011) found out that Iranian EFL learners preferred to use metacognitive strategies more frequently than other types of strategies. Mahbudi, Shokrpour, Rafatbakhsh, and Mahbudi (2013) reported that Iranian EFL learners preferred to use cognitive strategies more frequently with affective strategies being the least frequently used strategy. In another study among Iranian learners, Rizaei and Rahimi (2005) observed that the proficiency level and motivation were major predictors of the use language learning strategies. They also reported that the difference between learners’ use of SILL’s six major strategy types was found significant. In a comparative study between successful and unsuccessful Iranian EFL students, Gerami and Ghareh Baighlou (2011) reported that successful EFL students often used metacognitive strategies whereas unsuccessful EFL students tended to use surface level cognitive strategies. Their study also showed that the Iranian EFL students used affective strategies least frequently. In a more recent study, Qasimnejad and Hemmati (2014) found evidence for differences between monolinguals and bilinguals in terms of learning language use. They reported that monolingual Persian and bilingual Azari-Persian EFL students employed a variety of language learning strategies when learning English. As a result, a
great need is felt for having more studies being carried out to examine the type of learning strategies Iranian learners use in general and bilingual and trilingual learners’ of English use in particular. The present study was an attempt to address this gap.

3. Method

3.1. Participants
A total number of 64 Iranian learners of English as a foreign language took part in the present study. They were all undergraduate students of English Language Teaching (TEFL) studying at Islamic Azad University in Tehran, Iran. They were selected using convenience sampling. From among them, 33 learners were learning English as their second language with Persian being their L1 or mother tongue. For the other 31 English learners, Persian was their L2 with Kurdish or Azari being their mother tongue, making English their third language. The bilingual group consisted of 12 male and 21 female participants with a mean age of 20.43 (Range = 19-24, SD = 1.63). The trilingual group was comprised of 13 male and 18 female participants with an age range of 19 to 25 (Mean = 21.26, SD = 1.81).

3.2. Instrumentation
Oxford’s (1990) 50-item Likert scale Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was used for data collection. SILL asks learners to react to a series of five-point Likert scale strategy descriptors by indicating the frequency with which they use such strategies. Respondents’ answers could range from ‘never or almost never’ (representing the score of 1 in the data analysis) to ‘always or almost always’ (represented by the score of 5 in the data analysis). This questionnaire consists of six subcomponents, with each component being examined by a number of items: Memory strategies (9 items), Cognitive strategies (14 items), Compensation strategies (6 items), Metacognitive strategies (9 items), Affective strategies (6 items), and Social strategies (6 items). According to Oxford and Ehrman (1995), the internal consistency of SILL is usually found to be above .90. In the present study, the Cronbach’s alpha was observed to be .914.

In addition, SILL was accompanied by another questionnaire collecting data on learners’ demographical information including their age, sex, mother tongue, language used at home, and the language used in interaction with friends.

4. Results and Discussion
The first research question was about whether there were any significant differences between the two groups of participants (bilingual and trilingual) in the frequency with which they used each learning strategy type when learning English. The descriptive statistics of learners’ reported use of each strategy type, presented in Table 1, revealed that Iranian learners’ of English as their third language generally used each strategy type more frequently.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Two Groups’ Use of Learning Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy type</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>Bilinguals</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trilinguals</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Bilinguals</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trilinguals</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>Bilinguals</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trilinguals</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>Bilinguals</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trilinguals</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>Bilinguals</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trilinguals</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Bilinguals</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trilinguals</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, in order to check whether the observed differences could reach statistical significance, a number of independent samples t tests were run. The results of this analysis revealed that the two groups significantly differed from each other in the use of all types of strategies, with trilinguals reporting significantly more uses of all learning strategies examined by SILL: Memory strategies, \( t (62) = -3.02, p = .00 \); Cognitive strategies, \( t (62) = 6.07, p = .00 \); Compensation strategies, \( t (62) = -4.75, p < .005 \); Metacognitive strategies, \( t (62) = -4.30, p < .005 \); Affective strategies, \( t (62) = -4.33, p < .005 \); and Social strategies, \( t (62) = 2.41, p = .02 \). Table 2 presents the results of the comparison of the two groups.

Table 2. Results of the Independent Samples T Tests
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's Test</th>
<th>t-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>1.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>1.967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>2.363</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next research question addressed the question whether each group of participants had a particular interest in the use of one or some particular strategy types, or all strategy types were used similarly by each groups. To answer this question, two one-way repeated measure ANOVAs were run among different strategy types reported by each group of learners. In the case of the Iranian monolingual learners of English, the result of the repeated measure ANOVA was found statistically significant for Time, Wilk’s Lambda = .66, F (5, 28) = 2.89, p = .03, multivariate partial eta square = .34, indicating that bilingual learners had a particular interest in and preference for some types of strategies over the other types, entailing the use of post hoc analysis. The pairwise comparison showed the existence of a significant difference in the frequency of use only between Metacognitive strategies and affective strategies.

As in the case of Iranian monolingual learners of English, the bilingual learners showed a significant difference in their interest in the use of different types of learning strategies, Wilk’s Lambda = .38, F (5, 26) = 8.38, p < .005, multivariate partial eta square = .62. Memory strategies...
were found to be significantly different from Cognitive, Metacognitive, and Social strategies, and Metacognitive strategies were found to be statistically significant from Affective strategies.

It was observed that those learners for whom English was their third language reported significantly more uses of learning strategies in comparison with the monolingual learners of English. In addition, both groups of learners were found to prefer some types of strategies over the other types, i.e. they used some of them significantly more than others. Learners of English as second language reported making more uses of metacognitive and social strategies, with the rest of the strategies being used almost similarly. Likewise, metacognitive and social strategies were the most commonly used types of learning strategies by learners of English as their third language with memory and affective strategies being the least frequently used types of strategies for them (See Table 1).

The fact that bilingual learners of English were observed to make more use of learning strategies than monolinguals may stem from different variables. However, it seems that the main reason must be the previous experience and background of learning another language, in this case Persian language, before attempting to learn English. It is argued that strategies are formed and mastered in an individual’s L1 acquiring. However, learners need to be made conscious about using such strategies in the L2 learning context, and they should be given opportunities to practice them in L2 in order to be able to develop their strategic competence (Dornyei, 1995). Therefore, it seems plausible to conclude that learners for whom English was their third language have already had more opportunities to practice such strategies when they were learning their second language. Their strategic competence had already been sufficiently developed and since they had already gone along the way from their L1 to L2, they were quite experienced in facing the problems they had during the process of learning an L2. As a result, they had learned how to deal with the problems they may face during the learning process. They have devised and developed their repertoire of strategies to enhance their learning.

However, for those learners for whom English is the second language, the problems they face in the learning process sound quite new and they need to cope with them using a trial and error approach. They have not fully developed their repertoire of strategies yet, and for those strategies they have already developed knowledge of, their use is far from being automatic. Still they need more opportunities to practice those strategies to be able to automatically resolve their learning problems when they arise.
The next point concerns the most and the least frequently used types of strategies by each group. Interestingly enough, the most frequently used strategies for both groups were the metacognitive and social strategies. While metacognitive strategies address the whole process of learning by doing planning for and evaluating one’s learning, social strategies involve others such as the peers and interlocutors in the learning process (Oxford, 1990). Based on the definition of different learning strategies, it seems logical to state that these two strategy types and more specifically the metacognitive strategies have a central role in the learning process, determining the success of the learner. While metacognitive strategies determine the success of the learning process, the social strategies decide and judge the success of demonstrating one’s learning outcomes as they involve interaction with others and showing what one has already mastered and is able to make use of. The metacognitive strategies seem to play a central role in one’s internal processes of learning and social strategies appear to be concerned with the processes, which involve one’s external image of learning in the form of success in interacting with others. As such, it seems that both groups of learners have truly recognized the importance of each and have done their best to make the best use of those aiding tools, with bilinguals managing to outperform the monolinguals in this case.

5. Conclusion

Regarding the least frequently used strategies, both groups were found to use affective strategies the least frequently. Affective strategies involve gaining control over one’s emotions, attitude, and motivation in the learning context. This could indicate that learners may have not still mastered such strategies sufficiently because they need more time to find their way into one’s repertoire of strategies. Affective factors are known to be the most influential variables in learning an L2 (Krashen, 1985), gaining control over which takes a lifetime. Therefore, both groups were observed to make less use of them in comparison with other types of strategies, though still the bilinguals could use them significantly more.

5.1. Findings

It seems that while both monolingual and bilingual learners of English use the same strategies in learning English as their L2 and L3, respectively, the frequency with which they use such strategies can significantly differ from each other, with the bilinguals making significantly more use of them. This can be mainly due to their experience in dealing with common problems in second language learning and developing their repertoire of strategies as a result. It must be noted that the results
of the present study can be generalized only to the learners at the intermediate proficiency level. Learners of different proficiency levels may be observed to use different strategies.

5.2. Suggestions for Further Research

The participants of the present study were undergraduate students of TEFL, who might have been somewhat familiar with the notion of learning strategies as part of their education in TEFL. Therefore, some of what they reported as their frequency of strategy use might be due to their being conscious about such a notion. Other studies may find their frequency of use slightly lower or at least different, but since this was the same for both groups of participants, it cannot question the general pattern of results observed in this study. More importantly, it could be a good idea to examine other factors that could be involved in the use of strategies especially those variables under the category of individual differences including age, motivation, attitude, and other affective factors.

References


Title

Iranian EFL Teachers’ Attitudes towards Implementing Computer Assisted Language Learning in Writing Classes

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Abstract

Writing in a foreign language is one of the most difficult tasks which requires considerable efforts and practice. It seems that traditional approaches cannot help learners reach an acceptable level of writing. Therefore, the need for educational changes in teaching approaches is felt. As one of these changes, using computer in teaching writing is referred to. Since teachers’ attitudes can have a great impact on success or failure of such a reform, studying their beliefs is necessary. This study investigated the Iranian EFL teachers’ attitudes about applying technology in writing classes. The specific aim was to study teachers’ personal principles and practices in their own teaching contexts particularly writing classes. To reach this aim, a teacher attitude questionnaire developed by Thitirat Suwannasom (2012), was administered to 30 EFL teachers with teaching experiences from 1 to 29 years from Gachsaran high schools, Kohgiluye and Boyerahmad, Iran. Also, an open-ended interview was conducted to the same participants. After calculating the percentage and frequency as the statistical analysis method, it was revealed that teachers’
attitudes and their different roles influence using technology in teaching writing in EFL context positively. The result of this study was beneficial for EFL teachers and learners.

**Keywords:** Teachers’ Attitudes, Computer Assisted Language Learning, EFL Context, Writing Classes

1. Introduction

Today we are witnesses to application of computers in our lives and we know that this electronic device has been changed into a valuable object. These days we can find computers everywhere around us. In fact, modern world will be incomplete without computers and their applications. It is almost impossible to even imagine the modern facilities without the use of computers. As such, computers can be considered as a unique tool in human life history.

Presently due to the triumphal entry of computers into education system, they have changed into a brilliant aid in teaching. Instruction by means of this new teaching aid is a method which needs to be studied, analyzed and interpreted in real contexts. Every day we can see the increasing number of teachers who have the tendency towards the use of new technologies in their classrooms.

The adoption of technology into the education has often been premised on the potential of the new technological tools to revolutionize an outmoded educational system, better prepare students for the information age and accelerate national development efforts (Pelgrum, 2001).

One of the needs of all people is the need to write for different reasons. For example, communicating with a friend, writing to or for a magazine, preparing information and so on. Writing is generally a group of letters or symbols written or marked on a surface as a means of communication (Collins, 2003). This definition suggests that writing is the activity of producing a piece of written language which is more than being a matter of transcribing language into symbols, but it is used for communication. In terms of pedagogy, writing is a central element in the language teaching as students need to write down notes and to take written exams. Harmer (2004) agrees that writing should be learned because it could not be naturally acquired like speaking, though, he provides more reasons to teach writing for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners which include reinforcement, language development, learning style and more importantly, writing as a skill in its own right.

In this research, the researchers focus on using technologies to teach this important skill. New digital media have played an important role in the teaching of writing, through both the cognitive
era that began in the 1980s, in which word processing was emphasized as a tool for revision (Pennington, 1993) and the socio cognitive era that began in the 1990s, in which computer-mediated communication was emphasized as a tool of social construction of meaning (Kern & Warschauer, 2000). “The advantage of computer-based writing instruction for students is that they can practice writing often. They can interact with each other through the Internet and develop mutual communication and understanding” (Cheng, Chen & Lee, 2007, pp. 225-244).

The present research explores teachers’ attitudes towards using technology in teaching writing. The decision regarding whether and how to use computer technology for instruction rests on teachers’ shoulders. If we are to achieve fundamental changes in classroom teaching practices we need to examine teachers themselves and the beliefs they hold about teaching, learning and computer technology. Full integration of technology into educational system is a distant goal unless there is reconciliation between teachers and computers (Pourhossein, 2012). To understand how to achieve integration, we need to study teachers and what makes them use computers (Marcinkiewics, 1993).

This study is going to answer the following questions:
1. How can EFL teachers’ attitudes about the use of technology in EFL writing instruction be important?
2. In what ways can teachers’ roles in computer assisted instruction impact the learners’ writing ability?

2. Review of the Related Literature
As computer assisted language learning (CALL), technology-based language teaching, teachers’ attitudes towards this kind of language teaching, benefits of technology uses in EFL writing classes and at last teachers’ roles in this area are the key concepts in the present study, the researchers point to the related studies.

2.1 Computer Assisted Language Learning
CALL as a whole has been concisely defined as “The search for and study of applications of the computer in language teaching and learning” (Levy, 1997: p. 1). CALL embraces a wide range of information and communication technology applications and approaches to teaching and learning foreign languages, from the traditional drill and practice programs that characterized CALL in the
1960s and 1970s to more recent manifestation of CALL, e.g. as used in virtual learning environments and web-based distant learning.

2.2 Technology-based Language Teaching

One of the main sectors of any society is education. These days it is tried to transform technology projects into this important sector. As a reason for this transformation, teaching English language easier and more effective is referred to. According to Singhal (1997), technology and English language education are related to each other. One of these projects that can be integrated into teaching is smart school projects. “The aim of using technology in schools is preparing children for the information age” (Smart School Project Team, 1997. p.10).

Wernet, Olliges and Delcath (2000) believe that technology-enhanced education is becoming an increasingly important part of higher and professional education. Crystal (2001) indicates that technology-based language teaching offers all students opportunities to learn in ways not previously possible. Its innovations have gone hand-in-hand with the growth of English and are changing the way in which we learn. Technology not only gives learners the opportunities to control their own learning process, but also provides them with ready access to a vast amount of information over which the teacher has no power or control (Lam & Lawrence, 2002). Research findings have supported the use of technology in teaching language. First, technology has positive influences on students’ motivation. Second, technology programs have been encouraged as cost effective ways that could be used to replace or enhance direct human input (Ware & Warschauer, cited in Tsou, 2008). There is no doubt that computer-based instruction will occupy a more central role in the second language classroom in the future.

2.3 Teachers’ Attitudes towards Technology-based Language Teaching

In recent years, the rapid evolution of information and communication technology has made great changes in societies and education. The Internet particularly has become a useful tool for communication. Along with the impact of the Internet, the extensive use of computers at schools has made a critical influence on educational environments. In this regard teachers and their beliefs about using technologies in classrooms can have a great impact on technology-based instruction. As Woodraw (1991) mentions teachers are active agents in the process of changes and implementation of new ideas (using technology) because their beliefs and attitudes may support or impede the success of any educational reform.
Several researchers like Campoy (1992) claim that teachers’ beliefs about the role of technology are the most essential factors that determine the content and scope of their use of technology in their classes. Believing that teachers, not computers are the essential factor for integrating computer technology, Miller and Olson (1994) assert the need for studying teachers and their purposes for using computers.

Teachers’ attitude towards computer is a means for effective development of teacher training that will prepare teachers to face the challenges in the information gap (Fisher, 2000). Lam (2000) emphasizes that teachers’ personal beliefs of the advantages of using technology for language teaching influence teachers’ decisions regarding technology use.

By taking teachers’ beliefs into consideration and studying them we conclude that their attitudes play the most important role in making decisions about technology use in classrooms.

2.4 Studies on Benefits of Computer in Writing

Daiute (1985) summarizes some of the benefits of computers in the writing process as follows:

1. They enable writers to focus on the point.
2. They help learners see the spelling mistakes by highlighting the incorrect words.
3. They provide students with the communication channel through which they intercommunicate with their friends and colleagues.
4. They make learning fun and stress-free.

In this regard Dirkzwager and Mol (1987) noted that students are more motivated and work with greater concentration and are more likely to revise texts.

According to Carrasco (1991), computers can help learners with different stages of the writing process; some can be useful in the pre-writing stage by helping build up good basic structures of the foreign language. Other programs such as word processor are best suited for the writing stage where they can facilitate the task of producing drafts. And for the last stage, those related to polishing the final copy or good graphics quality which can be integrated with other final copies to produce, for example a school newspaper of professional quality.

Trenches (1996), while performing a case study, used electronic mail as a medium of instruction to improve writing in the students’ second language. In this regard, Singhal (1997) declares that electronic mail is a modern way for writing and transferring messages through the Internet. Using e-mail can be a very effective means for improving writing skills. Students can use e-mails to learn how to respond to the incoming messages using some formal statements and meaningful language.
Warschauer (1997) explored the use of e-mail between a teacher and her students in a graduate of English as second language (ESL) writing classes. He found that using e-mail enables teacher to provide students with detailed and rapid feedback on the immediate problems and questions they had.

Text chatting is another important technical method for developing writing ability. It provides an on-line and quick tool for writing and expressing thoughts, transferring ideas and responding with the other side writer.

2.5 The Role of Teachers in Technology-based Writing Instruction
The roles and skills of teachers provided in earlier studies have indicated that teachers’ roles have a great impact on students’ learning via computers as they are needed to provide students with typical support and guide them to participate actively and critically in the learning process. The research of Grasha (1994) summarizes several patterns that describe the role differences of teachers: expert, formal authority, personal model, facilitator and delegator. He gives the following examples to describe these different roles:

1. Expert: Teachers should have abundant knowledge about the domain they teach and should play a role of knowledge source for the students.
2. Formal authority: Teachers should assume themselves as authors in knowledge domain and students should follow the standards the teachers set for them.
3. Personal model: Students do what teachers say or demonstrate.
4. Facilitator: Teachers should guide students to learn new things based on what they already know and facilitate the learning process for them.
5. Delegator: teachers give students assignments and encourage them to work independently or in a self-directed manner.

Although a lot of studies have been done on computer assisted language learning and writing, few researches have conducted on this subject in Iran. For this reason, the researchers have decided to work on it and present it to the world of education and computer so that it can contribute to language teaching.

3. Method
3.1 Participants
The research was carried out with 30 EFL teachers from Gachsaran high schools, 15 males and 15 females with 1 to 29 years of teaching experience which is not exclusively in teaching writing, but teaching this skill shapes a part of their experience. Among them, 25 hold bachelor’s degree, while 5 had a master’s. A study by Khanalizade and Allami (2012) revealed that teachers’ orientations to teaching writing were not affected by their level of education, year of experience and gender. The participants’ computer use ranged from 1 to 10 years. All of them used the Internet at home or school or both.

3.2 Instruments
The data for this study were taken from qualitative and quantitative instruments. Qualitative data were collected via a questionnaire and quantitative data from an open-ended interview.

3.2.1 Questionnaire
The questionnaire (See Appendix A for the full version) was extracted from a thesis named The Technology-Mediated EFL Instruction in the Thai Tertiary Context by Thitirat Suwannasorn (2012) in order to explore the participants’ opinions towards technology application in general and writing in particular. The original questionnaire was piloted during November 2007-January 2008 and was modified based on the comments received from the pilot-test participants about the length of the questionnaire and unnecessary instructions. In this way, the reliability of it was computed acceptable. The mentioned questionnaire was modified to be adapted to the Iranian language teaching context. After modification, there were two main sections. The first section consisted of four parts: in part A the respondents were asked to answer the demographic questions followed by two open-ended questions based on Delphi research method. Part B included questions which were asked to identify the teachers’ frequent use of computers and the Internet in their classes and also they were asked to choose statements representing their beliefs about technology use in EFL instruction. Part C and D contained 3 questions about teachers’ attitudes and behaviors towards EFL writing instruction. In order to answer the questions of each part of this questionnaire the participants should select as many answers as they like.

Section 2 contained a questionnaire of Likert type with 26 questions about the extent of teachers’ usage of computer in their teaching activities. At the end of the questionnaire, there were 2 open-ended questions about computer application in EFL writing classes.

3.2.2 Open-ended Interview
The open-ended interview was used in this study to find out teachers’ ideas about technology-based activities in Iranian EFL writing instruction. In this kind of interview, the interviewee feels more comfortable in expressing his or her idea. The interview allowed for a two-way communication and was conducted face to face. Before starting the interview, the participants were informed about the research objectives. They were encouraged to talk freely and clarify views.

3.3 Procedure and Data Analysis

The data were collected from the time span of September-December 2013. At the beginning, the participants were asked to complete the questionnaire to present their attitudes about the under studying topic. The instruction was clearly given to make sure that they would answer the questions correctly. It took 20 minutes to answer the questionnaire. For analyzing the responses, SPSS software was used. After that the teachers participated in an open-ended interview. Each interview took about 30 minutes. All interviews were recorded and transcribed in text format. Each interview was started with a warm up then open-ended questions. Follow-up questions were asked during the interview to obtain additional information. After gathering the participants’ answers and in order to compare their attitudes statistically, rating of ordinal type was done. A list of 30 statements about the research topic was produced by the researchers. The estimated reliability using Alpha Cronbach test was .785 and acceptable. Then a five category scale was devised to show how much the interviewees agree or disagree with the statements. Categories which were strongly disagree, disagree, no opinion, agree and strongly agree were coded from 1 to 5 and responses were put in these categories. At the end the total scores were divided by the total persons responding. The obtained number showed interviewees’ agreement or disagreement with the given item. (See Appendix B for the full version).

4. Results and discussion

In order to analyze the data collected from the questionnaire, percentage and frequency were computed. Coding and categorizing were used to analyze the results of the interview.

4.1 Descriptive and Inferential Results of Participants’ Beliefs about Technology Integration in the Iranian EFL Classrooms

In order to obtain the descriptive statistics resulted from the analysis of participants beliefs about technology integration in the Iranian EFL classrooms (Part B of the questionnaire); percentage and frequency were computed (table 4.1)
Table 1 Percentage and Frequency of Participants’ Beliefs about Technology Integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
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<td>25</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The obtained results in the above table (4.1) revealed that although the participated teachers in the questionnaire believed that using computer programs in their classrooms, chatting and exchanging e-mails for communication, creating weblogs and working collaboratively on on-line projects were not used in an extensive level, they could have a positive effect on students’ learning. So, they encouraged students to use them.

4.2 Descriptive and Inferential Results of the Analysis of the Participants’ Behaviors in EFL Writing Instruction

The following table revealed the descriptive statistics of the analysis of the participants’ beliefs about EFL writing instruction (part C of the questionnaire with 18 items).

Table 2 Percentage and Frequency of Participants’ Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the above table (2) the results of this part of the questionnaire (part C) showed that participants used behaviors and practices in their writing classrooms to encourage students to write better and create good written texts.

4.3 Descriptive and Inferential Results of the Analysis of Participants’ Beliefs about Teaching Writing with the Use of Technology

The participants responded to the 15 items about teaching writing with technology in part D of the questionnaire (table 3).

Table 3 Percentage and Frequency of Participants’ Beliefs on Teaching Writing with Technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
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<td>3.3</td>
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<td>50</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the participants’ beliefs, their students showed a great interest in using technology in learning writing. They liked exchanging e-mails to improve the quality of their own writing. They were interested in practicing writing and communicating with friends and teachers on line and finally, they wanted to develop autonomous language learning.

4.4 Descriptive and Inferential Results of the Analysis of the Participants’ Frequency of Using Technology in Writing Classes

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Responses to part E of the questionnaire which consisted of 26 questions of Likert type was analyzed. To analyze the questions of this part, the first two and the last two scales were combined. Never and rarely were considered as one scale (No) and often and very often as another scale (Yes). Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics obtained from the analysis of the data of this section.

Table 4 Percentage and Frequency of Participants’ Using Technology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>No</td>
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<td>76</td>
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<tr>
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<td>22</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By observing the obtained results in table (4.4), it was concluded that the participated teachers rarely used technology and web to exchange ideas, to communicate with students and give feedback to them.

4.5 The Results of the Analysis of Open-ended Interview

As mentioned before, another research instrument which was used in this research was an open-ended interview. After gathering the participants’ answers to the given questions and in order to compare their attitudes statistically, rating of ordinal type was done. To rate, a list of 30 statements about the research topic was produced. Then a five-category scale was devised to show how much the interviewees agree or disagree with the statements. Categories which were strongly disagree, disagree, no opinion, agree, and strongly agree were coded from 1 to 5 and responses were put in these categories. At the end, the total scores were divided by the total persons responding. The
obtained number showed interviewees’ agreement or disagreement with the given items. The result more than 3 shows agreement and less than 3 shows disagreement with the items. There is a separate table for each item as follows. (See Appendix C for full version).

**Table 4 Interview Rating for Question 1**

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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>ScorexFrequency</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
\frac{125}{30} = 4.16
\]

The findings of this study revealed a great motivation in using technology in writing classes and interests in technology integration in EFL classrooms. They showed that teachers tried to use behaviors and practices in their classrooms to help students create good pieces of writings, feel accomplishment, improve their English, have more chances to use authentic English and encourage them to be good writers.

Teachers’ attitude was discussed as an important variable in this study. A positive relationship between it and using technology in writing classrooms was found. The ultimate goal of studying teachers’ attitudes about using technology in EFL context is how to teach with technology.

By studying teachers’ beliefs it was found that how their use of technology in EFL writing instruction and their teaching method were influenced by their perceptions. Teachers’ attitudes showed that they had a positive insight towards using technology in improving learners’ writing skills.

The most influential domain of teachers’ beliefs and thoughts was perceived benefits of technology in language instruction. It was found that teachers’ use of technology was formed by their insights about students’ needs and their motivation.

5.2 Teachers’ Roles in Technology-mediated EFL Writing Instruction

Iranian students have limited exposure to authentic materials. So, teachers play the main role to provide this exposure for them. Teachers provide them with appropriate models, resources, strategies and any necessary scaffolding in using technology in language learning.

Many students require close supervision and guidance from their teachers. So, teachers’ physical presence and participation in students’ learning process is crucial.
To be successful writers, students should receive extensive practice and input. Students should read a lot, practice a lot and use English every day. They should know what they want to learn and what they should do to achieve the learning goals. If they are aware of their own language needs, they will learn better. So, they should receive appropriate input and be exposed to a wide range of texts which support language learning and skills development. In this regard this research showed that it was the teacher who could give his or her students language resources and extensive practices.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Findings
With the assumption that what teachers think has a great impact on classroom instruction and students’ learning processes, this study aimed to discover what teachers perceive, believe and think about technology in teaching writing in EFL contexts or in other words using computer, Internet programs and on-line practices.

In this research it was found that participating teachers supported the use of computer and information technology as a tool for providing students with more learning resources, enhancing instructional activities for writing, submitting assignments and facilitating classroom communications between teachers and students. Therefore, they were eager to accept a form of technology-mediated instruction that helped them achieve their teaching goals which were influenced by their own instructional beliefs and students’ needs and backgrounds. Participating teachers in interview believed that the advantages of using computer in writing classes are more than its disadvantages. Changing the traditional teaching methods, more controlling over learning, saving time, connection with the world, creating opportunities to practice English, enhancing students’ motivation and being creative in writing were some of these advantages. Interviews revealed that teachers were responsible to provide their students with more opportunities to practice the language skills that were considered necessary for their academic and future requirements. Also it was perceived that technology had a great potential in promoting communicative and social language learning.

Based on the data obtained throughout the study, it can be concluded that writing ability can be developed through exchanging e-mails, positive responses and encouraging feedbacks which can promote interests in writing.
It was revealed that computer applications could bring changes to writing classes. Using this tool made teaching easier and more interesting, learning might turn into a more interactive process, teachers’ activities could be encouraged, learners’ autonomy might be enhanced and they could write in a greater amount of diversity, format and quality.

The conclusion of studying teachers’ attitudes which focus on teachers’ previous experiences, personal principles and what they believe about the impact of technology in their language teaching and writing instruction offered a practical understanding of teaching writing with technology in Iranian EFL context. It was revealed that teachers’ perceptions and attitudes toward CALL were generally positive. Teachers’ responses to the questionnaire and interview showed all teachers considered the technology use as a necessity in new learning contexts.

It was obtained that increasing an understanding of teachers’ beliefs as a part of efforts to increase teachers’ computer technology, skills and uses was necessary.

So, it became obvious that technology-mediated instruction is not just a set of strategies, but a result of insightful perceptions and critical thinking that investigates and evaluates this kind of teaching and learning within a particular environment.

5.2 Applications and Implications
Computer assisted language learning has implications for teachers and learners. These implications can be useful for future applications in the area of language learning by using technology.

Computers offer teachers the unique ability to collaborate with other educators. Teachers can get teaching plants and new ideas from the internet. Technology application and instructional integration gives teachers a sense of security and allows teachers to effectively use technology for teaching (Strudler, 1995). With the assistance of technology, teachers can improve their teaching and even their learning. Through professional development and support, teachers can provide the valuable classroom instruction needed for learners to succeed.

CALL implementation has been developed in the area of learner training along with the more general movement in the language teaching profession towards developing learner autonomy. CALL is considered to be a productive tool for EFL or ESL learning (Barson, Frommer & Schwartz, 1993). This study and studies of this type can help learners teach themselves. By using technology, students can decide about their studies and learn in a better way. They can work in more supportive environments, seek help from others and share their learning experiences in a productive fashion. Students’ motivation increases when technology is used to assist a teacher in
facilitating a particular lesson. Students may lose interest when their teacher stands at the front of the classroom just lecturing.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research
The first suggestion is that the research would conduct with a larger number of participants. It will be valuable to put more time and energy so as to conduct longitudinal studies with different groups of teachers in various educational settings to extend the results into schools and language institutions. If larger number of teachers from different parts of the country participate in the study and share their technology-based teaching experiences with others, more findings will emerge and better results will be obtained. It is recommended to understand teachers’ beliefs and backgrounds and to know how they apply computer in their teaching contexts. To generalize the findings of such a research to larger teaching contexts, using more observation methods is suggested and more time should be given to get richer information. It is good to ask teachers to design instructional methods that enhance language learning for students of the digital age.

References


Appendix A

The aim of this questionnaire is to elicit Iranian high school teacher’s beliefs about using IT (information technology) in high school EFL writing instruction. This questionnaire has two sections and each section has some parts. Section 1 contains four parts and section 2 contains one part.

Section 1

Part A: Questions about participants’ personal information and beliefs about technology in EFL instruction.

Part B, C and D: Questions about participants’ beliefs and experiences in using technology in EFL writing instruction.

Part A: participants’ personal information and beliefs about technology in EFL instruction. Directions: Please put a check mark (√).

A1: Gender male female

A2: Degree B. A M.A Ph. D Other:

A3: Teaching experience 1 – 5 years 6 – 10 years 11 – 15 years 15 – 20 years More than 20 years

A4: Please complete the sentence.

In my opinion, the advantages of integration IT in high school EFL instructions are ……………

A5: Please complete the sentence.

In my opinion, the disadvantages of integrating IT in high school EFL instructions are………………

Part B: Beliefs about technology integration in the Iranian EFL classrooms.

B1: Please put a check mark (√) to select technology uses that describe your most frequent EFL instructional behavior. (You can select as many as you like).
1. Use E-mail to communicate with students.
2. Use chat to communicate with students.
3. Use computer program (e.g. Word, Power Point) to prepare teaching materials.
4. Create a weblog or website for EFL learner.
5. Have students create weblogs.
6. Have students word process their assignments.
7. Have students exchange their electronic writing with peers.
8. Have students do language exercises or tests on recommended websites.
9. Have students work collaboratively on an online project.

Other (Please specify): …………………

B2: How much is the use of IT in English language instruction supported or encouraged at your instruction?
10. Not really supported / encouraged
11. Somewhat supported / encouraged
12. Supported/ encouraged
13. Strongly Supported / encouraged

B3. Directions: Read the following statements about technology integrations; put a check mark (√) to choose up to 7 items that you want to integrate in your EFL instruction, and finally underline only one statement of your most preferred instruction.

Statement of Beliefs

14. Students word process their written assignments or essays to reduce spelling and mechanical mistakes.
15. E-mail, chat, and web discussions are used to provide students with greater opportunities to practice English language.
16. Students use online references such as dictionaries or translation tools to improve their written texts.
17. Students are encouraged to join social network sites or online groups such as face book to exchange ideas with others in English.
18. Students do language exercises like pronunciation practices, or choosing the correct verb forms in the CD-ROMs or websites according to their proficiency level.
19. Computers are used to deliver multimedia lessons like shopping in order to promote learners’ motivation.
20. Students go online to get corrective feedback on their language from more competent English language speakers.
21. Students practice online authentic communication such as sending e-mails.
22. Students work on online tasks using websites to develop critical thinking (e.g. identifying facts from opinions).
23. Students study native speaker’s language in academic English websites as a model of academic genres such as essays, reports, and summaries.
24. E-mails and chat rooms are used to promote knowledge construction through inquiring, exchanging ideas, and discussion.
25. Students use chat and e-mails to establish intercultural competence (i.e. understanding one’s culture and others’ cultures).
26. Online authentic English sources such as television or newspaper websites (e.g. BBC, and VOA) are used to stimulate students’ verbal or written communication.
27. Students publish their academic or personal web pages to connect themselves to a broader community.
28. Students individually or collaboratively create an English web sites to promote their communities or to serve local organizations (e.g. schools)

PART C: Beliefs about EFL writing instruction

C1. Direction: Please read the following statements about teachers’ behaviors and put a check mark (√) to choose 5 items which you think are the most important features for EFL writing instruction.
29. Teachers encourage students to write grammatically correct sentences.
30. Teachers give feedback on the students’ drafts.
31. Teachers exchange ideas about their students’ writing.
32. Teachers are aware of the readers’ expectation about the students’ writings.
33. Teachers encourage students to develop relationship with others through written texts.
34. Teachers usually help each students individually to complete their drafts.
35. Teachers usually guide all students once to complete their drafts.
36. Teachers encourage students to develop different kinds of writing (e.g. letters, reports, and essays).
37. Teachers ask students to study focused structures in model texts before they write their own.

C2. Direction: Please read the following statements about teacher behaviors and put a check Mark (√) to choose 5 items which you think are the most important for Iranian EFL instruction.
38. Teachers help students to develop the content and ideas of the writing.
39. Teachers encourage students to write for a friend.
40. Teachers provide writing exercises for students according to their proficiency.
41. Teachers facilitate group collaborative writing tasks.
42. Teachers give corrective feedback about the students’ language in their drafts.
43. Teachers provide students different types of texts as models of good writing.
44. Teachers create a positive environment for students to do a lot of writing.
45. Teachers encourage students to exchange their writing with penpals or keypals.
46. Teachers encourage students to write in response to questions or feedbacks.
PART D
D1. Direction: Please read the following statements about writing instruction and put a check mark (√) to choose up to 7 items that are the most relevant to your beliefs in teaching writing with technology.

Statement of beliefs

47. Your students are more motivated to write in a technology-based writing activity.
48. Practicing writing e-mails improves students’ writing quality.
49. Practicing writing in a chat improves students’ writing quality.
50. Writing for real online audiences improves students’ writing quality.
51. Practicing writing online increases students’ writing fluency.
52. Teacher involvement is important for students’ technology-based writing development.
53. Peer involvement is important for students’ technology-based writing development.
54. Your students develop higher-level thinking skills such as critical thinking from technology-based writing.
55. Your students gain confidence in writing in technology-based tasks (e.g. sending e-mail).
56. Technology-based writing supports equal participation among students.
57. Technology-based writing encourages students to develop autonomous language learning.
58. Writing electronic correspondence prepares students for their professional skills.
59. Technology-based writing instruction meets the students’ needs for academic skills.
60. CMC * tools offer students more interactions among peers and teachers.
61. Students develop language from technology-based writing tasks.

*CMC stands for computer-mediated communication (e.g. e-mail, chat, web discussion, web conferences).

Section 2

PART E
E1. Direction: Please read the statements and put a check mark (√) in the box to answer this question. How often do you do these technology-based writing activities?

Teachers’ technology-based writing activities

Never  Rarely  Often  Very Often
62. Teachers send e-mail to communicate with the students in English
63. Teachers join web discussion exchanging ideas in English
64. Teachers chat online with other teachers in English
65. Teachers ask students to submit writing assignments by sending e-mails
66. Teachers ask students to submit writing by posting them on the class webpage
67. Teachers write e-mails to other people for information
68. Teachers give feedback on the students writing by e-mail
69. Teachers give feedback on each other teachers’ electronic drafts
70. Teachers chat online or exchange e-mails with native or non-native speakers of English
71. Teachers ask students to use technology-based references (dictionaries) to improve their writing
72. Each Teacher creates a web page or blog to post their written work
73. Each Teacher creates a web page or blog to post their written work in pair or group
74. Teachers’ feedback causes students to improve their web-based writing
75. Teachers ask students to go online searching before writing paragraphs, reports, or essays
76. Teachers communicate with readers visiting their web pages
77. Teachers themselves engage in technology-based writing according to their own interests or communicative purposes
78. Teachers read EFL writing websites or journals about tech-based writing instruction
79. Teachers download online teaching materials to use in the classroom
80. Teachers have students e-mail to communicate with them
81. Teachers upload classroom materials on a webpage or virtual classroom
82. Teachers keep a technology-based writing log about your teaching
83. Teachers chat online with students based on classroom sessions or general issues
84. Teachers exchange e-mails with students based on classroom sessions or general or general issues
85. Teachers participate in a web discussion with students
86. Teachers exchange ideas about web-based teaching with other EFL or ESL teachers online
87. Teachers create or have a website or blog created for classroom communication
E2. What do you think is the most effective way to integrate web-based activity in your current EFL class? …………………………………………………………………………………………….
E3. Please write anything that you want to share about your opinion related to computer application in EFL writing teaching in the Iranian high schools……………………………………

Appendix B

Dear Teacher,

Please circle one of the numbers from 1 to 5 according to your perceptions of each item on the use of computer technology in EFL writing classes.


1. In my view, computer technologies are more powerful tools of teaching and research than more traditional tools. 1 2 3 4 5
2. All computer technologies (referring generally to computers, videos, hardware, software and networks) increase my knowledge and skills as a teacher. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Computer programs can be used as advanced instructional tools in writing instruction.1 2 3 4 5
4. Computer can be used to effectively manipulate instruction. 1 2 3 4 5
5. Computer is more effective for teaching writing than paper and pencil. 1 2 3 4 5
6. I can avoid problems like handwriting when I use computers. 1 2 3 4 5
7. Computer can help keep track of my progress. 1 2 3 4 5
8. Computers enable me for more interest and creative work. 1 2 3 4 5
9. I have limited experiences in using computer technology for my EFL writing courses. 1 2 3 4 5
10. I am familiar with the word processors like Word. 1 2 3 4 5
11. It is good to be familiar with writing tools like Write Board. 1 2 3 4 5
12. Using a computer gives me more chances to use authentic English. 1 2 3 4 5
13. Using a computer gives me more chances to practice English. 1 2 3 4 5
14. Using a computer gives me a feeling of accomplishment. 1 2 3 4 5
15. Communicating by e-mail is a good way to improve my English. 1 2 3 4 5
16. I can write better essays when I do them by computer. 1 2 3 4 5
17. Revising my paper is a lot easier when I write them on computer. 1 2 3 4 5
18. I enjoy seeing what I write printed out. 1 2 3 4 5
19. I enjoy using the computer to communicate with my students. 1 2 3 4 5
20. I am afraid to contact people by e-mail than in person. 1 2 3 4 5
21. Writing papers by hand saves time compared to by computer. 1 2 3 4 5
22. E-mail helps people learn from each other. 1 2 3 4 5
23. Using E-mail and the internet makes me feel part of a community. 1 2 3 4 5
24. An advantage of using e-mail is you can contact people any time you want. 1 2 3 4 5
25. Writing to others by e-mail helps me develop my thoughts and ideas. 1 2 3 4 5
26. Writing by computer makes me more creative. 1 2 3 4 5
27. Using a computer gives me more control over my learning. 1 2 3 4 5
28. I enjoy the challenge of using computer. 1 2 3 4 5
29. I can learn English faster when I use a computer. 1 2 3 4 5
30. I want to continue using a computer in my English class. 1 2 3 4 5

Appendix C

S stands for Score, F stands for Frequency, P stands for Percentage, S×F stands for Score×Frequency and T stands for Total

| Question 1 | 125:30=4.14 |
| Question 2 | 119:30=3.63 |

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| Question 30 | 109:30=3.6  | S×F | 2 | 4 | 24 | 44 | 35 | 109 |
Title

Iranian EFL Learners’ Notions of the Role of Imagery in Learning Idiomatic Expressions and its Application in Pedagogical Contexts

Authors

Fatemeh Ghanavati Nasab (M.A)
Department of English, Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Isfahan, Iran

Biodata

Fatemeh Ghanavati Nasab, M.A in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) from the University of Isfahan in 2014. Her areas of interest include second language acquisition, sociolinguistics and cognitive linguistics.

Abstract

Having the genius for the proper use of formulaic language in general and idioms in particular is crucial to native-like fluency. Iranian EFL learners are proven to have highly positive attitudes towards English idioms; however, rarely are EFL learners asked to voice their opinions on issues regarding the specific strategies for comprehension and retention of these expressions. The present study is primarily an attempt to investigate the attitude of the Iranian EFL learners towards learning idioms in general and, the specific strategies to master these expressions in particular. The article reports answers to an attitude questionnaire given to 64 second-year adult learners of English. Analysis of data revealed that (a) EFL learners regarded idioms as an indispensible part of language learning and, (b) they were in favor of etymologies and pictures as didactic tools for better comprehension and retention of idioms. The study is also to determine the relationship between the attitudes of EFL learners towards imagery as a strategy to learn new idioms and their learning styles. To this aim, a learning style questionnaire was adopted from Boers' (2009) study. The results revealed that there is a statistically significant relation between the students' learning styles on the one hand and their attitudes towards the application of imagery-supporting elements on the other.

Keywords: Idioms, Attitudes, Imagery, Learning style
1. Introduction

All living languages have phrases which cannot be realized literally even if all the component parts are lexically and semantically known. English is a language rich in idioms—the expressions without which English language would lose much of its fun and humor. Idioms are a double-edged sword which may ease or ruin communication in a given discourse. Idioms are full of culture, poetry and history. Failure to recognize the figurative meaning of these expressions may generate downright misunderstanding between the interlocutors.

Native speakers of any language use an abundant number of idioms without realizing that they are actually doing so. It indicates that communication can be a confusing experience for those not fully familiar with the language. It is to state the obvious that not all expressions are easy to decipher. Some are derived from popular activities such as golfing, hunting and sailing. Some others contain archaic words which appear to be quite obscure in today's language (http://www.linguarama.com/).

Oxford English Dictionary defines an idiom as "a form of expression, grammatical construction, phrase, etc. peculiar to a language; a peculiarity of phraseology approved by the usage of a language, and often having a signification other than its grammatical or logical one" (1996). Langlotz (2006) on the other hand, defines it as a fixed construction made up of two or more lexical items with the structure of a phrase or a semi-clause whose meaning cannot be inferred from the meaning of its component parts.

Two disparate views explain for idiom representation in the mental lexicon. The first view, the orthodox view, regards idioms as unanalyzable and non-compositional strings which are processed by direct lexical retrieval. In this view, the internal semantic patterning of idioms has nothing to do with the process of these expressions in the mental lexicon. The second view, the compositional view, attributes the representation of idioms in the mental lexicon to their internal semantic structures. This view regards idioms as analyzable strings which are processed compositionally. Therefore, idioms are not long linguistic units but are complex mental representations with the potentiality to be unfolded at various levels of semantic representations (Langlotz, 2006).

Lakoff (1987) was in the belief that a key component to make figurative language decipherable is the creation of an appropriate image based on the literal meaning of the expression. As he asserts, language learners best learn the meaning of idiomatic expressions by resorting to either a concrete or a mental image. Mental imagery is based on associations to build up a vivid picture of the
underlying concept (Smith & McCarthy, 2009). Davis (1988) considers imagery as a highly effective strategy to retrieve and recall information. Clark and Paivio (1991) also claimed over the effectiveness of an imaginistic component in the process of information. Concrete pictures and etymological elaboration can be considered as effective strategies to trigger imagery during the process of idiomatic expressions. As Boers (2007) claims etymological elaboration is an effective strategy for the realization of a mental image based on the original use of the expression. Imagery refers to the mental pictures or images generated by words and sentences. It is a well-established belief among scholars that mental images accompanied by captions enhance retention. Therefore, imagery can be signified as an effective strategy to facilitate triggering the recollection of information in pedagogical contexts.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Mental Lexicon
The mental representation and the process of idioms has always been an issue worth considering. Sprenger et al. (2006) conducted a number of experiments to investigate the way idioms are stored and produced in the mental lexicon. Mental lexicon is where one contents the mental storage of words along with their meanings and associations. It is also the place where the knowledge of fixed expressions is stored. It is however, devoid of knowledge of form for every single word, knowledge of verb inflections, knowledge of tense and plural forms. The standard or canonical forms designated as lexemes are the only abstract entities stored in the mental lexicon. The canonical form is referred to as lemma. For example, the canonical form 'come' is a lemma for other forms like 'to come', 'is coming' and 'came'. All the information about meaning, form and syntactic properties of words are stored in the mental lexicon (Jackendoff, 1995 as cited in Brouwer, 2011).
To learn new words, one must recognize the linguistic and conceptual units and make a link between the two (Waxman & Lidz, 2006). Therefore, it is the meaning relationship of a lexeme that is stored in the mental lexicon. Levelt (1994) presents a model consisting of conceptual, lemma and the sound level. The conceptual level encompasses similar concepts related to one another in a network. The lemma level refers to the syntactic properties of words which are stored in a network frame. This level encompasses word categories like verbs and nouns. The sound level points to the relation between all the constituent sounds of a word. Her hypothesis was that the idioms are retrieved from the mental lexicon by comprising the figurative meaning of a set of

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words. Cutting and Block (1997) observe that the meaning that is represented in the mental lexicon is first composed of individual words. Her experiment was based on the idea that separate processing of individual words contributes to the process of whole phrase production.

The fact that the meaning of an idiomatic expression cannot be worked out through direct stipulation of its component parts bears witness to its unit status. However, the role of the literal meaning of the idiom cannot be ignored in the actual process of its meaning. On the other hand, idioms are compositional strings with the potentiality to be analyzed and unfolded with a view to their literal meanings. For instance, the meaning of the expression 'spinning one's wheels' can be retrieved from the image of the wheels stuck in the mud and the engine troubled to move the car. The meaning of highly transparent idioms like 'shake a leg' is not hard to come by; however, to retrieve the meaning of an expression like 'a red herring' one needs to trace back the meaning of the expression to the original context which it first came from (Langlotz, 2006).

The way new idioms are presented influences their storage in the long run. Richards and Schmidt (2002) believe that in pedagogical contexts, retention relies up on the meaningfulness of the material (the cognitive domain) and the interest of the learners (the affective domain). The 'working memory' is responsible for the temporary storage of the material just learned. This memory is composed of two distinguishable storage systems; the articulatory loop and the visuospatial sketchpad. While the first is in charge of the storage of verbal input (verbal explanation of words and phrases), the second is responsible for the storage of visual information (pictures).

The storage of visual information is made easy with imagery as a valuable asset (Lakoff, 1987). Imagery is generally associated with mental pictures with its basic function being the generation of a vibrant representation of a scene in order to appeal to the learners' senses (http://literarydevices.net/imagery/). Therefore, teaching idiomatic expressions along with their pictures and etymologies to be stored in the learners' memory is considered useful.

2.2 Previous Studies on Attitudes
Gardner (1985) regards attitudes as an evaluative reaction to a referent or object based on individuals' opinions and beliefs. It is a psychological construct which supports and explains the rather consistent patterns in one's behavior (Baker, 1992).
Attitudes are defined as the internalized predispositions developed by learners' experiences with positive or negative orientations subject to change over time (Baker, 1988). Teachers, learners and researchers believe that success in a second language is not only related to language aptitude but also to a high motivation and a positive attitude toward the second language (De Bot et al, 2005). Learners' attitudes are assumed to be influential factors on the success or failure of the students in a particular course (Tezbacaran, 1998). Language attitude has a crucial role in language learning and teaching to the point that Prodromou (1992) directly relates learners' positive attitudes to successful learning.

Language attitude in particular, accounts for linguistic behaviors and persistent feelings people have for their native language or second/foreign languages (Crystal, 1991). It is actually what makes people to assume a language as sweet, prestigious, easy or as harsh, difficult and local.

The bulk of research on language attitudes has investigated various dimensions with a narrow focus on constructs and changes of attitudes over time. Language attitude as a widely studied phenomenon in sociolinguistics gains prominence as it contributes to the preservation, restoration, decay or death of a language (Baker, 1992). In pedagogical contexts, attitudes have been mainly enquired into from two main dimensions; integrative and instrumental. Brown (2000) defines integrative attitudes as the desire to know and become part of the target culture. Instrumental attitude on the other hand, refers to the desire to use language as a means for better achievements.

In one study, the integrative motive among Filipino college students toward English was scrutinized. The results rendered proof for the existence of positive attitudes and integrative motivation among students as they identified themselves with the target culture (Borromeo-Samonte, 1981). Similar results were reported among Brazilian adolescents who showed dispositions toward English language regarding status and solidarity as they considered English as the prestigious language.

In 2000, the students’ attitudes toward Hebrew language was checked out with a focus on the instrumental motive. The results revealed the existence of religious and national motives as indicators of instrumental orientation (Al-Haq, 2000). Wide discrepancies were found in Hong-Kong regarding the integrative/instrumental motive for English, Putonghua and Cantonese. While most students ranked Cantonese as the first, English as the second and Putanghua as the third language from an integrative perspective, the same students believed in English as the language of power, education, job opportunities and upwards mobility (Lai, 2009).
Chalak and Kassaian (2010) investigated attitudes and motivation of Iranian EFL learners at IAUKB with a narrow focus on the motivational orientation of non-native students toward learning English as a foreign language, English speaking people and the English culture. The findings revealed that EFL learners at IAUKB were both extrinsically and intrinsically motivated. Their findings also rejected the idea that Iranian EFL/ESL learners are just instrumentally motivated.

Students' learning achievements is often dependent on the environmental components which finally influences their success or failure in the process of language learning (Stern, 1983). It is also claimed that positive attitudes are closely related to the ease of learning another language with an enhanced proficiency level (Chamber, 1999).

Apparently, attitude has become the focus of both first and second language researchers since it constitutes an integral component of learning and second language pedagogy. Research on the students' attitudes gains prominence in that it can influence one's inner moods and decisions in choosing, studying and speaking in a second or foreign language (Weinbugh, 1998).

2.3 Learning Styles
The preferred ways of learning applied by the learners to learn and remember new information is referred to as 'learning styles'. Brown (2000) defines learning styles as the manner in which individuals process information in the learning situation. There are no good or bad learning styles. It is simply the method which learners learn best with. Felder (1996) was among the first researchers who differentiated the ways in which learners suck up new information. As he puts it while some learners learn best through acting and performing, some others prefer reflecting and reasoning, and still some others take advantage of seeing or visualizing. While students may take advantage of all their senses to learn the new material, they have personal preferences in the ways they learn best. It is assumed that if the learning environment is adjusted to the learning preferences of the learners, academic achievement will be increased (Babadogan, 2000). Moreover, it is believed that identifying learners' styles can assist teachers to prepare the most appropriate medium of instruction for their learners (Sunbul, 2004).

2.4 Significance of the Study
As Gardner (1985) asserts, the goal of any second language program is not just confined to linguistic ones. The linguistic goal is responsible for extending and developing the individuals' competence to do the four major language skills. The non-linguistic goal on the other hand mainly focuses on such aspects of language as the desire and interest in learning and communicating in
other languages, the apt to study in another language and the integration into second language community just to mention a few.

Identifying the ways in which students think and learn is critical for the application of the right educational system to ease the learning process. Accordingly, students’ attitudes and preferred styles of learning stand to attention (Guven & Kurum, 2006). The concept of attitude has long been one of the most examined research topics conducted in the area of idiom acquisition in Iran. However, no study to date has aimed to uncover Iranian EFL learners' opinions towards idiom teaching and learning or the strategic use of imagery in idiom classes. This study is aimed to explore this gap. This study therefore, is spurred by a number of motivations. First, it is an attempt to find out about the attitudes of Iranian EFL learners toward learning English idioms. It also aims at finding an answer to whether or not Iranian EFL learners are satisfied by the way idioms are treated in English classes. If so, secondly, it is the researcher’s desire to determine whether the use of imagery-supporting elements (pictures and etymologies) is considered useful by the students. The researchers also intend to determine whether the students' learning styles and their attitudes toward the application of specific strategies to learn new idioms are correlated.

3. Method

3.1 The Research Questions

1. What are the students' attitudes toward learning idioms and the specific strategies (etymological notes & pictures) to master these expressions?

2. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the attitudes of the students towards imagery as a useful strategy and their preferred styles of learning?

3.2 Participants

A total of 64 B.A Iranian students majoring in English at the University of Isfahan took part in the study. The participants were chosen randomly. They were all male and female students aged 19 to 23. 84.37% of the participants were female and 15.6% were male. Table 3.2 summarizes the descriptive statistics of the participants.

<p>| Table 3.2. Descriptive Statistics of The Participants |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Valid N</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Instrumentation

3.3.1 The Attitude Questionnaire
The fourteen items in the questionnaire were the modified version of Gardner's (2004) and Liontas' attitude questionnaire (2002) in order to assess the students' attitudes toward both English idioms and the specific strategies to learn such expressions. The questiones aimed at investigating the students' interest in learning English, their estimated difficulty of English idioms, their satisfaction with their present knowledge of idioms, and their orientations toward specific strategies to master these expressions. All the items on the questionnaire used a five-point likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5) as follows:
(1) Strongly disagree
(2) Disagree
(3) Unsure
(4) Agree
(5) Strongly agree
A pilot study was run to ensure the reliability and the validity of the questionnaire. Given the fact that the target audience was B.A University students of English, volunteers were sought from among the students with the same major at the same university. Finally, five volunteers were surveyed to ensure the length, relevance and the language level of the items. After rewording a few items in terms of language level for the sake of clarity, the questionnaire was administered to the target participants. The calculated Cronbach Alpha was 0.71. The items were then classified into six distinct categories. These categories are presented in table 3.3.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation toward English and the student's assigned</th>
<th>I'm interested in learning English idioms (1).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In my opinion, knowledge of idioms is essential in everyday conversation (2).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Idioms should be included in EFL/ESL classes (4).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Importance to learn English idioms | Difficulty in learning idioms  
And the student's satisfaction with their present knowledge | I often have difficulty in understanding and using English idioms in daily work and study (5).  
I'm satisfied with my knowledge of idioms (3). |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| The satisfaction of the learners with the way idioms are presented in English classes | I'm satisfied with the way idioms are treated in English classes (6).  
The traditional way of teaching idioms is acceptable (10). |
| The students' assigned importance to the role of imagery as a strategy to learn idioms | Students should be provided with specific strategies to learn and remember new idioms (7).  
Origin of phrases should be included in the study of idioms (8).  
Idioms should be supported by pictures (9). |
| The role of imagery for the sake of retention | Origin of phrases helps retention of idioms (11).  
Pictures contribute to the retention of idioms (12). |
| Imagery as a fun element in idiom classes | Origin of expressions makes idiom classes fun (13).  
Pictorial illustration make idiom classes fun (14). |

### 3.3.2 The Learning Style Questionnaire

The participants' preferred styles of learning was checked through a learning style questionnaire adopted from Boer's study (2009). The respondents were invited to indicate the degree to which the 20 items of the questionnaire applied to them for the purpose of self assessment. The statements were to estimate the degree of the visuality of the learners along a continuum. Finally, each student was given a score on the image continuum. The questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

The gathered data was analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21 software. The students' responses to the items of the attitude questionnaire were analyzed in terms
of descriptive and inferential statistics. All the items were applied to fulfill the aims of the study. Chi-square was run to make sure that the distribution was not based on chance and that the observed frequencies were statistically significant. To discover the relationship between the students’ attitudes towards imagery as a useful strategy on the one hand and their learning styles on the other, Pearson Product Moment correlation was employed.

4. Results and Discussion

To answer the first research question, the participants’ responses to the items in the questionnaire were analyzed in terms of descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings based on percentage (%) and mean value are presented in tables 4.25 and 4.26. The analysis was to determine the participants’ attitudes toward idioms and their preferred learning context. The frequency of each item was based on a likert scale; strongly agree (5), agree (4), unsure (3), disagree (2), strongly agree (1). Table 4.1 shows the obtained results from the questionnaire.

| Table 4.1. The Percentages for the Items in the Questionnaire |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Item | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Unsure | Agree | Strongly agree |
| Q1 | 3.3 | 10 | 13.3 | 26.7 | 46.7 |
| Q2 | 8.3 | 6.7 | 21.7 | 28.3 | 35 |
| Q3 | 3.3 | 31.7 | 28.3 | 28.3 | 8.3 |
| Q4 | 5 | 15 | 21.7 | 35 | 23 |
| Q5 | 0 | 18.3 | 26.7 | 40 | 15 |
| Q6 | 18.3 | 35 | 38.3 | 6.7 | 1.7 |
| Q7 | 3.3 | 6.7 | 15 | 25 | 50 |
| Q8 | 3.3 | 21.7 | 15 | 38.3 | 21.7 |
| Q9 | 6.7 | 8.3 | 8.3 | 35 | 41.7 |
| Q10 | 3.3 | 10 | 20 | 23.3 | 43.3 |
| Q11 | 5 | 8.3 | 40 | 26.7 | 20 |
| Q12 | 1.7 | 10 | 26.7 | 23.3 | 28.3 |
| Q13 | 1.7 | 11.7 | 20 | 33.3 | 33.3 |
| Q14 | 3 | 5 | 13.3 | 23.3 | 55 |
Figure 4.1 Participants Strong Agreement and Disagreement to Items 7, 8 and 9

For the ease of interpretation, the 14 items were categorized into 6 distinct categories:

1. Orientation toward English and the student's assigned importance toward learning English idioms,
2. Difficulty in learning idioms and the student's satisfaction with their present knowledge,
3. The satisfaction of the learners with the way idioms are presented in English classes,
4. The students' assigned importance to the role of imagery as a strategy to learn idioms,
5. The role of imagery for the sake of retention,
6. Imagery as a fun element in idiom classes.

Table 4.2 contains the categories, number of the items and mean scores of the students’ responses to the items of the questionnaire.

Table 4.2 Categories of classified questionnaire items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Attitude Questionnaire</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Orientation toward English and the student's assigned importance to learn English idioms</td>
<td>Item (1) 4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Item (2) 3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Item (4) 3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in learning idioms and the student's satisfaction with their present knowledge</td>
<td>Item (5) 3.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Item (3) 3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The satisfaction of the learners with the way idioms are presented in English classes</td>
<td>Item (6) 2.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Item (10) 3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students' assigned importance to the role of imagery as a strategy to learn idioms</td>
<td>Item (7) 4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Item (8) 3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Item (9) 3.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of imagery for the sake of retention</td>
<td>Item (11) 3.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some interesting patterns emerged from the careful inspection of the results. Item 1 tried to examine the participants' interest in learning English idioms. The majority of learners (73.4%) with the average of 4.03 were widely interested in idioms.

Item 2 sought to explore the students' assigned importance to the role of idioms in everyday speech. An average of 3.75 viewed idioms an essential part in everyday speech. An average of 3.07 for item 3 indicates that the students are not satisfied with their knowledge of idioms. This item gained the lowest mean score compared to the other items of the questionnaire. Item number 4, with an average of 3.57, shows the students' interest for the inclusion of idioms in EFL/ESL classes. Only 5% of the students were strongly against the idea. Item 5 with an average of 3.52 indicates that the students often run into difficulties when using English idioms. A considerable number of the students (40%) agreed with the statement.

Item 6 tried to explore the students' satisfaction with the way idioms are treated in English classes. An average of 2.38 mentions the students' dissatisfaction with the current trend (the traditional way of instruction with standard entries) in English classes. Items 7, 8 and 9 concerned the students' views about the specific strategies to learn idioms. The relatively high average scores revealed that the students had a positive view regarding specific learning contexts for acquiring idioms. Item 10 was to discover the students' attitudes towards the traditional ways of teaching idioms. The results revealed that while many students considered the traditional ways acceptable, still a considerable number were having doubts (20%).

Items 11 and 12 focused on the students' assigned importance to the role of specific strategies for idiomatic retention. The results revealed that while a considerable number were undecided about the advantages of pictorial illustrations or etymological notes for idiomatic retention, still a considerable number of students favored the idea. It yielded an average of 3.48 and 3.77 for each item respectively. The results of the last two items of the questionnaire (items 13 and 14), which yielded relatively high average scores, indicated that learning idioms with the aforementioned strategies was considered good fun by the students. A noticeable number of the students (55%) concurred with the idea of having pictorial illustrations for a highly enjoyable experience.
To investigate the second research question, the following null hypothesis has been formulated: There is no significant relationship between the attitudes of the students towards imagery as a useful strategy and their learning styles. In order to test the null hypothesis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation was run between the students' learning styles and their responses to items 8, 9, 11 and 12 of the attitude questionnaire. The amount of p-value (p < 0.05) as presented in table 4.3 indicates a positive relationship between the two variables under study. Therefore, according to the statistics the null hypothesis is rejected as a strong relationship was found between the attitudes of the students towards imagery as a useful strategy and their learning styles.

Table 4.3 Correlation between Students' attitudes and Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Styles</th>
<th>Q1, Q14</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1, Q14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.468*</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>64 64 64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Styles</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.468*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>64</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Language learning can not be set apart from the psychological and social aspects. Therefore, the students' attitudes to second language learning largely influences their mastery of a language. In other words, learning is considered an emotional process which is affected by the learners' likes and dislikes of their surroundings (Choy & Troudi, 2006). As the affective domain, among a number of other variables, affects the relative success or failure of students in an EFL context, the present questionnaire was designed with an attempt to explore Iranian language learners' attitudes toward learning second language idioms.

Overall, the participants' insights revealed that they hold specific beliefs about learning idioms in English classes. Their viewpoints were likely to be reflected by their learning styles. Moreover, it looked as if they all hold strong beliefs about the significance of idioms or how best they can be taught in English classes. It gives the impression that their viewpoints which is partly
influenced by their learning styles may to some extend determine what approaches to take to make the learning process more fruitful.

The participants' responses discloses their unanimous desire toward what they consider an enjoyable pedagogical context. It is to suggest that learning idioms can be an enjoyable experience with a focus on the accumulation of a set of factors which best satisfies the needs of the learners. To go in to more detail, we can state that Iranian EFL learners were eager to learn English idioms and were in favor of the systematic teaching of idioms for the sake of retention. The transcribed data showed that, overall, Iranian students were neither satisfied with their present knowledge of idioms, nor with the way that these expressions are treated in English classes. The students also showed strong tendencies to be equipped with specific strategies to learn and remember new idioms.

The data can be discussed in various ways by taking the main points of the study into account. The findings of the present study indicated that the learners were genuinely interested in learning English idioms and attested to the importance of idioms in everyday communication. However, they were dissatisfied with their present knowledge of idioms or the way that idioms are dealt with in English classes and considered the current trend of little or no avail. Moreover, they expressed their positive attitudes for idioms to be catered for in EFL classes. They also acknowledged to the difficulties they faced in both comprehension and production of idioms in the daily discourse.

Items 8 and 9 addressed the students' views with respect to the strategies to master idioms. A huge number of students expounded on the merits of specific strategies to learn and recall new idioms. As regards the students' perceived utility of specific strategies, both etymological notes and pictorial illustrations gained support; however, comparing the two strategies, the inclusion of pictures seemed to be of paramount importance to the students. As Fu (2003) also points out, visualization is one of the important strategies that second language learners use. He also argued for the importance of pictures for language learners as a way to reassure their understanding of what they are learning. The overall percentage of the responses to items 8, 9 and 10 indicated that mnemonic devices can be considered as acceptable and agreed-upon approaches to arouse the learners' interest in the process of learning.

The students' relative awareness of the mentioned strategies concerning the use of specific strategies for the sake of retention (items 11 & 12), was credited for prudently, as still a considerable number of the students were unsettled on the issue.
The last two items (13 & 14) indicated that a vast majority of the students consider learning idioms accompanied by either pictures or the origin of phrases a fun experience.

The results of the questionnaire were in line with Liontas' findings (2002) which indicated the positive attitudes of the learners toward learning English idioms. As the researcher states the findings provided big support to carry out his study. Most of his participants regarded idioms as a significant part of natural discourse and commented on the role of idiomatic knowledge in speech fluency. As with respect to the learners’ motive to acquire English idioms, except a few numbers who considered grammar and vocabulary build-up as the bare essentials in a foreign language, the majority regarded English idioms as an integrated part of the foreign language. However as Rohani (2012) points out, their study was conducted among European students studying in America which may allude to the immersion of the students in the target culture rather than their attitudes to learning idioms.

Based on the results of the second research question, it has been determined that there is a positive and strong significance between the learning styles of students and their attitudes towards imagery as a useful strategy. Accordingly, it can be stated that students with visual learning styles prefer the use of imagery-supporting elements to learn new idioms. Moreover, it can be estimated that the learning style preferences of Iranian EFL learners can be regarded as an important variable in their attitudes towards learning the subject. It can be concluded that the visual learning style preferences of students have a positive influence on their attitudes toward the use of imagery-supporting elements to learn new idioms.

The desire for the inclusion of meaningful contexts in idiom classes is not far from being satisfied since strategies are teachable (Brown, 2000). This attainable goal burdens the responsibility of researchers to accommodate the needs of the learners by more investigation on the most practical ones suitable to cater for the needs of all learners.

The present piece of research has implications for syllabus designers, material developers, teachers and learners. Teachers should integrate the most successful language learning strategies, among all the possible ones, according to the interests of the learners. Learners should be given the opportunity to talk about their preferred language strategies for a more effective language learning environment. Moreover, syllabus designers and material developers should focus more on what has a motivating effect on the learners for the purpose of facilitating the learning process.

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Concerning the limitations of the study, the analysis of the attitude questionnaire totally relied up on the respondents' personal estimates and beliefs. Therefore, caution is needed for making general assumptions and further research may be essential to be carried out on the correspondence of the students' estimation and performance in the actual achievement tests.

This study took a qualitative approach to examine students' attitudes in regards to idioms. Thus cause and effect relations were not taken into account. Further research can investigate the causality between students' attitudes and their achievements.

References


http://literarydevices.net/imagery/

http://www.linguarama.com/


**Appendix A**

**Attitude Questionnaire**

This questionnaire is designed to gather information on your attitude toward English idioms and how best to teach and learn them in the second language context. Read each item and mark one of the answers from 1 to 5 (with 1 being *strongly disagree*, 2 *disagree*, 3 *unsure*, 4 *agree* and 5 *strongly agree*).

1. I'm interested in learning English idioms. 
   - 1.□ 2.□ 3.□ 4.□ 5.□

2. In my opinion, knowledge of idioms is essential in everyday conversation.
   - 1.□ 2.□ 3.□ 4.□ 5.□

3. I'm satisfied with my knowledge of idioms.
   - 1.□ 2.□ 3.□ 4.□ 5.□

4. Idioms should be included in EFL/ESL classes.
   - 1.□ 2.□ 3.□ 4.□ 5.□

5. I often have difficulty in understanding and using English idioms in daily work and study.
   - 1.□ 2.□ 3.□ 4.□ 5.□

6. I'm satisfied with the way idioms are treated in English classes.
   - 1.□ 2.□ 3.□ 4.□ 5.□

7. Students should be provided with specific strategies to learn and remember new idioms.
   - 1.□ 2.□ 3.□ 4.□ 5.□

8. Origin of phrases should be included in the study of idioms.
   - 1.□ 2.□ 3.□ 4.□ 5.□

9. Idioms should be supported by pictures.
   - 1.□ 2.□ 3.□ 4.□ 5.□

10. The traditional way of teaching idioms is acceptable.
    - 1.□ 2.□ 3.□ 4.□ 5.□

    - 1.□ 2.□ 3.□ 4.□ 5.□
12. Pictures contribute to the retention of idioms. 1.□2.□3.□4.□5.□
13. Origin of expressions makes idiom classes fun. 1.□2.□3.□4.□5.□
14. Pictorial illustration make idiom classes fun. 1.□2.□3.□4.□5.□

Thank you

Appendix B

Learning Style Questionnaire

Read each item and mark one of the answers from 1 to 4 (with 1 for almost never, 2: sometimes, 3: often and 4: very often). There is no right or wrong answer.

I try to remember new words or expressions …

1. by saying them out loud a couple of times (or by doing so silently, in my head)
   1.□2.□3.□4.□
2. by creating a mental picture of what they refer to
   1.□2.□3.□4.□
3. by associating them with their translation equivalent
   1.□2.□3.□4.□
4. by analyzing the building blocks of longer words, e.g. prefix + root
   1.□2.□3.□4.□
5. In the case of action verbs (e.g. *squeeze*), by “acting out” their meaning (physically or just in my imagination)
   1.□2.□3.□4.□
6. by inserting the word or expression in a story or scenario
   1.□2.□3.□4.□
7. by associating them with another word because of a similar sound, e.g. when learning *jeopardy* (= danger), I might think of the sound of leopard
   1.□2.□3.□4.□
8. by associating them with another word because of a similar spelling, e.g. when learning *jeopardy*, I might think of the written word leopard
   1.□2.□3.□4.□
9. by associating them with a particular place (e.g. where they first struck you)
   1.□2.□3.□4.□
10. by focusing on how a word is written (or by actually writing it down)
    1.□2.□3.□4.□
11. by organizing sets of words in diagrams (e.g. connecting words that
belong to the same field) Or scales (e.g. placing lukewarm on a line between cold and hot)

1.□2.□3.□4.□

12. by “playing with” the sound of the words, e.g. creating rhymes

1.□2.□3.□4.□

13. by recalling a song, a spoken slogan, or so, in which they are used

1.□2.□3.□4.□

14. by using them in a sentence (that I encountered them in or one I invent myself)

1.□2.□3.□4.□

A few more general questions:

15. in the case of figurative expressions, by imagining their literal meaning, e.g. when learning Close ranks, I might picture soldiers shoulder to shoulder on a battlefield; when learning ‘Rat Race’, I will picture real rats; etc.

1.□2.□3.□4.□

16. I’m good at remembering how people speak (e.g. I can imitate them).

1.□2.□3.□4.□

17. I’m good at remembering what someone said, i.e. her/his precise words.

1.□2.□3.□4.□

18. I’m good at interpreting diagrams in a manual; I don’t need to read the text.

1.□2.□3.□4.□

19. I think aloud or “say” things internally.

1.□2.□3.□4.□

20. When I draft an outline of an essay or a presentation, I use arrows and other symbols to signal the connections.

1.□2.□3.□4.□

THANK YOU
Title

Enhancing Listening Comprehension: The role of Metacognitive strategy Instruction

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of explicit instruction of meta-cognitive learning strategies on the listening comprehension achievement of EFL learners. After administering a TOEFL test from Barron's TOEFL (1994), 60 homogeneous intermediate male and female students were selected and randomly assigned to two groups: an experimental and a control. The experimental group received explicit instruction in line with meta-cognitive strategies, whereas the control group was instructed via the Conventional Instruction (CI) method which followed an individualistic instructional approach based on the exercises in their regular text book. A post test was administered and its results were analyzed through one-way ANOVA and t-test. The results revealed that the explicit instruction of meta-cognitive learning strategies proved ineffective. A
possible explanation is that language learners at the intermediate level draw on these strategies unconsciously. Findings suggest that meta-cognitive learning strategies could be introduced at suitable levels that conform to the listeners' actual potential in cognition to help them comprehend the listening materials better.

**Keywords:** Metacognitive, Strategy Instruction, Conventional Instruction, Listening Comprehension

1. Introduction

Language learning strategies are referred to as the choices which language learners make while they are involved in learning or utilizing a second language (Cook, 2001). Brown (1994) states that as the knowledge of second language acquisition increased noticeably during the 1970s, teachers and researchers realized that no single research finding and no single method of language teaching would commence an era of utopia of absolute, predictable success in teaching a second language. The methods or techniques of teaching notwithstanding certain learners seemed to be successful. The importance of individual variation in language learning was spotlighted, and certain learners appeared to be endowed with abilities to develop in a successful way, others not possessing those abilities.

Grounded upon the above-mentioned proposition, traditional methodologies were considered dreary and poor in value for the language learners because they did not take into account individual learning differences. The 1970s henceforth witnessed the drastic changes in language pedagogy throughout the world. This period could be deemed a great triumph for language teaching and learning since some preeminent amendments in the era of language pedagogy occurred. One of the changes was the application of language learning strategies.

The notion of good language learners provoked language authorities to launch extensive investigations into learning strategies (Brown, 1994). Language learning strategies have been spotlighted so that they may spur learners on to their effective learning. Cook (2001) states that those who are considered good language learners might deal with L2 learning in different ways from language learners who are less good or they might deal with language learning in the same way but more efficiently.

As a result of these onward, thoughtful movements, language pedagogy underwent some fundamental shifts in its methodologies and approaches to teaching languages. Language learners
were encouraged to draw on the learning strategies to enhance their language learning skills, the listening comprehension skill being one of them. Recognizing good language learners' ability in language learning sparked a number of studies carried out by researchers on language learning processes. Along the same line, this study is motivated to find out the effect of explicit instruction of meta-cognitive learning strategies on promoting intermediate language learners' listening comprehension skill.

2. Research Questions and Hypotheses
In order to draw up the boundaries of research, this study intended to pursue the following questions:
1. Does explicit instruction of meta-cognitive language learning strategies enhance intermediate language learners' listening comprehension skill?
2. To what extent are meta-cognitive language learning strategies salient in the listening comprehension skill at the intermediate level?

Following the above questions are the hypotheses upon which the present research has been conducted:
Hypothesis 0: Explicit instruction of meta-cognitive language learning strategies does not influence intermediate language learners' listening comprehension skills.
Hypothesis 1: Explicit instruction of meta-cognitive language learning strategies promotes intermediate language learners' listening comprehension skills.
Hypothesis 2: Explicit instruction of meta-cognitive language learning strategies hinders intermediate language learners' listening comprehension skills.

3. Literature Review
Since the 1970s, a host of researchers have fussed over learners and changed their stance on teaching methods. In this regard, quite a number of studies were conducted to elucidate the relationship between learning strategy use and successful learning.

Brown states that strategy use helps language learners achieve language competence and he emphasizes the effectiveness of a variety of learning strategies (Brown, 1994). O'Malley, Chamot, and Kupper (1989) maintain that the application of monitoring, elaboration, and inferencing strategies has made second language learners develop effective listening skills.
Liu (2004) argues that the cognitive view of learning which regards language learning as a dynamic, creative process and the learner as an active strategy user and knowledge constructor has influenced the researchers. He launched an investigation into EFL learning strategy use among a group of 428 technological institute English majors in China. In his investigation, Liu made use of Oxford's SILL (Strategy Inventory for Language Learning, 1990, version 7.0). Throughout the research, the frequent use of EFL learning strategies and its two influencing factors were spotlighted. The two factors were gender and language proficiency. The descriptive statistics revealed the fact that the Chinese technological institute students majoring in English made medium use of strategies. Statistically speaking, the overall strategy use mean was 3.25 and the standard deviation was 0.53. The students most frequently employed meta-cognitive strategies and the mean for the use of meta-cognitive strategies was 3.74 and the standard deviation was 0.64. The students made least frequent use of memory strategies of which the mean was 2.91 and the standard deviation was 0.61. The independent sample t-test manifested that those learners who had higher EFL proficiency utilized the overall strategies and the six categories of strategies more frequently than learners who had lower EFL proficiency. In this investigation, females did better than males in using overall strategy use, memory strategies, and affective strategies.

In her study, Liu (2004) did not show for which skill English majors have used most meta-cognitive strategies, and whether the meta-cognitive strategies proved helpful for promoting the listening comprehension skill. She did not mention whether females' success was in making use of meta-cognitive strategies in listening comprehension or some other areas and skills.

The research carried out by Bialystok on 10th and 12th grade students who were learning French in Toronto revealed that monitoring strategies and strategies for functional practice impacted on learning outcome positively. She achieved such results through administering achievement tests in writing, listening, reading, and grammar (Bialystok, 1981).

In Bialystok's (1981) research, the extent to which meta-cognitive strategies had been made use of in the listening comprehension skill was not shown.

O'Malley (1987) investigated the effect of different types of strategy training (cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective) on different language skills and found that the strategy training did not impact on the listening comprehension skill, but on the speaking skill.

According to Anderson (2002), meta-cognitive strategies are conceived of as the strategies which differentiate between effective and ineffective learners. In his classification, successful
learners are those who have an awareness of effective learning. Anderson (2002) argues that meta-cognitive strategies create critical but healthy reflection and evaluation of individuals' thinking and they lead to some changes in how to learn better.

Anderson's (2002) claim respecting meta-cognitive strategies, however, did not manifest the language skills in which learners could improve their learning.

Rahmatollahpour's (2006) investigated the effect of memory, cognitive, compensatory, meta-cognitive, affective, and social learning strategies on language proficiency among ninety elementary, intermediate, and advanced university students majoring in TEFL at Masjed Soleiman Azad University. Findings of his survey revealed that students at intermediate level made use of meta-cognitive learning strategies the most while the elementary students made the least use of these strategies.

All the afore-mentioned studies were carried out to demonstrate the relationship between learning strategy use and success in learning process. The researchers have made attempts to scrutinize whether learning strategies particularly meta-cognitive strategies accelerate the process of language learning. However, these studies did not depict specifically to what extent the use of meta-cognitive strategies impacted upon and improved the listening comprehension skill. Additionally, they did not focus thoroughly on the explicit instruction of meta-cognitive learning strategies in promoting the listening comprehension skill. With the gap existing in the literature, the present study is aimed at discovering the effect of explicit instruction of meta-cognitive strategies on promoting the listening comprehension skill at the intermediate level.

4. Method
This part describes the methodology that was employed to carry out the research and it embraces the information regarding the participants, instruments, and procedure.

4.1. Participants
A sample of 60 male and female junior students majoring in TEFL at Shiraz Azad University was chosen based on a systematic random sampling from 90 students. They were divided into two groups – each 30 students – an experimental group, and a control group.

4.2. Instruments
As to collect the required data, two TOEFL tests were used: one taken from Barron's TOEFL (1994) which was administered to the participants to measure their proficiency level in English;
and a listening comprehension proficiency test containing 25 multiple-choice items extracted from How to prepare for TOEFL test (Sharpe, 2001) used for the pre-test and posttest. The reliability of the test was .732 based on KR-21 method.

4.3. Procedure

The explicit instruction on the use of meta-cognitive learning strategies for the experimental group took place in five stages based on CALLA model (Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach) by Chamot and O'Malley (1994) as follows:

Preparation: at this stage, the teacher expatiated on the language learning strategies, particularly meta-cognitive learning strategies which were paramount in conducting this study. The subjects were debriefed on meta-cognitive strategies in language learning and especially the listening comprehension skill and their values were discussed. The subjects in the experimental group were also told that the use of meta-cognitive learning strategies could expedite their listening comprehension ability.

Presentation: the subjects were provided with meta-cognitive learning strategies after they were thoroughly acquainted with their nature. They were instructed on how they could make optimal use of these strategies. For instance, they learned to have a discussion regarding the listening materials that they were going to listen to. Or the subjects, as instructed, attempted to attend to a listening task and disregard the irrelevant parts, e.g. the parts which did not contribute to their comprehension. For example, there were some questions raised about the listening task in their textbooks and they had to focus on them before working on the listening comprehension activity. Thus, their attention was directed toward the parts which included the answers to the questions. Throughout this study, the subjects in the experimental group were instructed to supervise and monitor their listening comprehension processes. The supervisory and monitoring procedures were accomplished by the self-monitoring strategy which is one of the meta-cognitive learning strategies the subjects in the experimental group were instructed in.

Practice: at this stage, the subjects were exposed to some listening tasks and activities and they were asked to perform them by incorporating the meta-cognitive learning strategies. They practiced the listening comprehension tasks and activities with the help of the meta-cognitive learning strategies presented and the teacher was present to give whatever help they needed. The subjects were also instructed to use the appropriate meta-cognitive learning strategies suited to the listening task and activity in focus. For instance, they made use of the selective attention meta-
cognitive strategy to attend to specific information that had been specified prior to the listening task.

Evaluation: At this stage, the subjects learned to evaluate their progress in their listening comprehension skill. As trained, they asked themselves questions on whether they had comprehended the listening input. They were debriefed on the completed listening comprehension tasks and activities and the meta-cognitive learning strategies they had used.

Expansion: finally, the subjects were encouraged to apply the meta-cognitive learning strategies for appropriate listening comprehension tasks and activities. They were instructed that they could make use of some other meta-cognitive learning strategies which were suitable to their listening comprehension skill.

Since the participants in the experimental group were determined to enhance their listening comprehension ability, one could fathom out that they had been employing the meta-cognitive learning strategies in their listening tasks and activities.

The listeners in the control group, however, did not receive any training in meta-cognitive learning strategies. Therefore, they followed the listening comprehension instruction before which they had not received any strategy training, and no preparation as a pre-listening task was provided for the control group listeners.

Instruction lasted a whole academic semester. Throughout this period, the participants in the experimental group endeavored to practice and apply the meta-cognitive learning strategies to promote their listening comprehension skill. Another point to state is that the participants in the experimental group were constantly reminded of the meta-cognitive learning strategies during the whole semester when they were engaged in listening comprehension practice.

Table 1. Group means and standard deviation for homogeneity test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Maxi</th>
<th>Mini</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Group</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.92</td>
<td>10.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.83</td>
<td>9.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Results

5.1. The analysis of the participants' post test scores in the two groups
The same descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to the data obtained after the posttest was administered. The mean score of the experimental group was slightly greater than that of the control group. However, in order to compare the two mean scores, the statistical t-test was calculated. Table 2 displays the descriptive and inferential statistics applied to the data.

**Table 2. Descriptive statistics pertaining to the posttest**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>T-Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>52.9333</td>
<td>11.5398</td>
<td>.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>53.0667</td>
<td>11.7882</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Armed with this information (t-test = .047), the researchers moved to the table of critical value. The critical value was 1.671 which meant that the difference was not significant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was sustained which alleged that explicit instruction on the use of meta-cognitive learning strategies did not influence the listening comprehension skill when language learners wanted to regulate and self-direct their learning process. Results of the present study failed to accept one of the directional hypotheses.

In other words, the t-value revealed that the two groups performed almost equally on the posttest which was indicative of the fact that meta-cognitive strategy instruction did not afford the participants in the experimental group any privilege and as such had no effect on promoting the listening comprehension skill.

The results of the present study are in conformity with those of O'Malley (1987), Bialystok (1990), and Rahmatollahpour (2006) concluding that intermediate language learners are aware of meta-cognitive learning strategies and no instruction of these strategies is required. However, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) showed that meta-cognitive learning strategy training was effective for some listening tasks.

Results indicated that the explicit instruction on the use of meta-cognitive learning strategies did not result in promoting the listening comprehension skill of the participants in the experimental group.

The reason behind this might be that conscious instruction and use of meta-cognitive learning strategies distracted the participants in the experimental group from the listening contents. The results of this study challenge the ideas in Consciousness Raising Theory presented by Rutherford.
and Sharwood-Smith (1985). Through consciousness-raising, language learners are encouraged to attend to language forms, thus helping them acquire language in an indirect way.

On the other hand, the outcomes of this study might be more in line with Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development which claims that learners must reach a certain cognitive maturity before which instruction is not effective. Ellis (2004) states that "Vygotsky' ZPD explains the difference between an individual's actual and potential levels of development" (p. 179).

6. Discussion
This section discusses the results of the research by direct reference to the questions raised in the study. Question One: does explicit instruction of meta-cognitive language learning strategies enhance intermediate language learners' listening comprehension skill?

The present study shows that intermediate language learners are aware of meta-cognitive learning strategies and utilize them unconsciously. This is because instruction could not bring a change in the experimental group. This is in line with the suggestion by O'Malley and Chamot (1990) that intermediate language learners in general employ more meta-cognitive learning strategies. Therefore, instructing intermediate language learners in these types of strategies to promote their listening comprehension ability would not be effective.

As regards the participants in the control group, they might well utilize meta-cognitive learning strategies in their listening comprehension process unconsciously since, pedagogically speaking, learning strategy use is customary among intermediate language learners. Thus, the reason why both groups did almost the same on their posttest is that the two groups had made use of meta-cognitive learning strategies and it could also be true that the participants in the control group might have used other language learning strategies.

Question Two: to what extent are meta-cognitive language learning strategies salient in the listening comprehension skill at the intermediate level?

Preceding studies have suggested that it is the use of meta-cognitive learning strategies which differentiate between effective and ineffective learners (e.g. Anderson, 2002). Taking into account the results of the studies carried out in this regard, one could decide that meta-cognitive learning strategies are paramount in language learning in general and in improving the listening skill in particular. O'Malley et al (1990) manifested that meta-cognitive learning strategies improved most
EFL students' speaking ability. They contended that these strategies had positive effect on some listening tasks.

However, the results of the present study revealed that explicit instruction has not been effective to intermediate language learners. That is to say, intermediate language learners use these strategies unconsciously in their listening comprehension skill.

Following the above questions are two claims which were touched upon earlier:

Claim One: intermediate language learners, especially listeners, had better not be instructed by teachers on the use of meta-cognitive learning strategies.

To underpin this contention, Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development theory would prove fruitful to be referred to. The theory alleges that when language learners have reached their actual potential in cognition, they are ready to receive instruction. The present study showed that intermediate language learners had already passed this stage. Therefore, instruction on the use of meta-cognitive learning strategies became ineffective.

Grounded upon this theory, one can hold that intermediate language learners in this study had reached their cognitive maturity. They were able to draw on meta-cognitive learning strategies on their own and no explicit instruction on the part of the teacher was required. This study revealed that intermediate language learners employed meta-cognitive learning strategies during their efforts to solve their listening problems. Accordingly, their cognitive development was at a level that made them able to use these strategies.

Therefore, teaching intermediate language learners on how to apply meta-cognitive learning strategies while they are aware of them to improve their listening comprehension skill could not contribute to the enhancement of their learning.

Claim Two: consciousness-raising in employing meta-cognitive learning strategies for intermediate language learners could not foster their listening comprehension skill.

Language learners move along certain predetermined stages which cannot be manipulated as a result of instruction. That is, intervention does not foster acquisition of second language in general. As revealed in the present study, intermediate language learners were taught to make conscious use of meta-cognitive learning strategies but no striking progress was witnessed. Pedagogical intervention to instruct intermediate language learners in using meta-cognitive learning strategies did not prove productive in results.
Thus, making listeners with intermediate language ability level develop an awareness of meta-cognitive learning strategies through explicit instruction does not impact on promoting their listening comprehension ability. Whether instructed or not, intermediate language learners apply these strategies in an unconscious fashion. This claim is not in agreement with the theory of consciousness-raising proposed by Rutherford et al. (1985) stating that language learners can be encouraged by techniques to take heed of language forms. This proposition argues that awareness of language forms will contribute in an indirect way to language acquisition.

7. Conclusion
This study began with the assumption that teaching meta-cognitive learning strategies could enhance the intermediate language learners' listening comprehension ability. The instruction lasted for a whole academic semester. During this time, the researchers employed meta-cognitive learning strategies and taught the subjects in the experimental group how to use them in their listening comprehension. The participants in the control group, on the other hand, did not receive any instruction on the use of these strategies during their listening comprehension practice.

After the posttest, the results indicated that the instruction of meta-cognitive learning strategies did not affect the intermediate language learners' listening comprehension skill. That is, the listening comprehension ability of the experimental group who had made use of meta-cognitive learning strategies did not surpass that of the control group.

Results of this study conform to a number of studies. O'Malley (1987) studied the effect of different types of strategy training (cognitive, meta-cognitive, and socio-affective) in different language skills. O'Malley's study revealed that strategy training impacted on the speaking skill significantly, but it had no significant impact on the listening skill. Bialystok (1990) argues in favor of training which helps the students be generally aware of learning strategies rather than teaching the specific learning strategies. O'Malley et al. (1990) maintain that the use of learning strategies varies according to the level of students. Intermediate language learners draw on slightly fewer learning strategies in total but they employ proportionately more meta-cognitive learning strategies. Finally, Rahmatollahpour (2006) showed that intermediate language learners are aware of meta-cognitive learning strategies.

The studies mentioned above reveal the fact that instruction of meta-cognitive learning strategies for intermediate language learners is pedagogically ineffective and does not precipitate
strategy use. If strategy training to promote the listening comprehension skill is felt advantageous, it should be limited to notifying intermediate language learners of meta-cognitive learning strategies which they are applying to make them develop an awareness of these strategies.

References


Title

Investigating a Relationship between Computer Literacy and Language Proficiency: A Survey of EFL Students in Sanandaj

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Abstract

This article presented the results of a study which examined the level of computer literacy of language students and also the relationship between their language proficiency and computer literacy. A total of 53 EFL students were chosen from different language institutes of Sanandaj, Iran. They were given two questionnaires. The first questionnaire was second version of Oxford Placement Test and the second questionnaire was an adapted version of Computer Literacy Questionnaire. It took one session to complete the questionnaires. T-test was run to determine the relationship between the two variables. It was revealed that there is a direct relationship between language proficiency and computer literacy of students. Those who were more proficient in English had been able to use computer more easily. This study has limitations in the size of participants and the condition of data collection. It is obvious that the findings of the study cannot be generalized to all Iranian EFL students.

Keywords: computer literacy, language proficiency, EFL student, gender

1. Introduction
With the technological advances in our century, the dependence of different professions on computer is increasing. Language education is not an exception, so that the importance of teachers’ computer knowledge and competency in online environments has been discussed in many studies (e.g., Atkins & Vasu, 2000; Cunningham, 2000; Johnson, 2002; Lam, 2000; Oh & French, 2007; Park & Son, 2009; Rakes & Casey, 2000; Shin & Son, 2007; Konan, 2010; Son, Robb, & Charismiadji, 2011).

The increasing use of electronic texts has expanded the definition of the word ‘literacy’ and has invented some “new literacies such as ‘computer literacy’, ‘electronic literacy’ and ‘information literacy” (Son, Robb, & Charismiadji, 2011, p. 27). As Reinking mentions, educators and educational policy makers must now expand their definition of literacy to include the reading and writing not only of printed texts but of electronic texts (Reinking, 1994). Based on the "US Congress of Technology Assessment’s book (1984)” computer literacy is defined as the knowledge and ability to utilize computers and related technology efficiently, with a range of skills covering levels from elementary use to programming and advanced problem solving. It can also refer to the comfort level someone has with using computer programs and other applications that are associated with computers. As noted by Reid (1997) computer literacy is essential in higher education. In this regard it is a crucial knowledge to be gained by students.

Since computer provides an environment to create, transfer and share any kind of information it can be used to foster language learning. According to Konan (2010) in this virtual environment, getting the necessary information fully and on time and making use of the obtained information in personal and professional development are directly related to the competency to use the computer effectively.

In the field of TEFL, “computer literacy involves the development of knowledge and skills for using general computer applications, language-specific software programs and Internet tools confidently and competently. It comprises a number of aspects, including technological awareness, technical vocabulary, components of a computer, concepts of data and programs, ways of computing, working on files, documents and pictures, working with multimedia, evaluating resources and communicating with others” Son et al., (2011).

As mentioned in this review, most of the studies have been conducted to determine the computer literacy of the teachers and their ability and tendency to use computer in their classrooms,
however the aim of this study is to investigate the relationship between the language level of EFL students and their computer proficiency level.

The purpose of this study is to find if there is any significant relationship between the computer literacy and language level of EFL students chosen from different institutes of Sanandaj, Iran. Accordingly the results of this study will answer the following questions:

1. Is there any significant relationship between computer literacy and language proficiency of EFL students of Sanandaj?
2. Is there any significant relationship between gender and computer knowledge?

2. Method

Participants of the study were a total of 53 EFL students (N(male)=31, N(female)=22) chosen from different institutes of Sanandaj, Iran. As it is shown in table 1 the average age of participants was 17.64 years. They had all the experience of studying English from 1 to 8 years. Almost everybody had access to computer and internet.

Table 1: Participant profile (N=53)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31 (58.5%)</td>
<td>22 (41.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average age</td>
<td>17.64 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to compute</td>
<td>Yes 100 %</td>
<td>No 0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to internet</td>
<td>Yes 100 %</td>
<td>No 0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants were asked to complete two questionnaires. The first questionnaire was second version of Oxford Placement Test. It consists of 60 questions to determine the current level of students English language ability. The second questionnaire was an adapted version of Computer Literacy Questionnaire. The questionnaire was originally used by Son et al. (2011). It was consisting of three sections: Section I (background); Section II (computer-related questions – Do you & Can you?); Section III (computer knowledge test – 20 questions). The reliability of the questionnaire is shown in table 2.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics
Obtained from the application of the developed inventory, the data was recorded on computer and were analyzed through SPSS 22 statistical package program.

3. Results

SPSS 22 was run to analyze the gathered data. The findings are as follows:
Most students rated their computer literacy as good (41.5 %). The remaining rated their literacy as poor (15.1 %), adequate (34 %), and excellent (9.4 %). Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Self-rating computer literacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to demonstrate if there is a significant difference between the computer knowledge of males and females, a t-test was conducted. The results, as shown in table 4, show that there is a significant difference between the male and female participants’ computer knowledge in favor of male participants.

Table 4: T-Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17.0645</td>
<td>2.22014</td>
<td>.39875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12.4091</td>
<td>4.50036</td>
<td>.95948</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Independent Samples Test
Pearson correlation coefficient was used to calculate the relationship between the computer knowledge and language proficiency of participants. As can be seen in table 5 the Correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (.633). This result shows that there is a significant relationship between participants’ language proficiency and their ability to use computer. In other words those with higher language level are more knowledgeable in computer.

**Table 5: Correlations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Computer Knowledge</th>
<th>Language Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Computer Knowledge</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sig. (1-tailed)</strong></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language Level</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pearson Correlation</strong></td>
<td>.633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sig. (1-tailed)</strong></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>N</strong></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

According to the participants’ responses, among the 53 students, 51 students (96.2%) have a computer connected to the Internet at home; 50 students (94.3%) have their email account; 20 students (37.7%) have a personal homepage on the Web; 23 students (43.4%) think that they understand the basic functions of computer hardware components; 12 students (22.6%) use keyboard shortcuts; 18 students (34.0%) use a computer connected to the Internet at school; 16 students (30.2%) use the computer for teaching purposes; 39 students (73.6%) find it easy to learn something by reading it from the computer screen; 26 students (49.1%) use CDROMs to
supplement their learning/teaching; and 50 students (94.3%) use Websites to supplement their learning/teaching (see Table 6).

Table 6: *Computer-Related ‘Do You’ Questions (N=53)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Do you have a computer connected to the Internet at home?</td>
<td>51 (96.2%)</td>
<td>2 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Do you have an e-mail account?</td>
<td>50 (94.3%)</td>
<td>3 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Do you have a personal homepage on the Web?</td>
<td>20 (37.7%)</td>
<td>33 (62.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Do you understand the basic functions of computer hardware components?</td>
<td>23 (43.4%)</td>
<td>30 (56.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Do you use keyboard shortcuts?</td>
<td>12 (22.6%)</td>
<td>41 (77.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Do you use a computer connected to the Internet at school?</td>
<td>18 (34.0%)</td>
<td>35 (66.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Do you use a computer for learning purposes?</td>
<td>16 (30.2%)</td>
<td>37 (69.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Do you find it easy to learn something by reading it from a computer screen?</td>
<td>39 (73.6%)</td>
<td>14 (26.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Do you use CD-ROMs to supplement your learning?</td>
<td>26 (49.1%)</td>
<td>27 (50.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Do you use Web sites to supplement your learning?</td>
<td>50 (94.3%)</td>
<td>3 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students also showed their capability to use the computer by responding to the ‘Can you’ questions listed in Table 7. While most students indicated that they are able to do various computer-based tasks, over 50 percent of the students indicated that they are not able create a simple Web page and use a video conference tool on the Web.

Table 7: *Computer-Related ‘Can You’ Questions (N=53)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Can you properly turn on and shut down a computer?</td>
<td>50 (94.3%)</td>
<td>3 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Can you start and exit a computer program?</td>
<td>51 (96.2%)</td>
<td>2 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Can you change monitor brightness and contrast?</td>
<td>49 (92.5%)</td>
<td>4 (7.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Can you minimize, maximize and move windows on the desktop?</td>
<td>51 (96.2%)</td>
<td>2 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Can you perform file management including deleting and renaming files, etc.?</td>
<td>51 (96.2%)</td>
<td>2 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Can you use a ‘search’ command to locate a file?</td>
<td>51 (96.2%)</td>
<td>2 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Can you install a software program?</td>
<td>37 (69.8%)</td>
<td>16 (30.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Can you scan disks for viruses?</td>
<td>50 (94.3%)</td>
<td>3 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Can you move a file from a hard drive to a USB drive?</td>
<td>51 (96.2%)</td>
<td>2 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Can you write files onto a CD?</td>
<td>51 (96.2%)</td>
<td>2 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Can you resize a photograph?</td>
<td>50 (94.3%)</td>
<td>3 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Can you record and edit sounds?</td>
<td>51 (96.2%)</td>
<td>2 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Can you print a document using a printer?</td>
<td>49 (92.5%)</td>
<td>4 (7.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Can you create a basic Word document?</td>
<td>51 (96.2%)</td>
<td>2 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Can you copy, cut and paste text in a document?</td>
<td>51 (96.2%)</td>
<td>2 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Can you change font style and size in a document?</td>
<td>50 (94.3%)</td>
<td>3 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Can you create a basic Excel spreadsheet?</td>
<td>34 (64.2%)</td>
<td>19 (35.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Can you create a simple database using Access?</td>
<td>26 (49.1%)</td>
<td>25 (47.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Can you create a simple presentation using PowerPoint?</td>
<td>50 (94.3%)</td>
<td>3 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Can you create a simple Web page?</td>
<td>16 (30.2%)</td>
<td>37 (69.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Can you send and receive attachments through e-mail messages?</td>
<td>50 (94.3%)</td>
<td>3 (5.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Can you search for information online using a Web search engine?</td>
<td>51 (96.2%)</td>
<td>2 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Can you download and save files from the Web (e.g., text, graphic, PDF files)?</td>
<td>51 (96.2%)</td>
<td>2 (3.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Can you use a video conferencing tool on the Web?</td>
<td>10 (18.9%)</td>
<td>43 (81.2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the study provide several points and issues that need to be discussed. First, self-rated competency is not equal to actual levels of computer knowledge and skills for using a variety of applications. Although there might be the possibility of influence from their unfamiliarity with technical vocabulary, the students in the study indicated that their self-evaluation of basic computing skills are generally high but their frequency of using computer applications is very limited to few types of applications such as word processing. They seem to have little knowledge and use of databases and computer-mediated communication (CMC) tools in particular. As shown in the frequency of using computer applications the students had very diverse experiences with computer applications. There were also great individual differences in the level of computer literacy.

Answering research question 1, the correlation between computer literacy and language proficiency was significant. It means that the knowledge of English language affected the students’ ability to use computer. In other words those who were more proficient in English had been able to use computer more easily. This can be explained by the fact that the language of computer is English.

Regarding research question 2, the difference between male and female’s computer knowledge was significant. Based on the results the male’s knowledge of computer was significantly more than that of females. As women are not interested in technical affairs, this finding can be justified. This study has limitations in the size of participants and the condition of data collection. It is obvious that the findings of the study cannot be generalized to all Iranian EFL students. Results can be useful for stakeholders of computer and language training centers.

References


A Comparison between Distance Education and Conventional University EFL Students Regarding Their Use of Meta-cognitive Strategies

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Biodata

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Habib Shirzaei, M.A. student in TEFL at University of Sistan and Baluchestan. He has taught different language courses such as IELTS courses in several language institutes. His areas of interest are distance education, vocabulary, pronunciation, and MALL.

Abstract

The present study aims at investigating the comparison between Distance Education and Conventional university EFL students regarding their meta-cognitive strategies. To this end, 40 EFL students including 21 males and 19 females from both DE and Conventional universities in Zahedan were selected through stratified sampling to participate in this study. The instrument of the present research is a Likert scale questionnaire named the Oxford’s Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) that was distributed among the participants to elicit their responses. The results of Mann-Whitney U test through SPSS revealed that type of universities affects the use of meta-cognitive strategies by EFL learners. By answering all 9 items, DE students made more use of meta-cognitive strategies than their counterparts in conventional universities. Due to the features of DE universities,
DE students strive more to be autonomous and independent since their system of education provides little feedback and face to face interaction.

**Keywords**: Distance education, Conventional university, Meta-cognitive strategies, SILL

1. **Introduction**

Any system of education has some distinct features that make it different from others. Distance education and conventional type of education that is a classroom and teacher-based system are among the major ones. These differences can be so deep to affect the way that students learn during their study. These two types of universities have different characteristics. Some of their features are discussed below. Also, scholars’ views on meta-cognitive strategies which include learning about learning are brought as follows.

The advances of technology have had great influences on the educational system of governments. This advancement has moved a lot of people toward distance education, especially those with job or family commitments and responsibilities, those who have difficulties partaking in the conventional mode of instruction.

Distance education has a long history. Its history can be traced back to more than one century ago. Taylor (2001) suggested five generations of distance education: First, the Correspondence Model based on print technology; Second, the Multi-media Model based on print, audio and video technologies; Third, the Tele-learning Model, based on applications of telecommunications technologies to provide opportunities for synchronous communication; Fourth, the Flexible Learning Model based on online delivery via the Internet; and Fifth, Intelligent Flexible Learning Model based on the interactive nature of the Internet.

Keegan (1990) also identifies five main elements of distance education: 1- the separation of teacher and learner; 2- the influence of an educational organization; 3- the use of technical media (usually print) to unite the teacher and learner and to carry educational content; 4- the provision of two-way communication so that the students may benefit from or even initiate dialogue; 5- and the possibility of occasional meetings for both didactic and socialization purposes. Keegan (1986) stated that distance education emerged in response to the need of providing access to those who would otherwise not be able to participate in face-to-face courses. It encompasses those programs that allow the learner and instructor to be physically apart during the learning process and maintain communication in a variety of ways. The characteristics of DE are also mentioned by Garrison.
Distance education implies that the majority of educational communication between a teacher and his/her student(s) occur non-contiguously. 2. Distance education must involve two-way communication between (among) teacher and his/her student(s) for the purpose of facilitating and supporting the educational process. 3. Distance education uses technology to mediate the required two-way communication.

Holmberg, B. (1989) defined distance education as follows: Distance learning, like any kind of learning, can serve different ends, but distance learning appears mainly to serve those who cannot or do not want to make use of classroom teaching, and the reasons why adults choose distance education are primarily "the convenience, flexibility and adaptability of this mode of education to suit individual students' needs" (Holmberg, 1989, p. 24). According to Maxwell, 1995 DE is "a student-centered approach to education that removes all barriers to access while providing a high degree of learner autonomy" (Maxwell, 1995, p. 43).

Distance study is self-study, but the student is not alone. As Holmberg (1989, p.27) describes it, "A kind of conversation in the form of two-way traffic occurs through the written or otherwise mediated interaction between the students and the tutors and others belonging to the supporting institution". He goes on to state that, "conversation is brought about by the presentation of the study matter if this is characterized by a personal approach…and causes the students to discuss the contents with themselves".

According to the aforementioned issues, more and more people have accessibility to distance education which has had a huge progress in the last decades. A great number of distance education learners have family and job responsibilities so that there is less time available for studying and participating in the classes as contrasted with the conventional learners. Payam-e-Noor University is the only distance education In Iran in which the students are not obliged to attend the class sessions. It is of semi-attendance or free-of-attendance mode. In addition, their attendance is optional for theoretical units and mandatory for practical ones. The foundation of Distance Education can be traced back to the late 1800s. One of the first forms of distance education was correspondence course study.

Distance Education has experienced dramatic growth both nationally and internationally since the early 1980s. It has evolved from early correspondence education using primarily print based materials into a worldwide movement using various technologies. The goals of distance education, as an alternative to traditional education, have been to offer degree granting programs, to battle
illiteracy in developing countries, to provide training opportunities for economic growth, and to offer curriculum enrichment in non-traditional educational settings. A variety of technologies have been used as delivery systems to facilitate this learning at a distance. Perhaps the most striking difference between a distance education university and a conventional university is the class attendance. Class attendance is not obligatory in distance education while it is mandatory in conventional education.

Probably the most common definition of distance education is the separation of teacher and students geographically. Student's assiduous work does not always lead to success. Students sometimes assert that despite their efforts they haven't been able to succeed in their studies. This problem is partly related to the way they learn. In other words, they should learn how to learn or teachers should learn how to teach. In order to do so, the following certain strategies are needed. These strategies are called meta-cognitive strategies. John Flavell defined meta-cognition as thinking about thinking and he believed that meta-cognitive knowledge refers to the individual's beliefs about oneself and about others as learners and of the requirements involved in the learning process (Flavell, 1979).

Scholars have emphasized the use of these strategies by students and have reported positive effects of applying meta-cognitive strategies for better learning. Rahimi and Riazi (2005) stated the reason why the Iranian EFL learners mostly used meta-cognitive strategies as the fact that Iran is an EFL context and language learners are not highly exposed to the target language to acquire it unconsciously. Rahimi and Katal (2012) mentioned that according to research, meta-cognitive learners who take conscious steps to understand what they are doing when they learn tend to be the most successful learners.

A study by Gerami and Madani Ghare Biaghlou (2011) determined that successful EFL students used a wider range of learning strategies and different from those often preferred by their unsuccessful peers. The former often used meta-cognitive strategies while the latter tended to use surface level cognitive strategies. Hence, the use of meta-cognitive strategies may lead to successful learning provided that other criteria for successful learning are met.

Meta-cognitive strategies are not considered as one way or method to enhance learning. In fact, they are divided into different categories. O'mally and Chamot (1990) have categorized them into three major groups called planning, monitoring, and evaluation. Planning includes the use of learning strategies such as advance organizers, directed attention, selective attention, self-
management, and functional planning. Monitoring is comprised of self-monitoring. Self-evaluation is a learning strategy applied in the evaluation group. If these strategies are applied by the students it is said that they are meta-cognitively competent. Oxford (1990) has also classified meta-cognitive strategies into some subgroups. Firstly, indirect strategies are considered as a main group in which meta-cognition is a subgroup. Centering one's learning, arranging and planning one's learning, and evaluating one's learning are the strategies under the category of meta-cognition. She has broken these strategies into more detailed subcategories.

Firstly, centering your learning includes over viewing and linking with already known materials, paying attention, and delaying speech production to focus on listening. Secondly, arranging and planning your learning is categorized into finding out about learning, organizing, setting goals and objectives, identifying the purpose of a language task (purposeful 4 skills) arranging and planning your learning, planning for a language task, and seeking practice opportunities. Thirdly, evaluating your learning involves self-monitoring and self-evaluating.

A great bulk of studies have been conducted on features of universities either conventional or DE, and also many scholars have conducted research on the use of meta-cognitive strategies by EFL students. Few studies have tried to examine the effect of these two factors on each other, especially a comparison between the two universities in order to determine which one is a more successful user of metacognitive strategies. The following questions are addressed in order to determine the effect of the use of meta-cognitive strategies on EFL learners in DE and conventional universities.

• Do DE students apply meta-cognitive strategies for learning English?"
• Do Conventional university students apply meta-cognitive strategies for learning English?
• How effective is the use of meta-cognitive strategies comparatively in DE and Conventional university EFL students?

2.Method
2.1. Participants
In this study, 40 EFL students were selected from among Iranian universities either conventional ones or distance education universities. Stratified random sampling was applied to select the
participants in both conventional and DE universities. The EFL students were chosen according to their type of university and gender.

2.2. Instruments

(The instrument used in this study was Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) developed by Oxford (1990). SILL was used in the current study to collect data on DE and Conventional University EFL students of how they use meta-cognitive strategies in their studies. Only part D of the aforementioned questionnaire (Items 30-38) was taken into consideration.) Oxford's (1990) SILL questionnaire was distributed among the participants to answer it wholly but just part D that was directly related to meta-cognitive strategies was considered for analysis.

2.3. Procedure and data analysis

The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Part D of Oxford’s (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) was used which is related to meta-cognitive strategies was taken into consideration. The questionnaire uses five point Likert-scale for which the participants were asked to reveal their response (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) to a strategy explanation (1. Never or almost never true of me; 2. Usually true of me; 3. Somewhat true of me; 4. Usually true of me; 5. Always or almost always true of me). Part D is about Meta-cognitive strategies which is at the focal of this study. There was no time limit for the participants to complete the questionnaire. Two variables including type of university, and their answers to the Oxford's questionnaire along with gender were considered by SPSS using Mann-Whitney U test in order to find the effects of applying meta-cognitive strategies on gender and type of university.

3. Results

The students’ answers to the questionnaire revealed different responses. Cross-tabulation through SPSS depicted that one DE student answered never or almost never to Item1 while 4 conventional students answered to it. Eleven conventional students replied usually not while 3 of them were DE students. 7 DE students somewhat agreed with Item1 while 4 conventional students just answered somewhat true. No conventional students replied usually true for me for Item1 but five DE students checked usually true. Three DE students totally agreed with Item1 while 2 conventional students complied with Item1. Most of DE students namely 16 students agreed with Item2 while 9 students out of 21 students of conventional universities were in agreement with this item. The majority of DE students had a positive answer to Item 3 but almost half of conventional university students
agreed with this item. Almost the same result as in item 3 was repeated for other items including items 4,5,6,7,8, and 9 i.e. most DE students agreed with items but only a few proportion of Conventional university students were in agreement with those items. Crosstab tables are brought in the appendices. According to Table1, showed that the items are affected by type of universities. From item1 to item9 with the levels of significance of .003 for item 1, .035 for item2, .016 for item 3, .015 for item4, .001 for item 5 , .005 for item6, .016 for item 7, .029 for item 8, and .043 for item 9. The results revealed that based on the type of university, the students made use of meta-cognitive strategies differently.

Table 1 Between meta-cognitive items and type of university

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Item1</th>
<th>Item2</th>
<th>Item3</th>
<th>Item4</th>
<th>Item5</th>
<th>Item6</th>
<th>Item7</th>
<th>Item8</th>
<th>Item9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>94.500</td>
<td>125.500</td>
<td>113.00</td>
<td>112.50</td>
<td>84.500</td>
<td>99.000</td>
<td>113.00</td>
<td>122.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td>325.500</td>
<td>356.500</td>
<td>344.00</td>
<td>343.50</td>
<td>315.50</td>
<td>330.00</td>
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<td>353.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]</td>
<td>.004\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>.044\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>.019\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>.017\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>.001\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>.006\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>.019\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>.036\textsuperscript{a}</td>
<td>.050\textsuperscript{a}</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Conclusion and discussion

The findings of the study showed that DE universities and Conventional ones bear some differences regarding the use of meta-cognitive strategies. Their answers to the 9 items of the questionnaire clarify the point.

The answers to the research questions are as follows

- As for the first question “Do DE students apply meta-cognitive strategies for learning English?” The fact is that DE students’ method of learning is totally affected by the meta-cognitive strategies that they apply.
Do Conventional university students apply meta-cognitive strategies for learning English? The use of meta-cognitive strategies by Conventional university students seems to be somewhat limited and not extensive.

How effective is the use of meta-cognitive strategies comparatively in DE and Conventional university EFL students?

DE students seem to be more affected by meta-cognitive strategies since they applied a wider variety of these strategies to a great extent to learn English. Considering the first item, the results showed that DE students try to find more ways to use English language and that might be because conventional universities’ curriculum is more fixed and organized than DE universities. As a result DE students try to find different ways to use English since there are few or no classes to be able to use the language.

The second item goes to paying attention to the mistakes the students make and the how to do better. In conventional universities, teachers mostly provide the feedback and that is why these students do not actually contemplate a lot about their mistakes and the way to improve them, whilst DE students receive no feedbacks. Thus, they really have to look for their mistakes and how to correct them because they can’t receive enough feedback from their teachers. Due to lack of practice in oral skills in DE universities, the students try to pay more attention when someone is speaking English than conventional students. That is why DE students were more in agreement with item 4.

Planning one’s schedule to have enough time to study is what item 5 includes. DE universities normally cover a whole book or a great bulk of materials for their students and most of them are self-study materials, so DE students must have a well-planned schedule in order to be able to learn the materials. According to the results, Conventional university students also try to be as planned as possible to study but since a great part of learning and instruction can happen in classes they won’t need more time and planning than DE students to cover their materials.

Regarding item 6, dearth of regular classes and the speaking chance for DE students makes them look more for people to talk to in English than conventional university students. Item 7 discusses the opportunities to read as much as possible in English. Again, a great deal of materials for DE students and also lack of appropriate instruction has made DE students look for more opportunities to read as much as they can than conventional university students.

Having clear goals for improving English language skills in item 8 is what both type of students have paid attention to, although DE students have agreed more to have clear goals for improving
their English language skills. That might be because they need to have clear goals to be successful since their curriculum seems somewhat broad and there’s also lack of enough direct instruction. Thinking about one’s progress in English is done more commonly by DE students due to the fact that they do not receive enough feedback from the teacher and they should think more to see if they have made headway or not in learning English. All in all, this study indicates that meta-cognitive strategies were more applicable by DE students and conventional university students applied less meta-cognitive strategies in order to learn English.

4.1. Pedagogical Implication

According to the results of the present study conventional university EFL students seem to be less familiar with the use of miscellaneous strategies in their studies. It is the responsibility of language teachers to familiarize them with the strategies of language learning in order to gain more autonomy. Teaching learners how to learn is deemed to be of great importance in making learning more efficient in general and language learning in particular. By taking the aforementioned strategies into consideration, the learners become more independent of their teachers. Strategy learning is believed to develop a sense of independence in the learners so that ultimately they become independent of their teachers.

References


**Appendix A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
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</tr>
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<td>never or almost never</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>usually true</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>always or almost always true</td>
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### Crosstab

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<th>somewhat true</th>
<th>usually true</th>
<th>always or almost always true</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conventional</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<table>
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<tbody>
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Appendix 2

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

This form of the strategy inventory for language learning (SILL) is for students of a second language (SL). Please read each statement and fill in the bubble of the response (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that tells HOW TRUE THE STATEMENT IS.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

Answer in terms of how well the statement describes you. Do not answer how you think you should be, or what other people do. **There is no right or wrong answers** to these statements.

**Part D**

30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my SL. 1 2 3 4 5
31. I notice my SL mistakes and use that information to help me do better. 1 2 3 4 5
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking SL. 1 2 3 4 5
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of SL. 1 2 3 4 5
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study SL. 1 2 3 4 5
35. I look for people I can talk to in SL. 1 2 3 4 5
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in SL. 1 2 3 4 5
37. I have clear goals for improving my SL skills. 1 2 3 4 5
38. I think about my progress in learning SL. 1 2 3 4 5
Title

The Impact of Cognates on Target words in vocabulary retention of Iranian Monolingual and Bilingual EFL Students

Authors

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Biodata

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Abstract

Vocabulary is one of the most important tools in second language learning process. It is important to know a good range of vocabulary in order to have good reading comprehension in a foreign language. In addition, it is important to know strategies such as cognates, to have a better vocabulary retention. For that reason, when people do not know a high range of vocabulary in the second language, or when people do not know the strategies (cognates), they face a problem in vocabulary retention. This fact encouraged the researcher to give implicit instruction on such strategies and on the words that are similar between languages and have the same meaning. The instructions were given with the purpose of making the students aware of the cognates. The experimental group (n= 70) received cognate method as the treatment, whereas the control group (n= 35) received non-cognate method as the treatment. This study used three instruments, one works as a cognate test, a vocabulary pretest, and a vocabulary posttest. The vocabulary pretest and posttest do not have the same format as the cognate test. The data from this study indicated that students in experimental group (monolinguals and bilinguals) significantly outperformed the students in control group in vocabulary learning.
Keywords: Cognate, Strategy, Monolingual, Bilingual

1. Introduction
Teaching English vocabulary is an important area worthy of effort and investigation. Recently methodologists and linguists emphasize and recommend teaching vocabulary because of its importance in language teaching. Vocabulary is needed for expressing meaning and in using the receptive (listening and reading) and the productive (speaking and writing) skills. “If language structures make up the skeleton of language, then it is vocabulary that provides the vital organs and the flesh” (Harmer, 1991,p.153).

Vocabulary is not a syllabus, i.e., a list of words that teachers prepare for their learners to memorize and learn by heart. Memorizing may be good and useful as a temporary technique for tests, but not for learning a foreign language. Language students need to learn vocabulary of the target language in another way. If we are really to teach students what words mean and how they are used, we need to show them being used together in context. Words do not just exist on their own; they live together and they depend upon each other. Therefore, teaching vocabulary correctly is a very important element in language learning.

1.1 Statement of the Problem
One of the major problems of Iranian students in learning a foreign language, especially English is their low knowledge of cognate strategy. Vocabulary is an essential element in L2 reading comprehension (Garcia, 2000). Because vocabulary helps students to understand texts, it constitutes an essential tool that learners should have to reach high levels of reading comprehension (Reed, 2009). In addition, having a poor vocabulary is a hindrance to succeed in reading (Chall, Jacobs, & Baldwin, 1990; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Hirsch, 2003; Scaborough, 1998). Bloom (1976) draws that there is a direct connection between the Learners’ vocabulary and the results they obtain in reading comprehension tests. Moreover, Thorndike (1973) evidenced in an analysis of Achievement test data in 15 different countries, a meaningful and strong connection between vocabulary and comprehension in the reading tests. Besides, students must be familiarized with the most frequent words that are found in the school materials if they want to avoid mistakes and evade failing in the understanding of a reading text.

Indeed, if the students are exposed to a text that is meaningful to them since the Content of the reading is related to their daily life, it is more probable to encounter words (cognates) that will take
the learner to have a better vocabulary retention. (Graves, 2006). For that reason, it is fundamental that teachers provide students with tools for acquiring their own approaches to vocabulary. According to Learsted and Gender (2005), students unconsciously take advantage of the L1, Using their knowledge for the comprehension of L2 text. Particularly, students take advantage of the words in their native language that are similar in script and meaning to words in the Second language. Those words are called “cognates” (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

Despite the problems identified, very few studies have been done on effect of Cognates on Target words in vocabulary retention. Moreover, little attention has been paid to explore the significant difference between different groups of students with different proficiency Levels in terms of the effect of cognate on Target words. A few Studies have investigated the topic of interest in an EFL context. monica Viviana(2011) Indicated cognate recognition through reading strategies instruction for written Comprehension among ninth grade students, Vilmar Ferreira De Souza (2003) indicated the Role of cognates in reading comprehension: a cognitive perspective.

This study, in general, aims at investigating the effect of the cognate on Target words of Iranian EFL learners. In other words, this study is to find out whether instruction of cognate helps EFL learners on Target words. Finally, this study aims at finding out whether or not there is a difference between different groups of Students with different proficiency levels in terms of the effect of cognate on Target words. This Investigation aims at analyzing the effect of Cognates on Target words in vocabulary retention of Iranian monolingual and bilingual EFL students. This study set out to pursue answers to the following two research questions:

a) What is the effect of Cognates on Target words in vocabulary retention of Iranian Monolingual and Bilingual EFL Students?

b) What is the effect of Cognates on Target words in vocabulary retention of Iranian Bilingual EFL Students?

In order to provide a reliable answer to the previously-stated research questions, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H01: there is no significance effect of Cognates on Target words in vocabulary retention of Iranian Monolingual and Bilingual EFL Students.

H02: there is no significance effect of Cognates on Target words in vocabulary retention of Iranian bilingual EFL Students.
2. Literature review

In today’s globalizing world, borders between people are disappearing one by one and languages share more day by day leading to an increase in the number of cognates in all languages. Defined as the vocabulary items in two different languages that are similar both orthographically and semantically (Holmes & Ramos, 1995), cognates constitute an important part of the vocabulary even in languages differing dramatically from each other such as Japanese and English. It is crucial to make a distinction between true cognates and false cognates. Although both types of cognates have the same or very similar form in two languages, only true cognates have the same meaning. As false cognates, or deceptive demons (Reid, 1968) deserve a different focus.

Research on cognates focuses mainly on two main topics: the facilitating role of cognates in L2 vocabulary activation, and the use of cognates as a learning strategy in second/foreign language learning. The investigation of cognates as a learning strategy in EFL/ESL settings aims to foster listening and reading comprehension. ComesanaSoares and Lima (2010) focused on the role of cognate and non-cognate words on second language learning methods.

The results of their study suggest that cognate words are easier to learn than non-cognate words because of the stronger lexical links, and the authors add that the sentence processing of new words in novice learners is mediated by the lexical representations of L1(p. 203). In their study, Nagy, Garcia, Durgunoglu and Hancin-Bhatt (1993) found out that Spanish learners of L2 English resorted to making a connection between their native languages and target language when they were exposed to a new word in English and used positive transfer of cognates as a reading strategy in English. Jimenez, Garcia and Pearson (1996) and Garcia (1998) pointed out that use of crosslinguistic strategies played a crucial role in reading comprehension. Jimenez et al (1996) encouraged low-literacy Latina students to search for cognates and resolve unknown vocabulary making inferences based on cognates.

The authors concluded that using cognate’s strategy resulted in the students producing extended discourse about the text and it augmented their reading engagement (Jimenez et al, 1996). Hammer and Madeleine (1978) highlighted the role of cognates in L2 learning, and suggested that cognates are easy to pick up not only in reading and but also in Listening.

Hammer and Madeleine (1993) also compared the identification of cognates in reading and listening, and found out that English speakers of French performed better on visual identification than aural identification. There were even some attempts to develop students’ use of cognate
strategy in the language classroom. Garcia (1996) for example, concluded that upon receiving an individualized scaffolded instruction on cognate recognition and use in reading, majority of Mexican-American students could access cognates to infer unknown vocabulary.

3. Method
3.1. Participants
The majority of the participants volunteered to take part in the study. All participants are from an Islamic Azad university in Shushtar City. The experimental group, monolinguals native language is Farsi and bilinguals’ native language is Arabic. The control group, other participants’ native language is Farsi. Nearly all participants are young adults with an average age of 20. The subjects of the study are classified into two different classes. One class is randomly assign to be the experimental groups and the other class are assign to be the control group. The experimental group (n= 70) received cognate method as the treatment, whereas the Control group (n= 35) receive non-cognate method as the treatment.

3.2. Instrumentation
This study used three instruments, one works as a cognate test, a vocabulary pretest to assess participants background knowledge before the treatment, a vocabulary posttest assess participants’ ability to recall and retention the new words after a week from the treatment sessions. Thus, each participant completed a total of three different protocols. The vocabulary pretest and posttest for the main experiment not have the same format as the cognate test. This study used three instruments, one works as a cognate test, a vocabulary pretest to assess participants background knowledge before the treatment, a vocabulary posttest assess participants’ ability to recall and retention the new words after a week from the treatment sessions. The vocabulary pretest and vocabulary posttest for the main experiment not have the same format as the cognate test.

3.2.1. Cognate test
Before the actual learning experiment, the researcher performed a cognate test in order to select 50 cognate words used in the study. The cognate test consisted of 35 English words. The researcher use of multiple-choice format test. Each of the 53 English Words was provided with four different Arabic words. The participants were asked to choose one answer from the four choices given. From the 53 multiple – choice questions, 50 words which had the highest percentage of correct answer were chosen to be used in the main experiment. The 50 words are as follow: Alcohol,
Alcoholic beverage, Algebra, Allah, Imam, Arabs, Bedouin, Burnous, Caramel, Caraway, Cipher, Cotton, Dinar, Dirham, Emir, Fellah, Gazelle, Ghoul, Harem, Hashish, Henna, Hegira, Hookah, Houri, julep, Muezzin, Mufti, Mullah, Muslim, Islam, Attar, Jihad, Jinn, Kaaba, Sultan, Sumac, Sunni, Sura, Vizier, Myrrh, koran, Safari, Salaam,Khamsin, Lemon, Lilac, Macramé, Wadi, Mohammad, mosque. The vocabulary pretest and vocabulary posttest for the main experiment did not have the same format as the cognate test.

3.2.2. Vocabulary pretest
A vocabulary pretest held during this study. For the bilingual group (from experimental group), the participants gave the English texts with words (cognate words) and they asked to answer to the questions. For the monolingual group (from experimental group), the participants gave the English texts with words (with cognate words) and they asked to answer to the questions. The monolingual group (from control group) has a vocabulary pretest where they gave the English texts with words (without cognate words) and they asked to answer to the questions. The aim of this test is to assess the participants’ background knowledge before the treatment sessions.

3.2.3. Vocabulary Posttest
The bilingual group (from experimental group) had a vocabulary posttest where they gave the English texts with words (with cognate words) that taught at that particular session and they asked to answer to the questions and the monolingual group (from experimental group) had a vocabulary posttest where they gave the English texts with words (with cognate words) that taught at that particular session and they asked to answer to the questions. The monolingual group (from control group) had a vocabulary posttest where they gave the English texts with words (without cognate words) that taught at that particular session and they asked to answer to the questions. The vocabulary posttest consisted of all 50 words that taught at the treatment sessions.

3.3 Procedure
All participants in both groups met with the researcher in seven 45 minute sessions. At the first session, the participants received an introduction to the study and take a cognate test. The purpose of the cognate test is to form a list of words unknown to the participants to take part in the study. The participants received a sheet of 53 English words and they asked the questions. The instruction of the test wrote in English and Farsi to ensure that the participants understand what they supposed to do. Moreover, an example provided to ensure that the participants understand how to answer the test. After two days from the cognate test the researcher need enough time to correct the cognate
test and choose the words and participants which used in the study, at the second session, the participants take a vocabulary pretest, the next sessions are the treatment sessions. Each of these treatment sessions lasted for about 45 minutes. At these sessions, the new lexical items, which choose from the cognate test, taught to the participants.

During these sessions, the experimental group taught the vocabulary via 3 C’s approach, also the control group taught via the 3 C’s approach. Each treatment session for both the experimental and control group last for 45 minutes. In the experimental group (both monolingual and bilingual), each English word presented with its equivalent Arabic word (that are cognate with English word) with the English pronunciation of the word. In the control group, each English word presented (that are not cognate with Arabic word) with the pronunciation of the word. The presentation repeated for three times because repetition is necessary for elementary learners in order to master the oral and form of the lexical items (Gairns& Redman, 1986, as cited in Ramachandran & Rahim, 2004).

At the last session, the participants in both groups gave a post-test. In the experimental group, the participants gave the English texts with words (that are cognate with English word) and they asked to answer to the questions. In the control group, the participants gave the English texts with words (that are not cognate with English word), and they asked to answer to the questions. In the post-test, all of the 50 words which taught at the treatment sessions tested using the same format which used in the vocabulary pretests.

3.4 Data analysis
The analysis of the data was quantitatively. For the vocabulary pretest, the total score for the test is 50. Each correct answer considered one point. For the vocabulary posttest, the total score for the test is 50. Each correct answer considered one point. The vocabulary posttest include all of the words that taught at the treatment sessions in order to measure how much the participants learn during the treatment sessions.

4. Results and Discussions
4.1. Descriptive statistics of vocabulary pretest
Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the participants’ scores on the vocabulary pretest and on the vocabulary posttest. These descriptive analyses can help identify the overall
patterns of students’ scores in both groups in order to address the first and the second research questions.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of vocabulary pretest were computed to summarize the participants’ scores on the vocabulary pretest. **Descriptives**

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</table>

Mean score for the monolingual condition (M = 25.91, SD = 10) was not significantly different than the bilingual condition (M = 25.69, SD = 12). And also, the control condition (M = 23.16, SD = 10) was not significantly different from the monolingual and bilingual conditions.

4.2. Descriptive statistics of vocabulary post test

Table 2. Descriptive statistics such as, means and standard deviations of vocabulary pretest were computed to summarize the participants’ scores on the post-test. **Descriptives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Mean</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
<td>Upper Bound</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monolingual (fars)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>35.1143</td>
<td>10.42839</td>
<td>1.76272</td>
<td>31.5320</td>
<td>38.6966</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bilingual (arab)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31.8000</td>
<td>10.53510</td>
<td>1.78076</td>
<td>28.1811</td>
<td>35.4189</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24.6857</td>
<td>10.28068</td>
<td>1.73775</td>
<td>21.1542</td>
<td>28.2173</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>30.5333</td>
<td>11.20274</td>
<td>1.09328</td>
<td>28.3653</td>
<td>32.7013</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mean score for the monolingual condition (M = 35.11, SD = 10) was not significantly different than the bilingual condition (M = 31.80, SD = 10). And also, the control condition (M = 24.69, SD = 10) was significantly different from the monolingual and bilingual conditions.

The questions addressed in this study was whether the use of cognate effect on Target wordsof Iranian monolingual and Bilingual EFL Students. To capture the initial differences between the
several means, a one-way ANOVA: post hoc multiple comparisons was applied. It should be reminded that ANOVA: post hoc multiple comparisons is a statistical test which is employed to make sure whether significant differences can be found between several means or not. The results appear in Tables 3.

Table 3 presents Post Hoc Test for multiple comparisons that is a statistical test which is employed to make sure whether significant differences can be found between several means of experimental group and control group. **Multiple Comparisons**

Dependent Variable: score

Tukey HSD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) name</th>
<th>(J) name</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>monolingual(fars)</td>
<td>bilingual(arab)</td>
<td>3.31429</td>
<td>2.48972</td>
<td>.381</td>
<td>-2.6073 to 9.2359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>control</td>
<td>10.42857*</td>
<td>2.48972</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>4.5070 to 16.3501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bilingual(arab)</td>
<td>monolingual(fars)</td>
<td>-3.31429</td>
<td>2.48972</td>
<td>.381</td>
<td>-9.2359 to 2.6073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>control</td>
<td>7.11429*</td>
<td>2.48972</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>1.1927 to 13.0359</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>monolingual(fars)</td>
<td>-10.42857*</td>
<td>2.48972</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-16.3501 to -4.5070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bilingual(arab)</td>
<td>-7.11429*</td>
<td>2.48972</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>-13.0359 to -1.1927</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

There was a statistically significant difference between groups as determined by one-way ANOVA ($F (2, 102) = 9.161, p = .000$). A Tukey post-hoc test revealed that the cognate on Target words was statistically significantly higher after taking the monolingual ($35.11 \pm 10$ min, $p = .381$) and bilingual ($31.80 \pm 10$ min, $p = .381$) treatment compared to the control group ($24.68 \pm 10$ min). There were no statistically significant differences between the monolingual and bilingual ($p = .381$).

### 5. Conclusions

The data from this study indicate that students in experimental group (monolingual and bilingual) significantly outperformed the students in control group in vocabulary learning through the cognate method. In other words, the treatment given to the experimental group had affected this group to some extent. Therefore, the first hypothesis and second hypothesis stating that cognate strategy has no effect on Target words was rejected.
References


Title

Task-Induced Engagement among Iranian EFL Learners’ Vocabulary Retention

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Abstract

Conspicuously, vocabulary acquisition is regarded as an essential issue in second language learning. Taking into consideration about learning a foreign or second language requires the acquisition of thousands of words. Obviously, language learners look for efficient methods to enhance chances for keeping new words as a significant factor in long-term memory, but they often complain forgetting new words soon after learning. As a matter of fact, task plays an important role in classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is mainly focus on meaning rather than form (Nunan, 1991). Therefore, 50 volunteer university students which were advance students in the International Language Institute were chosen as experimental n=25 and control group n=25, then, an important task was applied to experimental group as pre and post-tests in reading comprehension passages. Having finished collecting data, analysis of covariance was applied for data coding. Based on the hierarchy efficiency in the development of vocabulary retention, the
efficiency of checking difficult words from dictionary and writing them down on the flash cards in order to memorize them and keep them in the long term memory and finally, vocabulary retention task was verified as one of the most efficient tasks.

**Keywords:** Task, Vocabulary Learning Problems, Rote Learning, Task induced Involvement, Memory, Long-term Retention of the Words

1. **Introduction**

Vocabulary knowledge is considered as a necessary issue in second language development. It must be taken into consideration that learning a foreign or second language at intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency requires the acquisition of hundreds of words. So, language learners look for influential ways to grow up opportunities for retaining new words in long-term memory; but forgetting is considered as a significant problem. Obviously, vocabulary acquiring needs some challenges for instructors. They like to know in what ways instructional programs might promote the acquisition of so many words. It is remarkable that in foreign language learning, formal instruction is the primary source of input and consequently can be the source of much misunderstanding and wasted effort. Consequently, special attention must be given to demonstrating, practicing, and producing new vocabulary items.

**Research Question:** Does task induced engagements have a significant impact on the Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary engagement in terms of their vocabulary knowledge promotion?

2. **Review of the Related Literature**

2.1. **Students’ Vocabulary Learning Problems**

Vocabulary learning problems may be seen as hindrance to successful language learning. That is, solving these problems may be of great help to both students and teachers. If we want to supply guidelines and solve vocabulary acquisition problems, it is fundamental to discover those problems and perceive their nature, and finally eliminate them.

2.1.1. **Misconceptions**

Misconceptions are considered as wrong assumptions or understandings which are among the problems that have serious learning consequences in the long run. Learners often have misconceptions concerning the processes and strategies for learning the elements of language such as the lexicon. For instance, Iranian learners are often bewildered when English speakers refer to
two or three types of cooking vessels using the word *pot* while Iranians have different names for them. Farjami (2001) asserted Misconception Analysis for dealing with language learning problems. It comprises discovering and understanding misunderstandings and uncovering false assumptions. Obviously, one seemingly trivial misunderstanding may have serious learning consequences in the long run; consequently, teachers should apply Misconception Analysis at different points in their teaching process.

There are various ways of discovering students’ misunderstandings. The teachers’ observations can supply a rich source of information about students’ misunderstandings. Tests can also give some ideas about misunderstandings and illusions. Normally, two types of problems about misunderstanding of words are attributed to the students, those that arise from lack of knowledge or ability, and those that arise from misunderstanding. Of course, the teacher should discriminate between these two types of problems. In the former case, the teacher should provide affirmative instruction, that is, illustrate the item in terms of what it is, while in the latter case s/he should uncover false assumptions and illuminate the item in terms of what it is not or negative instruction (Farjami, 2001).

**2.1.2. Rote Learning**

Undoubtedly, forgetting should be considered as an annoying problem. Most of the students complain that they forget words soon after learning them. Why does forgetting take place? This fundamental question could be answered by taking into consideration the importance of meaningful learning theory. David Ausubel (1968, in Brown, 2000) differentiated between meaningful and rote learning. Rote learning includes the mental storage of items having little or no association with existing cognitive structure; it is the process of acquiring material as discrete and relatively isolated entities. On the other hand, meaningful learning may be illuminated as a process of relating the new material to relevant entities in cognitive structure.

Besides, the significance of the distinction between rote and meaningful learning becomes evident when we think of efficiency of the two kinds of learning in terms of retention, or long term memory. It is assumed that materials learned by rote are forgotten easily, while meaningfully learned materials are more efficiently retained. In the case of meaningful learning, forgetting takes place in a much more intentional and purposeful manner, that is, according to Brown (2000), forgetting is systematic. It is the eradication of unnecessary materials and a clearing of the way for more material to enter the cognitive field.
Consequently, we should clarify our statement and say that one of the students’ problems may be rote learning of the vocabulary, not forgetting. Hence, learners must have a meaningful learning set whereby they can link the new learning task to what they already know, so the following sections deal with meaningful learning and meaningful teaching of new vocabulary items.

2.1.3. Lack of Sufficient Input

Another problem that hinders efficient vocabulary learning is attributed to the lack of exposure to the foreign language. The major sources of input for foreign language learners are the teacher and the textbooks, so these sources of input are not adequate to guarantee successful language learning or at least vocabulary acquisition. We have not been taught the majority of words that we know. It is obvious that beyond a certain level of proficiency in a second language, vocabulary learning is more likely to be mainly implicit obtained through reading or listening (Carter, 2002). Furthermore, implicit or incidental vocabulary learning occurs when the mind is focused elsewhere, such as on understanding a text or using language for communication purposes. Besides, multiple exposures is significant for incidental learning, but a common problem facing language learners is lack of such exposure. A good way to combat this problem is to expose students to extensive reading, in which reading is done consistently over a period of time.

2.1.4. Lack of Output

Undoubtedly, output also serves a significant role in second language acquisition. Krashen (1997, in Brown, 2000) asserted that in the language classroom output is too rare to make any important influence on language development. On the other hand, Swain and Lapkin (1995, in Brown, 2000) proposed persuading evidence that their output hypothesis was at least as significant as input in explaining learner success. If learners do not apply new words in speaking or writing, lack of production may result in forgetting, so learners should seek opportunities to use words, which they have already learned inside or outside of the classroom.

2.1.5. Memory

Usually the discrimination between a successful and unsuccessful language learner has to do with memory. Memory plays a rudimentary role in learning a new language. Consequently, the type of remembering has a place too. We store ideas in our mind on a short-term or long-term basis; our aim in language learning is to move things into our long-term memory, ready to use. Unfortunately, forgetting is part of the process of sorting and trying to retrieve items from our memory. Plenty of words are forgotten immediately after they have been filed, but we can replace the items in our
memory. Learners forget things because some factors impact on their memory and since they have not learned helpful ways of remembering. Below is a list of factors that affect our memory (based on Lewis, 1999).

2.2. The task of vocabulary learning

One way to see the overall task of vocabulary learning is through the distinction between knowing a word and using a word. In other words, the aim of vocabulary learning should include both remembering words and the ability to use them automatically in a wide range of language contexts when the need arises (McCarthy, 1984). In fact, evidence suggests that the knowledge aspect (both breadth and depth) requires more conscious and explicit learning mechanisms whereas the skill aspect involves mostly implicit learning and memory (Ellis, 1994). Consequently, vocabulary learning strategies should include strategies for "using" as well as "knowing" a word. On the other hand, another way to view vocabulary learning is to see it as a process of related sub-tasks. When learners first encounter a new word, they may guess its meaning and usage from available clues. Some learners might proceed to look it up in the dictionary. Others might take down notes along the margins, between the lines, or on separate vocabulary notebooks. Some learners will repeat the new word a number of times until they manage to overcome with it. Others will go beyond simple rote repetition to transmit the word to memory. Some would even try to apply the word actively. Each of these task stages demands metacognitive judgment, choice, and deployment of cognitive strategies for vocabulary learning. So, each strategy a learner uses will determine to a large extent how and how well a new word is learned.

2.3. Task-dependent Vocabulary Learning Strategies

Nowadays, most of the empirical researches on vocabulary learning strategies in second language have crucially concentrated on different sub-tasks of vocabulary learning. Fewer studies can be found on person-related vocabulary learning strategies. Likewise, learning context has been merely noted in passing in discussions.

2.3.1. Guessing and Vocabulary Learning

There is a commonly believed idea which asserts that the vast majority of words in L1 come from extensive and multiple exposures through use rather than direct instruction, and therefore, vocabulary learning in a second language should follow the same route (Coady, 1993). A number of questions have often been proposed in the literature: could guess lead to incidental vocabulary learning in second language? How many exposures are required to learn a word incidentally? Is
incidental vocabulary learning better than intentional learning? And finally is guessing could be regarded as sufficient devise for vocabulary development in a second language? Each of these questions is dealt with below.

2.3.2. How many exposures are needed to learn a word?
Unfortunately, very different research results have been achieved in this issue. Nation (1990) concluded that 5-16 exposures are required in order to learn a word from context. Meara (1997) proposed 0.01 hypothesis (1 uptake every 100 exposures) for L2 learners, arguing that these learners are normally unable to be exposed to large quantities of text. A more recent study (Horst, Cobb, & Meara, 1998), which featured low intermediate EFL learners reading a 109-page book over a ten-day period, achieved a 20% pick-up rate. They also observed that words which appeared over eight times in text were more likely to be learned than words that were repeated less. However, researchers do seem to have come to an agreement that the number of exposures needed for the mastery of a new word depends on many other factors such as the salience of the word in context (Brown, 1993), the richness of contextual clues, the learner's interest and the size and quality of his/her existing repertoire of vocabulary (Laufer & Hadar, 1997; Nation & Hwang, 1995).

2.4. L1 vs. L2 Glosses
Researchers have investigated the efficiency of glosses on incidental vocabulary learning (Hulstijn, 1993; Hulstijn, Hollander, & Greidanus, 1996; Jacobs, Dufon, & Hong, 1994; Paribakht & Wesche, 1997). On the other hand, comparison of gloss conditions with non-gloss conditions has manifested the advantage of having glosses for increasing incidental vocabulary learning. Therefore, the question has changed to which gloss type is most effective. Accordingly, attempts to compare the effectiveness of L1 and L2 glosses have brought mixed results, some indicating no difference between the two types and others proposing the advantage of one gloss type over the other (Chen, 2002; Jacobs et al., 1994; Miyasako, 2002).

2.5. Long-term Retention of the Words
According to Waring (2002), one of the most challenging problems with vocabulary learning, and which all the second language learners have experienced, is that what we learn today will be forgotten tomorrow. On the other hand, language learners require all the information of the language to be learned transferred into long-term memory (LTM). Therefore, it has been of interest to the cognitivists how this encoding process could be achieved, how LTM operates, and how
information can be retrieved from this store, reversing the path and transferring information from LTM to STM (short-term memory) (Hauptmann, 2004), so learners need appropriate strategies to achieve success. The main way of transferring from working memory (WM) to LTM is by finding some pre-existing information in the LTM to attach the new information to. Due to the significant role of vocabulary learning, finding some important elements that were already present in the mental lexicon to link to the new lexical information (Schmitt, 2000, p.132). The native keyword is such an element. People have often experienced not being able to remember a word that they are normally familiar with, although they can remember many of its characteristics, e.g., meaning, gender, number of syllables, etc. (Brown & McNeil, 1966). It is only when they put all this information together that there will be complete retrieval at last.

3. Method
3.1. Design of the study
The following research was conducted as quantitative study in order to find out the effects of variables. After administrating Oxford University and Cambridge University (2001) placement test as a standardized test in order to find out the homogeneity of learners, they were classified as advance level learners. Then, the study was carried out and to reach the suggested research question to measure the effects of tasks on the learners’ awareness in memorizing of vocabulary and transferring them into the long term memory, two groups as experimental and control groups of male university students were devoted to find the influence of certain task on vocabulary retention; especially, providing some passages and asking students to read the passage thoroughly and then looking up the meaning of difficult words from dictionary and writing them on the flash cards in order to keep the new vocabulary in the long term memory. It contained a pre-test and post-test for control and experimental groups. The experimental group was received treatment in tasks such as distributing reading comprehension passages among students and asking the learners to highlight the difficult words and check them from dictionary, then write them down on the flash cards due to memorizing them and transferring the new words into the long term memory to recall them when learners are in a real need, but no treatment was given to the control group in contrast to the experimental group one. In order to conducting the research and reaching to a conclusion, pre-test was given before the treatment. In addition, the post-test was administered after the
treatment in two weeks. Besides, the influence of task induced and its relationship with vocabulary memorizing were respectively considered as the independent and dependent variables of the study.

3.2. Context of the study
International Language Institute in Tabriz, Iran was the place that the research was carried out. *IELTS, TOEFL, PASSAGES, AMERICAN ENGLISH FILES* volumes, are taught in this high level English institute. Each term covers 20 sessions including midterm and final exam in two times a week, 90 minutes in each session. Participants of the study were chosen from Advance level of male learners that were university students of medical science major and were attending in advance classes. The age ranges of learners were above 20 years old.

3.3. Procedures
The most important subject in the development of every language is related to the vocabulary knowledge which resides in every one’s mind. Furthermore, vocabulary learning plays an important role for both L2 learners and instructors. It is obvious that nobody could be a master in vocabulary knowledge unless his/her expansion and elaboration extends during the lifetime. Accordingly, words represent complex and often multiple meanings. Zimmerman (1997) believes that word knowledge has linguistic, psycholinguistic, and sociolinguistic aspects, which should be paid attention more in terms of exact vocabulary meaning. So, lexical competence is more than the capability to clarify a given number of words; it includes knowing a large amount about each word, including information about its general frequency of use, the syntactic and situational and contextual restrictions on its use, its generalizability, its collocational probabilities, its underlying form, its derived forms, and its semantic features (Zimmerman, 1997, 122).

Nation (1990) proposed three different factors which have a great effect on making a word difficult to learn. The first one goes back to the learners’ earlier background of English and their mother tongue. The second one is related to the way a word is learned or taught. The third aspect is attributed to the intrinsic difficulty of the word which mainly means some words are harder to learn than others. Nation (2006, p. 498) also says that “the vocabulary component of a language course will be more effective if it is based on well-supported principles that are clearly known by both teachers and learners”. Next, in order to measure the usefulness of each task as promoting means in vocabulary retention of L2 learners, the descriptive statistics were taken in to account. Having administered and evaluated the test, each group’s mean scores were found apart from the other ones. In the end, the results of reading comprehension tests accompanied with some
important tasks such as reading comprehension with marginal glosses, using dictionary, and using context were employed by using SPSS software. These tasks were adapted from Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) and Martinez Fernandez (2008), which have been used in different similar studies. Therefore, the researchers intended to demonstrate the impact of these tasks on the degree of vocabulary retention.

4. Results

4.1. Data Analysis and Results

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Two Groups’ Homogeneity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>33.080</td>
<td>7.68613</td>
<td>1.53723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>control</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31.480</td>
<td>6.98880</td>
<td>1.39776</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of independent sample test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>placement test score assumed</td>
<td>.340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>.770</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 and 2 demonstrates a total number of 50 homogeneous male university students assigned to present study. They were divided randomly into two groups as experimental and control groups consisting of 25 participants for each group.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test in two groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test distribution is Normal.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calculated from data.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>PREMARK</th>
<th>POSTMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>13.4000</td>
<td>17.5200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal Parameters a,b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.73205</td>
<td>2.06398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Extreme Differences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>.115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>-.133</td>
<td>-.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z</td>
<td>.823</td>
<td>.960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.508</td>
<td>.316</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 illustrates descriptive Statistics of one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test in two groups both control and experimental groups and shows that distribution of test is normal and it has been distributed well.

Table 4: Paired Sample Statistics of Two Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Statistics</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Std.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deviation</td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 PREMARK</td>
<td>13.4000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1.73205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSTMARK</td>
<td>17.5200</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2.06398</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Paired Sample Correlations in the Two Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Correlations</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 PREMARK &amp; POSTMARK</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.219 .293</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 and 5 demonstrates the efficiency of task-induced activity in experimental group as it is clear in pre and post-tests. That is, the use of task-induced activity causes to a highly influential vocabulary retention which could be understood by comparing scores, also the achieved scores of some important tasks in both pre- and post-tests has been manifested.

Table 6: Paired Sample tests' results in the Two Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std.</td>
<td>Std.</td>
<td>95% Confidence</td>
<td></td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deviation</td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>Interval of the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 PREMARK - POSTMARK</td>
<td>-4.1200</td>
<td>2.38607</td>
<td>.47721</td>
<td>-5.1049</td>
<td>-8.633</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 clarifies the paired differences in pre and post tests and shows that sig is .000 and it is less than 0.05 and accompanied with p<0.05.

Table 7: Descriptive Statistics of One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test in Two Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>PREMARK</td>
<td>POSTMARK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal Parameters a,b</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.6800</td>
<td>13.6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>2.07605</td>
<td>1.80278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Extreme Absolute Differences</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Differences</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>-.092</td>
<td>-.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z</td>
<td>.742</td>
<td>1.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>.141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Test distribution is Normal.
b. Calculated from data.
As it is clear, in order to achieve the comparison of different tasks in terms of their efficiency in pre and post-tests, one-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was applied which is shown in table 7. Furthermore, all tasks were given significant positions in the development of vocabulary learning and retention of them.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics of Posttests in different Tasks Between-Subject Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>232.875&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>116.438</td>
<td>39.246</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.625</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>86.904</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>86.904</td>
<td>29.291</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.384</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREMARK</td>
<td>40.795</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>40.795</td>
<td>13.750</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.226</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GROUP</td>
<td>153.878</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>153.878</td>
<td>51.865</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.525</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>139.445</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.967</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12478.00</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>372.320</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a.</sup> R Squared = .625 (Adjusted R Squared = .610)

Table 8 manifests the efficiency of task-induced activity in the enhancement of vocabulary learning. In other words, comparing of employed important tasks in terms of achieved mean scores revealed that all tasks-induced activities are considered as influential factors in the development of vocabulary learning.

Table 9: Statistical Results of Dependent Variable in Posttest between Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>17.346&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.348</td>
<td>16.647</td>
<td>18.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>control</td>
<td>13.774&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.348</td>
<td>13.074</td>
<td>14.473</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a.</sup> Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: PREMARK = 13.0400.

Table 9 reveals the differences between control and experimental groups' post-test in dependent variable. It is obvious that due to the application of treatment in the experimental group, the achieved mean score of experimental group is more than the achieved mean score of control group which has noticeable impact on the development of vocabulary learning.
Figure 1: Mean Plots of Pre and Post-test Results among the Groups

Figure 1 manifests the efficiency of task-induced activity in the enhancement of vocabulary learning in the pre and post-tests of both groups. In other words, means plots of applied tasks disclosed that task activity is considered as influential factor in the development of vocabulary learning.

Table 10: Statistical Results of frequency among Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PREMARK</th>
<th>POSTMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>13.4000</td>
<td>17.5200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>1.73205</td>
<td>2.06398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewness</td>
<td>-.052</td>
<td>-.958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Error of Skewness</td>
<td>.464</td>
<td>.464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Statistical Results of frequency in pre-test among Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Percent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 12: Statistical Results of frequency in post-test among Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSTMARK</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>64.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: Statistical Results of frequency among Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>PREMARK</th>
<th>POSTMARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>N</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>12.6800</td>
<td>13.6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>2.07605</td>
<td>1.80278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewness</td>
<td>.314</td>
<td>.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Error of Skewness</td>
<td>.464</td>
<td>.464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
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<td>11.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>17.00</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10, 11, 12 and 13 manifests the frequency of scores in control and experimental group. It is clear that due to the usage of treatment in the experimental group, the achieved mean score of experimental group is rather higher than the achieved mean score of control group which has remarkable influence on the development of vocabulary learning.

Table 14: Statistical Results of frequency in pre-test among Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PREMARK</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>52.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.00</td>
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<td>8.0</td>
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<td>96.0</td>
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</tr>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15: Statistical Results of frequency in post-test among Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSTMARK</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>14.00</td>
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<td>12.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.00</td>
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<td>12.0</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>4.0</td>
<td>96.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of comparison are manifested in the above tables (14 and 15); they disclose significant differences in the task efficiency. In addition, according to the table for frequency of scores in pre and post-tests, frequency tables showed the differences. Therefore, the results demonstrated that compared with task impact. These results led the researchers to conclude that providing task-induced activities have positive effect on learners’ performance in general.

5. Conclusion

It should be noticed that the earlier results of related studies were taken into consideration. That is, Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) made a conclusion that the implementation of task-induced activity has significant and positive effects on the retention of vocabulary. Besides, the findings of present study have verified the usefulness of other related studies. Vocabulary acquisition is considered as a basic issue in second language acquisition. It should be taken into consideration that learning a foreign or second language in advance and TOEFL levels of proficiency necessitates the acquisition of millions new words. Obviously, language learners look for efficient methods to enhance opportunities for transferring new words from short term memory to the long-term memory. As a matter of fact, forgetting is considered as a common problem. Language learners often complain that they forget new words soon after learning them. Having managed the study, the manifestation of pedagogical implications would be stated. That is, two main pedagogical implications as vocabulary acquisition and task-induced activity would be illustrated.

5.1. Suggestions and Recommendations

It is clear that in administration of every research the explanation of findings mainly for pedagogical implication are regarded as inseparable part of each research. That is, the
implementations of the findings in every study are considered as problem solving issue in the eradication of EFL learning problems. Consequently, dealing with unknown words has been considered as a dilemma in the process of L2 learning. Both L2 instructors and learners are peeved when they encounter with unknown words. A variety of problem solving methods have been recommended for elimination of these problems. The manifestation of task-based approach has triggered new paths to come up with vocabulary learning problems mainly vocabulary retention. To sum up, the type of task is considered as a representative of vocabulary retention development in dealing with unknown vocabulary in the process of L2 learning, so the significant and undeniable role of task as a facilitator of vocabulary retention should be much more emphasized.

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Hossein Sabouri Ph. D, University of Tabriz
Mohammad Zohrabi Ph. D, University of Tabriz

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Finally, sincere thanks to our families, who worked closely with us over the hot summer and cold winter months to produce this paper.

References


Title

Manipulation in Poetry Translation: A Case Study of Shakespeare’s Selected Sonnets

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Abstract

The present study attempted to examine whether Moqaddam’s Persian translation of Shakespeare’s sonnets is effective in doing justice to the true image of Shakespeare and his sonnets through investigating the extent of manipulation applied by the translator in his translation. For this purpose, the content of all the translated sonnets and their corresponding translations were analyzed. Using the ideological manipulation theory of Zauberga as the theoretical framework, the results of the study indicated that deletion was the most frequently applied manipulative strategy by the translator. Moreover, the results demonstrated that the Persian translation of Shakespeare’s sonnets has been subjected to ideological manipulations, and the translator has distorted Shakespeare’s true image.

Keywords: Translation, Ideology, Manipulation, Zauberga’s manipulation theory, Shakespeare’s sonnet

1. Introduction
Manipulation might refer to the manifestation of manipulative strategies in translation (Dukâte, 2009). The reason is to conceal the author’s good and/or bad intentions. Generally speaking, it is assumed that there are two types of manipulation, conscious and unconscious (Farahzad, 1999). Manipulation as a result of the ideological, economic, and cultural considerations is considered conscious manipulation. However, manipulation ascribed to the features of human psychology and manipulation due to ignorance or lack of language or world knowledge might be termed unconscious manipulation. The topic of translation as manipulation and attitudes towards it is very wide, while the scope of the present study is limited. Therefore, only some aspects of the problem are investigated in this study.

In fact, every nation’s literature and culture are inter-related. In conveying this culture, translation of its masterpieces plays a significant role. Unfortunately, in the process of translation, many formal and semantic aspects of the work were ignored through the ideological manipulation applied by the translator, even to such an extent that it culminated in the distortion of the author’s intention and ideology; consequently, the true image of the author presented to other nations was altered. Therefore, based on the translator’s own ideology or the dominant ideology of his time, a manipulated image of the author of the ST was presented.

A lot of studies have been inspired by the concept of manipulation in the past decades. For instance, the studies done by Hermans (1985), Bassnett (1987), Bassenett & Lefevere (1990), Venuti (1992), etc. Most of these studies have focused on the role of manipulation in translation and its effects on the target text as a product as well as the roles the manipulated target texts play in the target language community. The present study investigated the extent of manipulation applied by Moqaddam (2000) in Persian translation of Shakespeare’s sonnets.

2. Review of the Related Literature

In general, translational manipulation has not been widely discussed by the scholars; therefore, there is no mention of manipulation in the Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies (2001). Moreover, the Dictionary of Translation Studies (1997) provided no definition, explanation or sample of manipulation as a term in translation studies. Scholars writing on the manipulative aspects of translation concentrated on particular text types, mostly literary texts, or they focused on one particular type of manipulation, usually ideological manipulation or cultural manipulation.
Katan (1999) was of the opinion that manipulation is a part of a translation. He believed that “the very act of translating involves skillful manipulation” (ibid., p. 140). He also believed that some faithful translations can be more devious than free translations. According to the traditional translation theory, equivalence to the original is the fundamental and most important quality that a translated work should have. Manipulation refers to the translator’s role and different constraints to achieve one’s purpose rather than the equivalence to the source. The Manipulation School represented an approach to translation as manipulation or more precisely as rewriting of texts for a specific target audience in conformity with target language norms and under various constraints. Some of its most prominent members were Holmes (1988), Lefevere (1992), Hermans (1985), Bassnett (1987), Even-Zohar (1997), and Toury (1985).

According to Hermans (1999, p. 8), the name was proposed by Lefevere (1992) who attempted to investigate translation from a sociological perspective, i.e. how translational activities operate and function in the target society. He believed that ideology and poetics are the two major factors that constrain the production and the reception of translation. He considered society as the super-system or system of systems and considered literature as one of the subsystems of society. According to him, there are two control factors influencing the interaction between literary system and other systems. Lefevere’s theory of manipulation successfully placed translation within a larger social, political and cultural context and allowed us to observe the way in which translation interact with the target environment.

Farahzad (1999) distinguished two types of manipulation, e.g. conscious and unconscious. She accordingly described two types of processes which result in manipulation of texts in translation: The conscious process leads to conscious manipulation intentionally carried out by the translator because of various social, political and other factors. The unconscious manipulation is mostly a psychological phenomenon, and occurs under the influence of psychological factors. (p. 156)

Moreover, she (2007) worked on ten male and ten female English to Persian translations. The text chosen for the study was a feministic text. The translation of the male translators of the words ‘feminist’ and ‘feminism’ showed a type of negative attitudes, while female translation of them showed positive views. Thus, their choices were ideological and caused manipulative shifts. The paper concluded that translation shifts are one type of manipulation. If a translator tries not to translate a lexical item, he manipulates the text. It is the case even in cases where the translator is not conscious of his choice.
Shafiei (2012) did a study on ideological manipulation applied by Fitzgerald in English translation of Khayyam’s quatrains. Her study was theoretically based on Zauberga’s (2004) manipulation theory. The results of her study revealed that deletion was the most frequently applied strategy by Fitzgerald. Moreover, the study demonstrated that Fitzgerald’s translation of Khayyam’s quatrains has distorted Khayyam’s true image since it was subjected to ideological manipulations applied by the translator.

2.1. Ideology in Translation
Ideology has been defined in several ways by translation scholars. For instance, according to Lefevere (as cited in Gentzler, 2004), ideology is “a set of discourses which wrestle over interests which are in some way relevant to the maintenance or interrogation of power structures central to a whole form of social and historical life” (p. 136).

Lefevere (2004) didn’t consider ideology limited to the political sphere. He pointed out, “Ideology would seem to be that grillwork of form, convention, and belief which orders our actions” (p. 16). He introduced his theory of manipulation in which ideology was the key notion. It referred to either the translator’s ideology which he/she willingly accepts or the ideology imposed upon the translators by patronages. Moreover, Lefevere (1992) developed the idea that translation can be regarded as a form of rewriting. He considered translation as an act influenced by the norms and categories constituent to systems in a society. The most important of these are patronage, ideology, poetics, and ‘the universe of discourse’ (ibid., p. 13). Therefore, translators sometimes rewrite the source text (especially literary and religious ones) in the light of their personal ideologies.

2.2. Theoretical Framework
As mentioned previously, this study is theoretically based on Zauberga’s (2004) theory of ideological manipulation. He (as cited in Dukâte, 2009) introduced the following forms for the ideological manipulation:

- Deletion: this strategy was frequently used during the Soviet rule. It was used due to political or moral considerations.
- Substitution: It was used due to ideological and moral considerations.
- Addition: a word is non-existent in the source text but is added to the translation.
- Attenuation: this strategy was applied widely due to “moral considerations to mitigate taboo words or “upgrade” standard language” (ibid., p. 59).
With regard to the aforementioned data, the present study focused on ideological manipulation in translation of some of Shakespeare’s sonnets and was aimed at answering the following questions:
1- To what extent was the ideological manipulation applied by the translator in the selected corpus?
2- What is the most evident form of manipulation in Persian translation of Shakespeare’s translated sonnets by Moqaddam?

3. Methodology

3.1. Design of the study
This study was a descriptive quantitative research, as findings were based on the analysis of the selected corpus and it sought to measure the extent of imposing ideological manipulation statistically. It was a research to identify the manipulative strategies applied by the translator to make the target text look like the original one.

3.2. Data collection procedure
The data needed to carry out the research was gathered from Shakespeare's sonnets and their Persian renderings by Moqaddam (2000). Only the translated sonnets were investigated. For the purpose of brevity, only one translation was examined.

3.3. Data Analysis Procedures
The aim of this study was to investigate the ideological manipulation in translation of some of Shakespeare’s sonnets to analyze the manipulative strategies applied by the translator. To achieve the purpose of the study, the following steps were taken:
1. The lines of the ST and TT were compared and contrasted
2. The comparison took place by taking the theoretical framework into account
3. The extent of ideological manipulation applied to the TT was measured with regard to the application of the four manipulative strategies by the translator

As mentioned before, for the purpose of this study, the manipulation theory of Zauberga (2004) was selected as the theoretical framework. The following samples were extracted for the purpose of more clarification.

3.3.1. Deletion
Sonnet 53

_On Helen’s cheek all art of beauty set,
And you Grecian tires are painted new_
In line 8, “Grecian tires” which means Grecian costume is omitted by the translator.

Sonnet 44

But ah! thought kills me that I am not thought,
To leap large lengths of miles when thou art gone,

In these two lines “ah” and “miles” are omitted by the translator.

3.3.2. Substitution

Sonnet 104

Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.

In these two lines the word “færværdiːn” was substituted for “April” and “xordːd” was substituted for “June”.

Sonnet 55

And broils root out the work of masonry,

Nor Mars his sword, nor war’s quick fire shall burn

In Roman mythology “Mars” is the god of war and the most important Roman god after Jupiter. The translator has substituted “Bæhrːm” for it which refers to Iranian god of victory.

3.3.3. Addition

Sonnet 65

Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?

Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
The word “huːriːj ɐːn” was added by the translator. In target culture, it refers to extremely attractive and beautiful women in Paradise.

Sonnet 8

Whose speechless song, being many seeming one,
Sings this to thee: ‘thou single will prove none.’

In line 14, the translator has added the word “kæfæn:” which does not exist in the ST. According to target culture, the word “kæfæn” refers to a simple plain cloth in which a dead body is wrapped.

3.3.4. Attenuation

This strategy which can be used to mitigate taboo words or upgrade substandard language was not applied by the translator.

4. Results and Discussion

Taking into account the aforementioned data, it can be concluded that the translator’s opinions and preferences have influenced his rendering. The following chart demonstrates the frequency of each applied manipulative strategy based on percentage:

![Figure 1. Frequency of application of each manipulative strategy.](image)

With regard to the first research question, it can be pointed out that the ideological manipulation was applied to a great extent by the translator. He has mostly deleted those words which had no equivalent in the target language or culture and it might be due to the translator’s ideology. Taking the second question into account, the most frequently applied manipulative strategy was deletion.
and the frequency count was 45%. Substitution occupied the next position and the frequency count was 34%. However, addition was the least frequently applied strategy (21%) and attenuation was not applied by the translator. The present study sought to demonstrate that the translator has manipulated the source text due to his own ideology and sometimes without any reason. The manipulation which was applied consciously or unconsciously has resulted in the distortion of the image of Shakespeare’s sonnets.

5. Conclusion

In fact, manipulation is the result of adaptation of the text for the target audience. According to Dukäte (2007), there are two types of manipulation, i.e. text-external and text-internal manipulation. In this study, text-internal manipulation which includes manipulation of cultural words was investigated. There are three further types of manipulation under each category: manipulation as improvement, manipulation as handling and manipulation as distortion. Distortive manipulation is unacceptable because it misrepresents the reality and changes the true image of the original author. In the present study, the analysis of translation indicated that the translator has manipulated the original in favor of the target culture and has tried to substitute the TL cultural words for those of the SL as much as possible. This study was theoretically based on the ideological manipulation strategies of Zauberga (2004). The results of the study demonstrated that deletion was the most frequently applied strategy by the translator. The true image of Shakespeare was manipulated by the translator’s own ideology. He has mostly made an attempt to make his translation look like an original text by addition, deletion, substitution of cultural terms. He has even adapted a TL poetic form. It might be indicative of the fact that the translator has not only manipulated the content, but also manipulated the poetic form. The present study also demonstrated that the translator’s opinions and preferences influenced his achievement and he was not successful in providing a translation that presents a true image of Shakespeare to the TT readers.

As manipulation has not been widely discussed by theorists, the first challenge was finding an appropriate theory applicable to the corpus of the present study. Lefevere’s theory of manipulation used by many scholars has been really fruitful. However, with regard to the selected corpus, the one proposed by Zauberga (2004) was more appropriate for the purpose of this study. Finding and collecting material as well as finding renderings of those sonnets appropriate for the selected
corpus can be mentioned as the other challenges of this study. Moreover, for the purpose of brevity, only one translation was investigated in the present study.

References


Title

The Effect of Teaching Paraphrasing Strategy on Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL Learners

Authors

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of explicit instruction of paraphrasing strategy on reading comprehension. Research has found that often students have heavily on decoding texts and fluency with less work on understanding text, affecting outcomes in comprehension and their strategies for comprehension texts are often underdeveloped. Samples of eighty students were selected from two Foreign Languages Institutes. The effect of this instruction was measured by the students’ performance in reading comprehension. Then students were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Students in experimental groups received RAP paraphrasing strategy instruction and those in control groups were instructed traditionally. After 10 sessions a post-test was administered and its results were analyzed through a T-Test. Results indicated that the experimental group achieved significantly better results than the control group. The use of the RAP paraphrasing strategy improved reading comprehension ability of the learners. The result of the present study has confirmed that reading comprehension could be developed through systematic instruction in paraphrasing RAP strategy. It means
experimental groups’ scores, who received paraphrasing strategy as a treatment, were significantly better than those of the control groups, who received traditional instruction.

**Keywords:** reading comprehension, reading strategy, paraphrasing, RAP

1. Introduction

Reading is regarded as an important part of the four necessary language skills for acquiring knowledge, gathering information and the main skill that students need for their success at various levels of education. Reading is an active process by that readers use their mental activities during reading. According to Nunan (2001) this skill as an interactive process in which readers in which reader transfers constantly between top-down and bottom-up process, not only decode the words meaning, but also activate the prior knowledge of content and relevant schemata. To understand a text of several sentences, the reader must retrieve the meanings of individual words, compute the sense of each sentence, integrate the meanings of successive sentences, and incorporate background knowledge to construct a representation of the text.

The main focus of instructing this skill is on comprehension (Schunder, 1992). Reading comprehension is the process of constructing meaning from a text and involves the complex coordination of several processes, including “decoding, word reading, and fluency along with the integration of background knowledge and previous experiences” (Klinger & Geisler, 2008, p. 65).

There are students who are fluent readers who experience difficulties with reading comprehension. They are unable to process and comprehend what they read. One way to improve these students’ comprehension skills is by teaching them effective comprehension strategies. One of these strategies is paraphrasing strategy. Paraphrasing appears to be quite a simple process on the surface, but, in fact, is complex. Paraphrasing for comprehension is an excellent tool for reinforcing reading skills such as identifying the main ideas, finding supporting details and identifying the author’s voice. This study wants to investigate the effect of teaching paraphrasing strategy on reading comprehension in Iran and answer the following question.

**RQ1:** Does teaching paraphrasing strategy have any effect on the reading comprehension of the learners?

Comprehension is the reason for reading; it encompasses the learning, growing, and evolution of ideas that occur as one reads. Reading which involves both proficient decoding and skilful comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading instruction. Dechant states that comprehension relies
on two types of information: that which is received from the text (the surface structure of the text) and that which is retrieved from the reader’s memory. According to Meyer and Ray (2011) reading comprehension involves actively constructing new understanding by building relationship among the parts of text and between the text and one’s pre-existing knowledge. When learners comprehend, they interpret, integrate, critique, infer, analyze, connect and evaluate ideas in texts. They negotiate multiple meanings not only in their heads but in the minds of others. Comprehension takes the learner to a new level of active understanding and insight. Good readers use lots of strategies before, during and after reading (Dogan, 2002). Strategy instruction is the best method to improve comprehension skills. Explicit instruction in comprehension strategies can be an effective way to help students overcome difficulties understanding text. Onofrey and Theurer (2007) agree, stating that if students are going to become proficient in comprehension, teachers, need to equip them with skills and strategies that are independently transferable. Students who do not have strategies for making meaning from the text are at a disadvantage. Hardebeck (2006) defines reading comprehension strategies as tools or plans for facilitating and extending comprehension.

In paraphrasing it is important for students to identify the author’s voice before beginning the process of paraphrasing. Paraphrasing involves putting the text into the reader’s own words. The reader must carefully read the text, think about the text and then transfer the author’s message into the reader’s own words. Reading comprehension strategies can help readers remember the key points, distinguish the necessary and unnecessary information, think about the main idea and comment on the subject matter. It means that if the original text is written with passion, the paraphrase should also be passionate, if the text is humorous, the paraphrase should be, too. This process helps students identify with the characters in their reading. One of the reasons paraphrasing for comprehension works so well is because it integrates all the models of communication, reading, writing, listening and speaking, which leads to a deeper understanding of the text (Fisk & Hurst, 2003). Paraphrasing will help learners to understand the meaning of a difficult passage. When you go on to make your own argument, it will allow you to refer to another writer's thoughts while you maintain control of the focus and tone of the argument. Paraphrasing incorporates four ways for students to interact with the text: they hear it read aloud, they read it and make notes; they write it in their own words and talk about their paraphrased text with their peers. Hagaman and Reid (2008) also report the successful improvement of comprehension through teaching the RAP paraphrasing
strategy. This particular strategy has an easily understandable process and acronym mnemonic which can be taught through scaffolding, giving support to those students who need more assistance in learning ‘how to think’. The RAP strategy is grounded in information processing theory using chunking and paraphrasing procedures to help improve memory of main ideas and details in text. The strategy requires students to break reading passages into smaller units or “chunks” (i.e., paragraphs) and remember information from these smaller units of text (Schumaker et al., 1984).

2. Methods

Participants 2.1.
The original participants of this study were 90 female Azeri learners of English at some language institutes in Ardabil who were unfamiliar with RAP paraphrasing strategy. From 90 subjects, 10 students were randomly selected for pilot study to determine the reliability of the test and the remaining 80 ones participated in the main study. In order to establish the homogeneity of the subjects in terms of language proficiency, Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was given to the subjects. They had scores ranging from 31 to 63. The participants’ age were 15-23 and based on their performance on this test 80 participants were randomly assigned to two equal groups, one experimental and one control group. Experimental group (n=40) was assigned to receive paraphrasing strategy instruction and students in control group were exposed to the same texts without such instructional treatment.

3. Materials

The materials used in this study included a packet that consisted of an Oxford Placement Test (OPT), a reading comprehension test which served as a post-test, and some reading passages for treatment sessions.

3.1 Reading comprehension Texts

This text that was used as a posttest of the study was adopted from their course books. Care was taken to select those passages, which were not covered during their mainstream course. During treatment, some reading comprehension texts from the “Facts & Figures” fourth edition by Patricia Ackert and Linda Lee were selected for the instruction. Readability was calculated using Flesch Reading Ease in Microsoft Word 2007 to make sure that the texts suited their levels. This
readability turned out to from 60 to 75. After reading the passages, students were asked to answer multiple-choice questions and finding the main idea. Taking into consideration the scoring system of the reading comprehension test, each correct answer received 1 point earning 25 points as a whole.

4. Data Collection Procedures
This study comprised 10 sessions and was conducted during the winter semester of 2013. Several steps were taken in order to accomplish the purpose of the study. First, to make sure of students' proficiency level, Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was administered to 90 participants. As mentioned above, 10 students were randomly selected for pilot study and 80 of them were selected to take part in the main phase of the study. Then they were randomly assigned to two groups: experimental group and control group. In the second session, after making sure of the students’ homogeneity in both groups the teacher familiarized experimental groups with paraphrasing RAP strategy and its advantages in reading comprehension. Participants were provided with an extensive introduction to this type of strategy enabling them to understand how this type of strategy works and aids comprehension.

The instruction for the control group was in traditional way. In this group the teacher asked students to read the text silently and answer the reading comprehension questions. After 10 sessions, some passages with related questions were presented as post-test to both experimental and control group.

5. Results and Discussion
As mentioned above, to make sure of the participants’ proficiency level, Oxford Placement Test was administered. Table 4.1 illustrates the descriptive statistics for proficiency test scores for the original pool of participants.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics for Scores on the Proficiency Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>9.56</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Homogeneous participants (n=80) were assigned to two equal groups.
Table 4.2 Normality Check for the Scores on posttest Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.092</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>.091</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to select the appropriate statistical analysis, test of Normality was run. The researcher also used one-sample Kolmogorov - Smirnov (K-S) which tries to determine the normality of the scores. The result of the K-S Test (table 4.2) indicated that the scores of the posttest were normally distributed. (Sig=.091).

Table 4.3

Descriptive Statistic for the Score on Posttest Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>15.6750</td>
<td>4.28354</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Independent Samples T-test was run among two groups of students, Table 4.2 shows descriptive statistics for these passages and Table 4.4 depicts the result of t-test, which reveals no statistically significant difference in the mean scores of two groups of texts sig=.000

Table 4.4 Independent Samples T-test to Compare Posttest of Reading Comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>4.333</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the participants’ use of paraphrasing strategy while they read English texts. There appears to be a link between the paraphrasing strategy (RAP) instruction and reading comprehension. Positive results were gained; this instruction method indicates that using this strategy in a longer period of time will improve students’ reading comprehension. With regard to the first research question, which addressed the effects of paraphrasing strategy on the reading comprehension, the result obtained from this study confirmed
paraphrasing strategy has positive effect on reading comprehension. With respect to these findings, the null hypothesis saying that “Teaching paraphrasing strategy has no effect on the reading comprehension of the learners” was adequately rejected, implying that paraphrasing strategy has a significant effect on reading comprehension of students. The findings of this study conformed to the Katims & Harris (1997) result. They found that teaching paraphrasing using the RAP was a powerful procedure in improving the reading comprehension. The results of the analyses supported the findings of previous study by Ellis and Graves (1990) who found positive effects of RAP on reading comprehension. Similarly, Hagaman and Reid (2008) investigated effect of RAP strategy on reading comprehension of students. All participants improved in percentage of text recalled and accuracy when answering comprehension questions after receiving RAP instruction.

The findings of this study conformed to Fisk and Hurst (2003) study who noted that paraphrasing was an effective strategy to develop good reading comprehension as it reinforced other key reading skills. They found teaching paraphrasing reinforced skills like identifying main ideas in texts and finding supporting details.

7. Conclusion

This study examined the effect of paraphrasing strategy on reading comprehension Iranian students of English language who study English as a foreign language. All the students in treatment group have gained some paraphrasing awareness which can help them understand what they read. The experimental group achieved significantly better result than the control group. The result of the present study have confirmed that reading comprehension could be developed through explicit instruction in paraphrasing language learning strategy. Systematic explicit instruction about the concept of paraphrasing strategy helped students of the experimental group to better comprehend this new approach and how to apply it on reading. The findings of this study revealed that students who used paraphrasing RAP strategy outperformed those who received Traditional instruction. The result of the current study showed that there were statistically significant differences between the control groups and the experimental groups on reading comprehension. These studies all indicated that there was significant effect of independent variable, paraphrasing, on reading comprehension. It means experimental groups’ scores, who received paraphrasing strategy as a treatment, were significantly higher than those of the control groups, who received traditional instruction.
References


Title

Exploring Role of Academic Backgrounds in EFL Teachers' Language Assessment Literacy

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Abstract

Recent transitions in language assessment paradigms highlight the importance of improvement of language teachers’ awareness, perspectives, and knowledge regarding language assessment. To this end, the present study reports on exploring assessment literacy of 10 (N=10) language teachers, and analyzing this knowledge and literacy as a function of academic background. Divided into two groups (n=5), five participants held Bachelor of Arts in language related majors (ELT Group) and five held Bachelor of Arts or sciences in majors unrelated to languages (Non-ELT Group). The data were collected through focus group interviews, semi-structured individual interviews, and observation of actual test writing practices in meetings during a semester. Thematic analysis of data revealed three major areas of assessment knowledge, namely, ‘Theoretical Knowledge’, ‘Practical Skills’, and ‘Sociocultural and Critical Concerns’. In addition, statistical measures revealed significant differences between the two groups in terms their reported thoughts corresponding to the themes ‘Theoretical Knowledge’ and ‘Practical Skills’. However, comparing groups regarding the theme ‘Sociocultural and Critical Concerns’ revealed to be non-significant. The findings contribute to promotion of language teacher development programs and language assessment courses.

Keywords: Language Assessment Literacy (LAL), Assessment Knowledge Base
1. Introduction

Language assessment paradigms and testing related debates witness a heightened attention to dissemination of a core knowledge underlying assessment practices and evaluative decisions on the part of all language instruction and assessment stakeholders (e.g., Fulcher 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Taylor, 2009, 2013). This upsurge of interest is believed to be the outcome of a transition from the psychometrically-driven prescriptive of objectively measuring language proficiency, towards the dialogical process of a “socially constructed activity embedded in the local context with teachers, students and other community members” (Inbar-Lourie, 2008, p. 386). To this end, Inbar-Lourie (2008) calls for the formation of an ‘assessment culture’ which incorporates development of classroom teachers' interpretive epistemologies regarding the process of knowledge formation. Development of this knowledge base, according to Taylor (2013), arrives at its optimal success “when it reflects a dynamic and iterative process informed by a collaborative ongoing dialogue taking place at the interface between language testing experts and non-specialist test stakeholders” (p. 411). Hence, the transition in language assessment initiatives remarkably increases language teachers' responsibility to gain knowledge, awareness, and literacy for evaluative practices (Fulcher 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Rea-Dickins, 2008; Taylor, 2013). This knowledge base and awareness which underlies language assessment literacy (LAL), as defined by Inbar-Lourie (2008), is the conceptual framework, theoretical knowledge, and practical competency for understanding and analyzing the data collected from the learners' classroom performances. Such conceptualization and analysis is then, followed by examining the process of application and implementation of these sets of data (Inbar-Lourie, 2008).

Highlighting the role of academic background and teacher development programs (e.g., Almarza, 1996; Borg, 2003; Freeman, 2002, 2007), recently related literature records a considerable emphasis on application of appropriate methodology and materials to develop language assessment knowledge base among assessment stakeholders (e.g., Fulcher, 2012; Malone, 2008, 2013; O'Loughlin, 2006, 2013; Pill & Harding, 2013; Scarino, 2013; Stoynoff, 2012; Taylor, 2009, 2013). However, in spite of the importance of academic background and theoretical knowledge as the backbone of teachers’ pedagogical and evaluative decisions makings (Borg, 2003; Freeman, 2002, 2007; Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008), there is a paucity of research on how language assessment knowledge is classified among language teachers as one of the groups of stakeholders (Taylor, 2013). Moreover, to date, undue attention has been paid to the
To fill this gap, the present study set out to classifying language assessment knowledge base among Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers. This study also attempted to compare language assessment knowledge and literacy of EFL teachers with and without academic background in majors related to English Language Teaching (ELT).

2. Review of Related Literature

Formation of the concepts of language assessment literacy is tracked down the Lado's (1961) work, 'Language testing: The construction and use of foreign language tests'. In this book, Lado highlights the importance of maintaining a less technical language for disseminating language assessment knowledge among non-professional test constructors such as pre-service and in-service language teachers. More specifically, this book signifies assessment knowledge as a requisite to enhance the effectiveness of instruction, assessment of the language instructed, and evaluation of the language use. Although Lado raised this issue more than half a century ago, it is only around two decades that the term ‘assessment literacy’ has appeared in the work of language testing scholars such as Stiggins (1991, 1997) and Brindley (2001). In 1990, the American Federation of Teachers attempted to specify a set of language assessment competencies for classroom language teachers. These competencies incorporated selection and development of tests for classroom administrations, scoring interpretation and decision making, and considering ethics of the tests. In a decade, the concept of language assessment literacy further developed when Brindley (2001) called for a focus on assessment with regard to curriculum rather than standardized tests which are not directly relevant to classroom performances and related decision makings. Subsequently, attempts for investigating language assessment literacy addressed assessment knowledge among all assessment stakeholders, especially professional testers (e.g., Brown & Bailey, 2008; Malone, 2008, 2013; O’Loughlin, 2006; Taylor, 2000; Walters, 2010).

As demonstrated by Inbar-Lourie (2008), the attainment of a higher efficiency in ELT requires its stakeholders to gain the knowledge and competency regarding the concepts, skills, and strategies “to choose and develop assessment tools, to match instruction to the skillful administration, scoring and interpretation of externally and internally administered assessment procedures” (p. 389). Aligned with this view, language assessment knowledge base has recently integrated knowledge, skills, and competence for application of a set of principles to gain language
assessment competence with regard to construction and analysis of tests (Davies, 2008). In addition, this knowledge base incorporates setting criteria for using data emerged from assessment for various instructional decision making purposes (Inbar-Lourie, 2008). Held in a broader social perspective, “teachers as professionals should try to protect, guard, and use tests as pedagogical tools as part of the process of preserving and perpetuating democratic cultures, values, and ethics” (Shohamy, 2005, p. 110). Consequently, becoming geared towards assessment literacy entails "the capacity to ask and answer critical questions about the purpose for assessment, about the fitness of the tool being used, about testing conditions, and about what is going to happen on the basis of the results" (Inbar-Lourie, 2008, p. 389).

Characterization and classification of assessment knowledge, skills, and competencies have been reported in a coherent line of inquiry (e.g., Fulcher, 2012; Malone, 2008; Pill & Harding, 2013; Taylor, 2013). For instance, Taylor (2013) classified eight areas of assessment knowledge base underlying language assessment literacy. These areas are categorized as, ‘knowledge of theory’, ‘technical skills’, ‘principles and concepts’, ‘language pedagogy’, ‘sociocultural values’, ‘local practices’, ‘personal beliefs and attitudes’, and ‘scores and decision making’. Taylor (2009, 2013) also differentiated between the assessment literacy required for the four different assessment stakeholder namely, test writers, classroom teachers, university administrators, and professional language testers. To avoid the dichotomous comparisons which classify stakeholders' assessment knowledge on the ground of being either assessment literate or assessment illiterate, Pill and Harding (2013) suggested a deferring and progressive state for language teachers’ assessment literacy along a continuum. This characterization, according to Taylor (2013), caters for progression of assessment literacy through “designing modular courses in language testing and even in certificating levels of achievement as part of a broader professional development program for certain stakeholder groups” (p. 410).

A relatively recent avenue of research continues to examine the role of classroom teachers' assessment knowledge on students' achievement and progress (e.g., Davison & Leung, 2009; Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Malone, 2008, 2013; Rea-Dickins, 2008; Scarino, 2013). Regarding the increase in language teachers’ responsibilities for testing and assessment, Fulcher (2012) developed a comprehensive needs analysis of language teachers' assessment training as a survey instrument. He pinpointed the importance of assessment knowledge "in the creation of new pedagogic materials and programs in language testing and assessment to meet the changing needs
of teachers and other stakeholders for a new age” (p. 113). In addition, the role of classroom teachers’ language assessment knowledge and literacy was further highlighted by Scarino (2013) through addressing the prevailing conflicts between traditional assessment paradigms and sociocultural theories. As stated by Scarino (2013), language assessment knowledge base pursues “the dual goals of transforming teacher assessment practices and developing teacher understanding of the phenomenon of assessment itself and themselves as assessors” (2013, p. 309). Furthermore, Malone (2013) underscored the importance of a reciprocal relationship between the teachers’ sufficient knowledge of language pedagogy and the proper implementation of language assessment in classrooms. Accordingly, the spiral process of language teaching and learning arrives at a desirable result when classroom teachers can integrate their pedagogical practices with test development, selection, and use, as well as fair and ethical interpretation of the results (Malone, 2013). The above mentioned instructional, sociocultural, and epistemological goals of improving language assessment literacy (Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Scarino, 2013) highlight the importance of investigating language teachers’ assessment literacy. Given the paucity of empirical evidence addressing role of academic background (i.e. major of study) in Iranian language teachers’ assessment knowledge and literacy, the present study sought answer to the following research questions:

1. What are the dominant areas of knowledge underlying EFL teachers’ language assessment literacy?

2. What are the potential variations in EFL teachers’ language assessment literacy as a function of academic backgrounds?

3. Method

3.1 Specification of Context of the Study

The present study was carried out at a private language institute in Tehran, Iran. It was part of a bigger research project aiming at improving English language teachers’ assessment knowledge, especially regarding classroom assessment. More specifically, this program focused on empowering Iranian EFL teachers to construct, revise, administer, and interpret scores of their own tests. That is, the teachers who participated in this program attended weekly meetings in which, as group work, they wrote short quizzes which were administered in classrooms on a weekly basis with an instructional purpose. Meetings also provided opportunity for discussing and reflecting on assessment related issues.
3.2 Participants

The participants of the present study consisted of 10 Iranian, female, EFL teachers (N=10). Due to confidentiality of their identity, hereafter, the participants are referred to as T1, T2 …, and T10 (i.e. Teacher 1, Teacher 2..., and Teacher10). The participants were selected, from among volunteers, based on purposive sampling according to their academic background. Thus, they were divided in two groups, namely, ELT Group and Non-ELT Group. That is, Non-ELT Group (n = 5) included teachers holding Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BSc) in majors non-relevant to English language instruction. Participants of this group met the required professional qualifications for language teaching at the institute based on holding language institutes’ certificates approving their advanced level of English language proficiency. They also finished teacher training courses held by this institute. ELT Group (n = 5) consisted of teachers with BA degrees in ELT-relevant majors. They also finished the same teacher training courses as Non-ELT Group did. Table 1 provides a biographical summary of the participants’ academic background and length of teaching experience.

Table 1. Biographical Summary of the Participants’ Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Length of Teaching Experience (5 to 10 years)</th>
<th>Education and Academic Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-ELT Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Business Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Physics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELT Group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>TEFL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>TEFL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>English Language and Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>English Language and Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English Translation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to academic background, for homogeneity of the contexts, the participants were selected from among volunteers with similar context of teaching and materials of instruction. Accordingly, the teachers were all female, were between 25 to 32 years old, and had 5 to 10 years of teaching experience. Moreover, all teachers were Iranian with Persian as their first language. This study was carried out during a semester taking 10 weeks, the materials of instruction included Top Notch series (books 2A and 2B, and book 3A), and classes ran twice a week.

### 3.3 Instrumentation and Data Collection Procedure

Prior to the data collection procedure, the participants pronounced their agreement on the researcher’s presence in their meetings as supervisor of the program. Also they agreed on the use of the data for research purposes. The data were collected through conducting focus group interviews, individual semi-structured interviews following classroom test administrations, and group discussions in weekly meetings. Table 2 summarizes data collection schedule.

**Table 2. Summary of Data Collection Procedure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekly Meetings</th>
<th>Data Collection Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>- Meeting 1: Focus Group Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- After First Classroom Test Administration:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual Semi-Structured Interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weeks 2 to 9</td>
<td>- Group Discussion in 8 Weekly Meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10</td>
<td>- After Final Exam: Individual Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Meeting 10: Focus Group Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As preferred by the participants, interviews and meetings’ group discussions were conducted in English language. Partial lexical and grammatical editions were applied to the excerpts which are used as example in this paper. All of the discussions in meetings and interviews were audio-taped and later transcribed. A brief description of collecting data is provided as follows.

#### 3.3.1 Interviews
**Focus Group Interviews.** Focus group research is defined as collecting naturalistic qualitative data through “engaging a small number of people in an informal group discussion (or discussions), focused around a particular topic or set of issues” (Wilkinson, 2011, p. 168). This data collection procedure assigns a mediating role to the researcher, and aims at facilitating an interaction among the group members. This interaction, in effect, encourages detailed elicitation of authentic data (Wilkinson, 2011). To this end, focus group interviews were carried out with each group in the opening and the closing sessions of the semester (see Table 2). These interviews addressed the participants’ knowledge, beliefs, and concerns about classroom assessment, their objectives of test constructions, and their views about scoring issues and interpretation. The participants were also encouraged to go further to large scale and standardized tests as well as issues like ethics, fairness, and social impact of tests. They were asked to reflect on these issues from their viewpoint as either language teachers, test writers, test administrators, or as previously test-takers with reference to their learning background.

**Individual Semi-structured Interviews.** A more detailed inquiry into the participants’ practical aspects of assessment knowledge base could be obtained through classroom observation. However, due to the institute’s policies, during test administration, classroom observations were not allowed. Instead, immediately after the first and the last test administration sessions in the semester (see Table 2), conducting semi-structured individual interviews provided the opportunity for the participants to express and discuss their assessment-related concerns. These interviews led the participants to reflect on their classrooms’ atmosphere during test administration, their perceptions of the aim behind test tasks, their score's interpretation, their evaluation of the students based on the results, and the feedback students would receive on these results.

### 3.3.2 The Weekly Meetings and Group Discussions

During the semester, teachers discussed classrooms’ instructional and assessment-related issues in weekly meetings. On meeting days, the two groups participated in group discussions which took between 45 to 60 minutes. Due to the participants’ schedule at the institute and their convenience, each group was formed separately with a two-hour interval. Thus, the researcher could fully participate in both meetings and group discussions to provide supervision, mediation, and feedback when necessary. As assigned by the program, the participants examined learners' progress and evaluated their own teaching and testing methods. They also developed and edited their quizzes, then modified, revised, and edited them in group discussions. That is, after test items were written
and checked in the groups, the participants reflectively gave and received feedback on the newly written quizzes and decided how to develop them for future administrations. Meanwhile, if necessary, the potential problematic points were discussed and modified by the supervisor/researcher. Subsequent to administration, the participants were encouraged to archive the quizzes after editing potential problems. This kept them aware of their assessment and instruction processes, and allowed for future use of the quizzes depending on classrooms’ instructional needs. The following example represents one of the researcher’s interventions when a participant chose a test from the archive without evaluating its content.

Example 1:
“It is ok if you want to use tests from the institute's archive or bring tests from other institutes or schools. But I have already seen some mistakes in them, and some of the tests have been given in other institutes with different textbooks. If you want to use them, let’s first check and edit them; then, adjust them to your own students’ level, to your own goals; to what you have taught in your classrooms; and what you want your students to know at the end of the semester...”

3.4 Data Analysis
To arrive at a detailed representation of the participants’ assessment knowledge and literacy, the audio-taped interviews and group discussions were transcribed. Then, content analysis of the transcripts was applied through segmentation to identify and label units of analysis, and applying coding scheme, that is, open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Units of analysis constituted any assessment-related thought extracted from the participants’ interviews and meetings. Next, statements were coded based on the shared concerns indicating a core underlying knowledge. Subsequently, the inferred codes were best fitted into Taylor’s (2013) model of language teachers’ language assessment literacy mentioned above (see 2.1). However, the grounded approach adopted in this study allowed for the emergence a new characteristic addressed as ‘autonomy and agency’. This category represented the teachers’ actions which were not demanded by the curriculum, or attempts that they did to improve the institute’s instructional programs in spite of limitations. Finally, these areas were further categorized forming three major themes, namely ‘Theoretical Knowledge’, ‘Practical Skills, and ‘Sociocultural and Critical Concerns’. Accordingly, the categories ‘knowledge of theory’, ‘language pedagogy’, and ‘principles and concepts’ constituted the theme ‘Theoretical Knowledge’. The categories ‘technical skills’, ‘scores and decision making’ and ‘local practices’ formed the theme ‘Practical
Skills. The categories ‘sociocultural values’, ‘personal beliefs and attitudes’ and the newly emerged category ‘autonomy and agency’ comprised the theme ‘Sociocultural and Critical Concerns’. Definitions and examples for these categories are provided in the following sections. The following conversation provides an example of the segmentation and coding procedure.

Example 2: (Adopted from) Week 5, ELT Group

T5: “For this week’s production test, I have to write questions from this part of the lesson (1) but it is a new lesson and many of them [the learners] haven’t learnt it well and need more practices (2). How should I write the items?”

T8: “Look, you can write fill-in-the-blank items. Then, in the next quiz ask them to make sentences in the way that book wants (3). I usually do it in this way that after the quiz, while checking the answers, I repeat the lesson to make sure they have learned it (4).”

As shown above, this conversation was segmented into four units. More specifically, unit (1) represents T5’s concern for following lesson plans and schedule, and unit (2), indicates her attention to cognitive aspects of learning process. These two units were later classified under the category ‘language pedagogy’. Regarding T8, unit (3) indicates her test writing abilities and skills, which was later classified under the category ‘technical skills’. Unit (4) reveals T8’s strategy for the instructional aspect of assessment and the principles she has developed in this regard. This unit was later classified under the category ‘principles and concepts’.

To ensure reliability of the findings, a second coder, holding Ph.D in TEFL, experienced in content analysis, and specifically trained for the present study, coded 10% of the randomly-chosen transcripts. Results revealed inter-coder reliability of 91%. Subsequently, the diverging points were discussed and the coding procedure was revised accordingly. For instance, in the case of Example 2, unit (2) was interpreted as a concern for the learners’ motivation by one coder, and as a concern for learning process by another. Given that overall conversation’s context, no clue indicating motivation and affective domain was found. Thus, the two coders agreed that this unit indicated learning process.

4. Results and Discussion

To address research questions, both qualitative analysis and statistical measures were employed. First, thematic analysis of data led to the emergence of nine categories or areas of language assessment knowledge and literacy. Next, based on the results from content analysis of transcripts
of group discussions, statistical procedures examined variations in this knowledge between ELT Group and Non-ELT Group.

4.1 Dominant Areas of Assessment Knowledge

The first research question addressed the dominant areas of assessment knowledge underlying the groups’ language assessment-related practices during the semester. To provide answer to this question, the entire data adopted from interviews and meeting’s group work and discussions were analyzed. As mentioned above (see 3.4), nine categories were inferred which were categorized into three major themes ‘Theoretical Knowledge’, ‘Practical Skills’, and ‘Sociocultural and Critical Concerns’. The following sub-sections elaborate on the thematic analysis of major themes and their corresponding categories as well as groups’ particular concerns regarding each category. It should be mentioned that these themes and categories encompassed the participants’ assessment literacy as a unified knowledge base. Thus, there seems a degree of overlap between them. However, this categorization classified and analyzed statements and practices based on their contextual characteristics as the most representative of different aspects of this knowledge base.

4.1.1 Theoretical Knowledge

The first theme incorporated categories indicating the participants’ knowledge and approaches to language assessment and classroom instruction as informed by theories of assessment, teaching, and learning. The three following categories explained below correspond to this theme.

Knowledge of Theory. This category emerged from statements indicating the teachers’ familiarity with theories of language teaching and assessment. Analysis of the data indicated the two groups’ different reliance on this area of knowledge in their instruction and assessment practices. That is, although the institute’s curriculum encouraged adopting a communicative and functional approach in instruction and assessment, a structural perspective was frequently implied in the reflections and test construction practices, especially among Non-ELT Group. More specifically, they adopted a grammar based approach to their weekly quizzes to ensure students’ learning. However, function-based approaches to test writing were more frequently observed among ELT Group. The following excerpts indicate these approaches.

Example 3: Week 3, Non-ELT Group

T2: “I want to write items that follow the communicative approaches that we have in textbooks. At the same time, I think students need to know grammar and vocabulary to become more successful in their final exams. I should see what type of test is more appropriate.”
Example 4: Week 8, ELT Group
T6: “I believe items of this grammar quiz should be mixed with language functions, and collocations. Collocation itself means meaning; means form and function; means how native speakers talk; theory approves it, too.”

**Language Pedagogy.** The second category addressed utterances indicating how participants integrated pedagogical knowledge, classroom practices, and assessing learning process. Reviewing the data showed the groups’ considerable reliance on classroom experiences and their pedagogical knowledge. Although this category to some extent overlapped the groups’ ‘knowledge of theory’, the participants, especially in Non-ELT Group, expressed their increasing interest in gaining a deeper pedagogical knowledge by studying related books, searching available websites, and sharing ideas with members in meetings. In addition, both groups expressed their concern for their effectiveness of instruction and pedagogical practices as they reflected on their test writing activities.

Example 5: Week 8, Non-ELT Group
T3: “It is not enough to go to classes, teach, write quizzes based on the tests available in the institute’s test bank, then, run and score the quizzes. I see teaching and testing as two sides of one whole. You should know both to succeed.”

Example 6: Week 10, ELT Group
T9: “I evaluate students’ language production through classroom practices, correcting their errors, what they come and write on the board, book exercises, quizzes, and homework. I also give tests for the last stage of evaluation.”

**Principles and Concepts.** This category was inferred from remarks showing maxims and principles that the participants’ set for themselves based on their conceptualization of assessment and instruction and the strategies they have developed accordingly. These principles and concepts guided groups’ goal settings in test writing, related classroom practices, and evaluative decision makings. Accordingly, succeeding in the final exam with high grades constituted a major goal behind item writing and related practices, especially in Non-ELT Group. Final discussions and interviews, however, revealed both groups’ concerns for improving instruction based on the results of tests. The following extracts further illustrate this point.

Example 9: Week 2, Non-ELT Group
T5: “I want to prepare students for their final [exams], so I try to follow format of these tests... they should learn how to manage their time and how to answer questions. This makes them more successful at exam.”

T2: “I agree that we don’t have to forget midterm and final exams, but I think we should work on their speaking and listening, too.”

Example 10: Final Individual Interview, ELT-Group

T10: “You said tests should make us sure they [students] have learned the lesson. Ok, but what will you do if your students keep making mistakes in the quizzes?”

T6: “My way is that, when I have recently taught something, say vocabulary, I don’t expect them too much in quizzes. I test only their recognition. But after a couple of sessions that it has been practiced in the class, to check whether the process of learning has taken place, I include, for example, the same words with different contexts ... Then in midterm and final exam, I give production and function items, or ask them to write a paragraph using these words.”

With regard to the theme ‘Theoretical Knowledge’, examination of reflections and practices of the two groups indicated different perspectives. As such, ELT Group primarily maintained a functional view whereas Non-ELT Group more frequently adopted grammar-based approaches to theories of teaching and assessment. Moreover, the two groups represented different ways of integrating instruction and assessment and showed various conceptualizations of this link through setting instructional and evaluative goals.

4.1.2 Practical Skills

The second theme encompassed categories representing the participants’ practical skills and competence necessary for test writing, administration, scoring, and interpretation. This theme included three categories which are explained bellow.

Technical Skills. This category emerged from statements addressing the participants’ practical skills of item writing and their choice of different types of test tasks. Analysis of the data indicated that groups, especially Non-ELT Group primarily included recognition items, particularly multiple choice item types. Although the two groups attributed using this test type to the ease of construction, administration, and scoring, practical test construction revealed to follow relatively different directions in ELT Group. That is, in this group production items with functional purposes, or recognition items which required analytic language ability and higher level thinking more frequently came to focus. The examples below illustrate this variation.
Example 7: Week 5, Non-ELT Group
T1: “I prefer multiple choice items ... You know, class time is limited and when we have production tests, time of class is lost, and the scoring takes time, too ... but writing essay takes a lot of time. I give them a topic and the number of sentences but I need a fixed way for correcting essays.”

Example 8: Week 7, ELT Group
[As participants were discussing how to give a writing test, T8 suggested her own way of running the writing tests.]
T8: “I usually give them a topic and specify the length of writing. That is, I specify word counts for the writing not the number of sentences. By word I mean content words not a writing full of prepositions and pronouns. Then I give them some tips like where did you go, what did you do, etc. Don’t forget to tell them how you score the writings. They should know it before the exam.”

Scores and Decision Making. This category incorporated utterances showing the groups’ approaches to scoring and score interpretation as well as the consequences of decision making based on this interpretation. The two groups represented relatively similar concerns for this category. That is, in early meetings scores were addressed, by both groups, as a sign of the teachers’ success and the students’ progress. However, during the last meetings the groups added a direction to interpreting the scores that is as a feedback on teachers’ efficiency of classroom practices and for modifying their instruction. The following extracts which are told by the same teacher further elaborate on this process.

Example 11: Week 3, Non-ELT Group
T5: “When my students get higher scores, they become more motivated, and this helps them study harder. Sometimes I give them bonus marks. It makes them really competitive. Also, I see that the institute’s manager welcomes higher grades. You will be known as a better teacher; students will be more successful and motivated …”

Example 12: Week 9, Non-ELT Group
T5: “Scores of weekly quizzes tell me I haven’t wasted my time but when I saw their [students’] low scores of midterm exam, first, I lost my confidence. Then, I analyzed the problematic parts of the exam, and worked on them in the class. Now I expect better results for final exam because they have learned the lessons more effectively.”
Local Practices. This category addressed the participants’ attempts to practice their knowledge of language assessment and technical skills according to the context. Although the category ‘local practices’ constituted one of the most dominant areas on which both groups relied, analysis of the data revealed different concerns behind this reliance. That is, as compared with ELT Group, Non-ELT Group appeared more involved in meeting the requirements of the program including practicing test writing and administration, discussing related issues in meetings, and receiving feedback from groups. Although following the same line, ELT Group put more emphasis on flexibility of assessment practices based on the contextual factors. In this regard, as stated in the following example, one of the participants reported on different decisions she had to make on the same technique based on her learners’ proficiency level and the institutional constraints.

Example 13: Week 6, ELT Group

T7: “When I wanted to give the quiz last week, students said they weren’t ready. I asked them to do the quiz in pair, then we discussed the answers with the whole class and I asked them to score themselves.”

Analysis of the data corresponding to the theme ‘Practical Skills’ indicated the participants’ various assessment goals and approaches leading their choice of test types and score interpretations. In addition, different degrees of flexibility was observed in making decisions based on immediate needs of classroom and contextual factors. Although groups represented different views in choosing test types and local practices, both group stated to adopt a broader view of scores as a feedback providing clues for teachers for modification of instruction and assessment.

4.1.3 Sociocultural and Critical Concerns

The third theme included areas of assessment knowledge indicating groups’ reflections on and concerns for tests’ social impacts and ethical issues. This theme also encompassed the participants’ personal conceptualizations and values as well as their individual actions to improve assessment in their contexts. This theme consists of three categories which are outlined as follows.

Sociocultural Values. This category was inferred from the participants’ remarks representing their involvement in the social consequences and impacts of assessment, evaluation, and score interpretations. Moreover, this area of knowledge incorporated the groups’ understanding of ethics, fairness, and impacts of tests, and reflected their conceptualization of classroom instruction as a socially-situated practice. Although analyzing early discussions showed little variations in the groups’ directions towards these issues, both groups appeared to develop new conceptualizations
across the study. That is, during the early meetings, the pressures exerted from educational system, society, and students’ families were considered as accepted norms and difficulties of the job. However, in the ending discussions, the groups more frequently addressed the taken-for-the-granted norms of the society including achieving high ranks and scores as the accepted concept of educational success. The following excerpts further clarify these directions.

Example 14: Final Focus Group Interview, Non-ELT Group
T5: “I used to think I gave challenging tests but now I understand they weren’t fair. For example, [after] I taught a word which had several meanings, I brought examples from one of the meanings. Then in the quizzes, I would give them [students] a fill-in-the-blank item for another meaning. I thought they should guess the meaning based on the context. Now I see it wouldn’t fulfill my objective of teaching.”

Example 15: Week 8, ELT Group
T6: “When you help students pass IELTS or TOEFL tests successfully, instead of teaching them how to independently and creatively produce language, you are known as a successful teacher but maybe students can’t even communicate a sentence.”
T8: “That’s right, and we are under pressure from institute and the students who want good results. If the students get good grades, the institute ranks higher among other branches, then this means we teachers have done our job well. They put it all on the teachers’ shoulders… and we are not paid well.”

**Personal Beliefs/Attitudes.** This category emerged from statements representing the groups’ reflections and personal expression of assessment-related perspectives, concerns, and beliefs. One of the frequently expressed common views was that both groups emphasized the importance of a coherent criteria for their test writing and scoring which was missing in the program then. In addition, ELT Group highlighted that test construction and administration should be based on classrooms’ needs and the students’ individual differences. The following excerpts reflect some of the groups’ beliefs and attitudes.

Example 16: Week 9, Non-ELT Group
T2: “In my opinion, our quizzes affect study, learning styles, and strategies of students… so we need a unified set of rules for writing items and tests, and for scoring production tests, especially essays.”
Example 17: Final Focus Group Interview, ELT Group

T10: “When students know there is a purpose behind items, they will study more deeply and purposefully. But if they see it is always multiple choice, or if they realize the blanks in cloze passages are random, they will leave everything to chance and don’t set goal in their study.”

**Autonomy and Agency.** This category consisted of the participants’ voluntary actions which were not included in the curriculum, or their attempts to improve the institute’s instructional programs in spite of limitations. In the case of these attempts and actions, the two groups usually cooperated with each other. For instance, T10, T4, and T2 set to revise the institute’s test archive through updating and editing quizzes and organizing them based on the students’ needs and curricular objectives. T6 and T1 cooperated in assigning their students to choose items of their weekly quizzes. In addition, T8 reported that she had launched a similar program at another language institute in which she worked as a supervisor. Both groups also suggested that, added to the completely pre-designed tests that the institute provided in midterm and final exams, each teacher should add a few items evaluating supplementary activities focused in that classroom.

As indicated in the three categories of the theme ‘Sociocultural and Critical Concerns’, initial sociocultural and critical concerns were relatively similar across groups. However, participants of both groups expressed different sociocultural values, beliefs, and attitudes during the study. Another point to address is the cooperation in voluntary attempts that both groups made to improve assessment practices at their institute.

Given the instances of knowledge and perspectives inferred from qualitative analysis, the major themes and their corresponding areas of assessment knowledge were initially delineated based on the classification proposed by Taylor (2013). In addition, the area ‘autonomy and agency’, which was not included in Taylor’s classification, emerged from statements and actions of the participants. As indicated in qualitative analysis of the data, regardless of the frequency of referring to each theme, groups revealed different perspectives and approaches towards language assessment. That is, theoretical and practical approaches of Non-ELT Group to assessment implied as more practically-oriented than theoretically-directed, and indicated structural perspectives behind remarks and practices. However, statements and practices among ELT Group revealed to be more theoretically informed, with an inclination towards functional approaches to language instruction and assessment. With respect to the groups’ sociocultural and critical concerns, in addition to the groups’ conceptualization of ethics and impacts of tests, both groups revealed their
autonomy and sense of agency through their efforts to improve the institute’s evaluation policies. The above-mentioned dominant areas and assessment-related approaches, actions, and perspectives among the two groups reflect contribution of ELT-related theoretical knowledge and academic background (major of study). These finding are consistent with the empirical data and theoretical frameworks addressing role of theoretical knowledge and academic background to teachers’ pedagogical and evaluative practices and decision makings (e.g., Borg, 2003; Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008) as well as their awareness and concerns for sociocultural aspects of assessment (e.g., Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Pill & Harding, 2013; Shohamy, 2005). However, due to the focus and short length of this study, the observed instances of change in perspectives and actions during the course of study require caution.

4.2 Variations in the Groups’ Language Assessment Knowledge

The second research question addressed potential variations among the participants’ assessment knowledge as a function of academic backgrounds. Although the first research question revealed nuances in the groups’ perspectives, beliefs, and actions within dominant areas of assessment knowledge, comparing the frequencies yielded from the content analysis of group discussions and test writing practices provided clues to more thoroughly answer to this question. The frequencies and percentages of reported units under each category corresponding to major themes are tabulated in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Themes and Corresponding Categories</th>
<th>Frequencies and Percentages</th>
<th>Non-ELT</th>
<th>ELT Group</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Theory</td>
<td></td>
<td>95</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Knowledge</td>
<td>Language</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principles and Concepts</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>639</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As indicated in Table 3, of the total number of 4983 reported units, 70.5% of the units were reported by ELT Group, and 29.5% were reported by Non-ELT Group. In addition, the three categories ‘technical skills’, ‘language pedagogy’, and ‘local practices’ remained the most frequently reported areas guiding the two groups’ assessment related practices, reflections, and decision makings. More specifically, ‘Technical skills’ revealed to be the most frequently reported area of knowledge among both groups (6.6% reported by Non-ELT Group and 13.6% by ELT Group). Moreover, the three areas ‘knowledge of theory’, ‘sociocultural values’, and ‘Autonomy and Agency’ were the least frequently addressed among the two groups. Chi-Square Tests were conducted to compare frequencies of occurrences of the two groups’ reported units. First, total frequency of the themes reported by each group, and next, categories corresponding to each theme were compared. Table 4 summarizes the results of Chi-Square Tests. Accordingly, there was a significant difference between the two groups ($\chi^2 = 9.550$, df = 2, sig two-tailed = .008) in terms of frequencies of referring to the three major themes of language assessment literacy.

Table 3. Percentages of Total Units Reported by Each Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>ELT Group</th>
<th>Non-ELT Group</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical Skills</td>
<td>328</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>1006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scores and Decision Making</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Practices</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural Values</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Beliefs/Attitudes</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge of Theory</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autonomy and Agency</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1471</td>
<td>3512</td>
<td>4983</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As indicated in Table 3, of the total number of 4983 reported units, 70.5% of the units were reported by ELT Group, and 29.5% were reported by Non-ELT Group. In addition, the three categories ‘technical skills’, ‘language pedagogy’, and ‘local practices’ remained the most frequently reported areas guiding the two groups’ assessment related practices, reflections, and decision makings. More specifically, ‘Technical skills’ revealed to be the most frequently reported area of knowledge among both groups (6.6% reported by Non-ELT Group and 13.6% by ELT Group). Moreover, the three areas ‘knowledge of theory’, ‘sociocultural values’, and ‘Autonomy and Agency’ were the least frequently addressed among the two groups. Chi-Square Tests were conducted to compare frequencies of occurrences of the two groups’ reported units. First, total frequency of the themes reported by each group, and next, categories corresponding to each theme were compared. Table 4 summarizes the results of Chi-Square Tests. Accordingly, there was a significant difference between the two groups ($\chi^2 = 9.550$, df = 2, sig two-tailed = .008) in terms of frequencies of referring to the three major themes of language assessment literacy.

Table 4. Results of the Chi-Square Tests Comparing Groups
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Significant Level (p)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major Themes</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Knowledge</td>
<td>36.881</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical Skills</td>
<td>72.674</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural and Critical Concerns</td>
<td>4.730</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As reported in Table 4, Chi-Square tests were also employed to compare the two groups against categories of each major theme. As indicated in the results, ($\chi^2 =36.881$, df= 3, sig two-tailed=.001), there was a significant difference between the two groups in terms of their frequencies of reported units corresponding to categories of the theme ‘Theoretical Knowledge’. The results, ($\chi^2 =72.674$, df= 3, sig two-tailed=.001), also indicated a significant difference between the two groups with respect to referring to the categories theme ‘Practical Skills’. Regarding the theme ‘Sociocultural and Critical Concerns’, the results, ($\chi^2 =4.730$, df= 2, sig two-tailed= .094), revealed a non-significant difference between the two groups in terms of frequencies of reporting each category.

As represented in Table 3 and the results of Chi-Square Tests reported in Table 4, some patterns revealed among the groups’ reliance on particular areas of assessment knowledge and major themes. As such, with regard to areas of knowledge, the category ‘technical skills’, with 1006 reported units, incorporated more than 20% of reported statements the most frequently reported area of assessment knowledge. The second most prevalent area of knowledge, ‘language pedagogy’ with 16.6% (825 units) reported units, was followed by ‘scores and decision making’ with more than 13% of the whole units (654 units). In addition to analysis of categories, the theme ‘Practical Skills’ revealed to be the most frequently reported theme. The results, as reported in Table 4, indicate that although there was an extensive reliance on the three mentioned areas and the theme ‘Practical Skills’ within each group, frequency of referring to them revealed to be significantly different between groups. This implies that both groups were primarily guided by practical, technical, and pedagogical knowledge and competence in their assessment initiatives.
including their reflections, discussions, actual test writing activities, and decision makings. However, in addition to frequency of occurrences of referring to areas of assessment knowledge, different perspectives indicated in qualitative analysis of data, presented in the results of the first research question, implied that these practices were informed by theoretical knowledge and academic background. The variations in perspectives and practices expressed in the utterances of the two groups are in line with the literature addressing the importance of education and theoretical knowledge as major factors in improving assessment literacy among classroom teachers (e.g., Borg, 2003; Freeman, 2002, 2007; Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2009).

5. Conclusion

The present paper embarked on exploring language teachers’ assessment literacy and the knowledge base guiding their test construction, evaluative decisions, and actual classroom assessment practices. This knowledge base was further examined for the potential variations as a function of academic background among two groups of Iranian EFL teachers, namely, ELT Group and Non-ELT Group. Three major areas of assessment knowledge emerged from thematic analysis of the entire data collected from interviews, group discussions, and actual test writing practices in weekly meetings. Whereas qualitative analysis of the data revealed views and approaches to theoretical perspectives, assessment practices, and related social values, statistical measures compared the two groups for their reliance on each of these areas during their group discussions, test constructions, and reflections in meetings. The significantly different theoretical and practical reliance as well as different approaches and views appear to be consistent with the literature highlighting the role of theoretical and pedagogical knowledge and skills in development of language assessment literacy and its underlying areas of knowledge (e.g., Almarza, 1996; Fulcher, 2012; Inbar-Lourie, 2008; Malone, 2008; O’Loughlin, 2006, 2013; Pill & Harding, 2013; Scarino, 2013; Shohamy, 2005; Stoynoff, 2012; Taylor, 2009, 2013). These results also highlight role of materials, methodology, and education “in language testing and assessment to meet the changing needs of teachers” (Fulcher, 2012, p. 113). With respect to the theme ‘Sociocultural and Critical Concerns’, in spite of non-significant differences between the corresponding categories and relatively similar views of the two groups, the qualitative analysis of the data revealed instances of awareness and reformulations in the groups’ concerns behind referring to these areas. That is, both groups represented more awareness, autonomy, and sense of agency towards the end of the
study. This is indicated, for instance, in 4.1.3 as teachers suggested that the institute’s administrations allow teachers to contribute to construction of their classrooms’ midterm and final exams. This reconstruction of concerns and concepts is corroborated by Pill and Harding (2013) who suggest a progressive procedure in improving language teachers’ assessment literacy. However, as mentioned before, due to the short length of the study (10 weeks), caution is required in attributing these reconstructions of the perspectives to the role of mediated group work and discussions. It is suggested that longitudinal replications and follow-up inquiries further investigate role of mediated supervision in renewal and enhancement of language assessment knowledge and literacy.

Given the limited domain of inquiry in the present study, the results are suggested to be interpreted with caution, and replications are required to ensure compatibility of the findings with the theory. For one thing, longitudinal studies with a focus on dialog between groups are needed to investigate the above-mentioned transformational role of group activity in EFL teachers’ language assessment literacy. In addition, this research was carried out among a limited number of EFL teachers to investigate role of academic backgrounds in language assessment literacy. Thus, investigating contribution of teachers’ academic degree and length of teaching experience, across bigger groups of participants are suggested. Moreover, examining assessment literacy across different contexts of instruction (formal education, private sector, English for specific purposes, etc.) promises potential areas for further investigation and possible exploration of new areas of knowledge untouched in this study. In spite of its limitations, the results of this study provide implications for language teacher development programs to improve language teachers’ assessment knowledge and professional development. Thus, given the importance of language assessment literacy and formation of an ‘assessment culture’ (Inbar-Lourie, 2008), pre-service and in-service teacher development programs may find it relevant to encourage a coherent curriculum by considering improvement in these nine identified areas of assessment knowledge in their programs. Finally, the findings can provide a baseline for researchers to develop teachers’ belief scales and evaluative measures to investigate teachers’ assessment knowledge base with the aim of contributing to language teachers’ professional development.
References


Title

The Role of Negative Evidence in First Language Acquisition

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Abstract

Children understand many words long before they can produce them, and they may find some aspects of a language easier to master than others. Since language forms part of their daily communication it regulates what they do and they are encouraged to think of language as a social activity with rules and also as an activity that everyone engages in intentionally to communicate with one another. Children must induce the system from the evidence presented to them. The feedback that children get from adults plays a vital role in language development. This paper reviews the role and importance of negative evidence in a child’s first language acquisition.

Keywords: Negative evidence, Positive evidence, First language acquisition, Child directed speech, Parental feedback

1. Introduction

Language is a primary vehicle for teaching children how to become members of a society. Conversations become more elaborate as children understand more and take account of more uses of language. Infants are born into a social world, a world of touch, sound, and affect—a world of communication. All children in learning a language starting right after birth face a particularly intricate task. Although the environmental conditions and languages may vary and also the cultures and conditions of child rearing may differ with regard to motivations and talents all normal
children acquire their native tongue to a high level of proficiency within a narrow developmental time frame (Gleitman and Newport, 1995). They develop and grow up as social beings, immersed in a network of relationships from the start and language forms part of the daily communication around them regulating their behavior in the society to a great extent, telling them about the world, events, actions, objects, and relations within it. In short, language is a central factor in the social life of infants.

Children understand many words long before they can produce them, and this asymmetry between comprehension and production is lifelong. According to Clark (2009) languages are highly complex systems whether one considers just the sound system or the vocabulary or even the syntactic constructions and word structure. The structural elements are just half of what has to be learnt; the other half consists of the functions assigned to each element. The language they are exposed to provides the context in which they become proficient at communicating wants and desires, affects and interests, requests and instructions, questions and observations, and commentary on all the contents of everyday life. While all researchers agree that children need to be exposed to language to start in on acquisition, there is much less agreement on the form that this exposure must take. Until very recently, children’s acquisition of language was studied without considering child-directed speech (CDS) because it was assumed that the nature of the CDS made very little difference to the course of language acquisition (Clark, 2009).

Language acquisition is one of the most impressive and fascinating aspects of human development and although all languages are learned, some part of the capacity to learn must be “innate.” A child does not simply reproduce what he hears, but actively creates language, experimenting with the rules that he has extracted from the input (Karmiloff and Karmiloff-Smith, 2001). But a major challenge for theories of language acquisition is to explain how children recover from grammatical errors, such as (1) and (2):

(1) I maked it with water.
(2) And fill the little sugars up in the bowl (Brown, 1973; Pinker, 1989 cited in Marcus, 1993).

The question does arise: Do children eliminate their grammatical errors solely on the basis of internal mechanisms, or do they require external feedback from their parents? (Marcus, 1993). Children produce many errors during acquisition, and researchers have long been concerned with how they manage to get rid of these errors as they get older (Baker, 1979; Bowerman, 1988, 1996;
Grimshaw, 1981; Pinker, 1984 cited in Chouinard and Clark, 2001). Some have argued that the evidence children receive from the speech around them about the forms of language is too impoverished to account for their (eventual) learning. The first analyses of speech addressed to children was undertaken in response to the claims that such input was ill-formed and that it was very complex (Snow, 1986).

Noam Chomsky argued that the language children are exposed to is a degenerate version of a language (poverty of stimulus) – such speech is full of errors, hesitations, breaks in construction, retracing, pauses, and other disfluencies, repairs to vocabulary, pronunciation, and so on, to the extent that children would necessarily have great difficulty both in learning what might be systematic in a language and in discerning what the structures are. This description assumed that CDS did not differ in any important way from the language used among adults (Fodor, 1966 cited in Snow, 1986). Chomsky hypothesized that children are born with a specific innate ability to discover for themselves the underlying rules of a language on the basis of the samples of a natural language they are exposed to. Researchers studying language acquisition agree that since all children acquire the language of their environment, they must have some innate mechanism or knowledge that allows them to discover the complexities of a language in spite of limitations in their input. With language so close to the core of what it means to be human, it is not surprising that children’s acquisition of language has received so much attention.

2. Review of literature

2.1. What is Negative Evidence?

Until recently, a long-standing assumption in the field of child language acquisition research was that parents do not correct the grammatical errors of their children (Saxton, 2000). Bohannon and Stanowicz (1988) also believe that “regardless of their differences, recent language learning theories depend on the axiomatic assertion that children are never informed about the distinction between grammatical and ungrammatical sentences” (p. 684). While consensus now exists that potentially corrective responses are often supplied, controversy persists as to whether the child can identify and exploit such information in practice.

A great deal of debate about the role of negative evidence—for example, whether children have to be told that certain strings of words are ungrammatical in language acquisition, and its limitations have been used to justify the existence of innate principles. Learning a language is the
natural product of the developing human mind and brain and children in acquiring their first
language have to determine which system applies to their native language. That is, they have to
learn to set the principles and parameters as required by that particular language. It is very
important to know whether children get and need negative evidence, because in the absence of
negative evidence, any child who hypothesizes a rule that generates a superset of the language will
have no way of knowing that he or she is wrong (Gold, 1967). If children receive only positive
evidence, the solution to this dilemma must be sought by appealing to the structured properties of
the mind. Evidently, in acquiring language, children go beyond simply learning the new labels that
parents provide. They also analyze the words they hear to see how they function as part of the
wider linguistic context.

One important feature of the way in which the subset principle is formulated deals with the
distinction between positive and negative evidence. Positive evidence is simply the input, that is,
the sentences children hear. It is evidence that a particular utterance is grammatical in the language
that the child is learning; negative evidence is evidence that a particular utterance is
ungrammatical. Negative evidence is parental behavior that provides information about when
sentences are not in the language. Pinker (1990) argues that “at the grammatical level these
constraints are provided by the language itself. According to the subset principle, children begin
to search through possible languages by beginning with the smallest subset available (that is, the
most restrictive language). If there is no evidence from their linguistic input that this is their native
language they then proceed to the next largest subset, until they find a match” (cited in Carroll,
2008, p. 346). However, a variety of studies indicate that negative evidence is not provided in the
linguistic environment. Based largely on conclusions, subsequent research has based its views
solely on how children acquire language from positive evidence (hearing sentences that belong to
a language) and without negative evidence (information about which sentences do not belong to
that language) (Marcus, 1993). Marcus challenges this assumption that without negative evidence,
any model of language acquisition must account for how the child can learn language from positive
indicates that a particular utterance is ungrammatical or inappropriate” (pp. 346-347). But negative
evidence does not tell a child why a particular sentence is ungrammatical. For example:
Child: I eated the food.
Parent: I ate the food.
This parental reply clearly provides the child with a piece of positive evidence and could serve as negative evidence only if the child recognizes it as an exemplar of a recast and has mechanisms that use such information (Marcus, 1993). According to Marcus “A child who does not speak can receive no negative evidence, aside from explicit metalinguistic statements (e.g., don’t say X). Negative evidence must respond to a child’s utterance; it can only arise if parents are in some way sensitive (though not necessarily consciously) to whether their children speak grammatically” (p. 58).

Feedback from adults about children plays a vital role in language development. Children’s early utterances use the order most frequently modeled in the CDS. The child uses the input to formulate hypotheses which are revised only when disconfirming evidence becomes available. Children cannot correct their errors based on the positive inputs they always encounter. They should also be exposed to some kind of negative evidence which acts as a prerequisite to get rid of errors. Marcus (1993) believes that “Verbal parental feedback, such as repetitions or expansions, inherently provides the child with positive evidence, as well as potentially providing negative evidence” (p. 59). Sokolov and Snow (1994) argue that “although parents might not provide explicit negative evidence (in the form of explicit correction), they do provide implicit negative evidence” (cited in Harley, 2008, p. 83). Examples of parents who tend to repeat more ill-formed utterances than well-formed ones, and tend to follow ill-formed utterances with a question rather than a continuation of the topic are some of the cases. Accordingly there are also regional and class differences where working-class mothers in the USA provide more explicit corrections than do middle-class mothers. And Marcus (1993, p. 67) believes that:

Since every child learns language, a particular type of parental feedback can be a precondition for learning language only if it is provided to every child. Many types of feedback may be sufficient for language acquisition, but if any child manages to learn language lacking that particular type of feedback, then that particular type of parental feedback cannot be necessary for language acquisition. (Note that every child receives positive evidence).

2.2. The importance of negative evidence in first language acquisition
Language acquisition is a central topic in cognitive science and learning a first language is something that every child does successfully in a matter of a few years without formal lessons. The study of language acquisition can answer many fundamental questions: Do children learn language using language specific mechanisms, or is language acquisition part of their general
intelligence? Is language unique to humans? What is the relation between language and thought? We shall see that it is virtually impossible to show how children could learn a language unless one assumes that they have a considerable amount of nonlinguistic cognitive machinery in place before they start. According to Matychuk (2005, p. 303) parents use language to help reveal the world to their children. However, infants are not born with adult-like language competency with which they can comprehend the meaning of the language their parents direct at them. So, a question is where do they get that ability? Though it is likely that children are born with some sort of innate capacity for language acquisition (the nature of which is only theorized at present) which might play some role in the language learning process, we know that normal infants successfully manage to acquire the language(s) of their environment. Exactly how infants become such skilled manipulators of a communication tool as complex and nuanced as language, and to do it within a relatively short time frame, still remains a fascinating riddle without a completely satisfying solution.

Innate and environmental factors always interact in the development of complex abilities, and both are of crucial importance. It is not, however, absurd to ask what proportion of the developmental variation in some complex ability like language is attributable to innate as opposed to environmental factors, for it is certainly the case that environmental factors can be relatively more important in determining an individual’s achievements for one type of ability than for another type of ability. Based on the assertion that we understand the world through our particular language, and that speakers of different languages conceptualize the world in different ways, Pinker (1995) believes that language acquisition would be learning to think, not just learning to talk. According to Fletcher and Garman (1986) “children are more socially than linguistically precocious since they come to language learning with a good understanding of what constitutes communication and they are also capable of interpreting many adult responses other than explicit correction or total failure of comprehension, as negative feedback” (p. 77).

Matychuk (2005) states that the language children use contains functions which show what children do with language. These functions are believed to be present in the child’s output system, and do not, of course, appear fully formed and functioning at birth. The functions (and of course the language which is used to convey them) must have developmental roots within either the children themselves or the environment, or perhaps both. Matychuk continues that “if the environment plays any role at all in the linguistic development of an infant, presumably the parents or primary caregivers are responsible for a substantial part of the input needed for the infant’s
linguistic development to commence and then flourish” (p. 305). Although a complete understanding of how infants acquire language still eludes researchers while various theories of language development exist. Many of these theories are based on the assumption that the biological maturation process of an infant is concomitant with and largely responsible for the relatively rapid acquisition of language proficiency (p. 307).

Language is universal in the species just because the capacity to learn it is innate. Children definitely do need to hear an existing language to learn that language. Parents play an important role in matching the language input to the appropriate level of cognitive and language development of their children. Proponents of theories emphasizing environmental control over acquisition have asserted that differential responses to children’s grammatical and ungrammatical utterances are crucial for fostering learning of syntax (Morgan et al., 1995). But some theories with nativists’ views proceeded to marshal arguments including observations that children commit relatively few errors and acquire a highly abstract grammatical system on the basis of limited and perhaps impoverished exposure to language. Fletcher and Garman (1986) believe that the “child is assumed to operate without benefit of negative evidence, i.e. without ever being told ‘That rule is wrong’ or ‘here is an incorrect sentence’ ” (p. 76). Bohannon and Stanowicz (1988) contend that parents generally correct only the truth and meaning of children’s utterances and not the sentences that they produce. On average, parents provided more recasts after ungrammatical than grammatical sentences. Cazden (1972 cited in Harley, 2008) believes that “parents rarely correct grammar, and if they try to do so the corrections have little effect” (p. 106). This claim is based on one study (Brown and Hanlon, 1970) which noted explicit parental corrections or failures to comprehend in response to child utterances. Explicit corrections occurred in response to child utterances that contained errors of fact, but not in response to child utterances that were grammatically incorrect or incomplete, leading to Brown and Hanlon’s identification of a major paradox in child rearing, that children nonetheless end up speaking grammatically but not truthfully (cited in Fletcher and Garman, 1986, p. 76).

Parents do not always completely ignore grammatically incorrect utterances. They may provide some sort of implicit feedback, in that the discourse patterns vary in frequency between parent and child depending on the grammaticality of the child’s utterances (Bohannon and Stanowich, 1988; Demetras, Post and Snow, 1986; Hirsh-Pasek, Treiman and Schneiderman, 1984; Moerk, 1991; Morgan and Travis, 1989 cited in Harley, 2008, p. 107). Marcus (1993) believes that the studies
that allow examination of individual differences show that different parents provide different, even conflicting, patterns of feedback. Although it is true that some form of feedback may be sufficient for those who receive it, any type of feedback that is not available universally cannot be a necessary type of feedback. (This does not eliminate the possibility that some other form might be necessary). But recasts that manifest negative evidence serving as corrective feedback sparked further theoretical interests because as in Bohannon and Stanowicz’s (1988) words “if children’s conversational partners provide some form of corrective feedback (i.e., negative evidence), then many of the innate linguistic constraints recently proposed would become unnecessary” (p. 684).

Children with Japanese genes do not find Japanese any easier than English, or vice-versa; they learn whichever language they are exposed to. One type of feedback according to Saxton (1977 cited in Harley, 2008) is that parents are more likely to repeat the child’s incorrect utterance in a grammatically correct form or to ask a follow-up question. Marcus (1993, p. 72) too believes that children attend to all possible reply types, and that those reply types not used in a manner contingent on grammaticality have no net effect on the child’s grammar. But if, for example, some parents use repetitions to indicate grammaticality whereas other parents use repetitions to indicate ungrammaticality, then each child would have to determine whether his or her parents’ repetitions correlate positively, negatively, or not at all with grammaticality. Messer (2000 cited in Harley, 2008) exemplifies that if the child’s utterance is grammatically correct, the adults just continue the conversation.

In 1972, McNamara (cited in Fletcher and Garman, 1986, p. 77) argued that this view of language acquisition was incorrect, and that the acquisition of syntax could be explained only if it is recognized that children collect information about the relationship between syntactic forms and semantic structures. In other words, children figure out the rules underlying syntactic structure by using the cues provided by the meaning of an adult’s utterance. This implies that children must be able to determine what an utterance means on the basis of non-syntactic information—since it is the syntax that must be learned precisely. Nevertheless, not only the child must be a good guesser, but also that the adult must say the kind of things the child expects to hear since the adult and child share a way of looking at the world. Greenfield and Smith (1976) argue that such a shared view of the world does exist, and this is what enables adults to interpret children’s early pre-syntactic utterances (cited in Fletcher and Garman, 1986, p. 77). Adult utterances have no syntactic structure and children in the early stages of language acquisition must interpret adult utterances in the same
way as adults interpret children’s utterances, that is by relating the words used to aspects of the situation being described. Thus, as Pinker (1995) believes language acquisition is ordinarily driven by a grammatical sample of the target language.

People from different cultures also respond differently to grammatically incorrect utterances, with some appearing to place more emphasis on correctness (Ochs and Schieffelin (1995 cited in Harley, 2008, p. 107). Whether this type of feedback is strong enough to have any effect on the course of acquisition is still controversial (Marcus, 1993). Although Bohannon et al. (1990) concede, they still argue that: “the absence of a particular form of feedback in a particular community does not belie its utility for those children who do receive it, nor does it mean that no form of feedback is necessary for language learning to proceed normally” (p. 224). Saxton (1997 cited in Harley, 2008) says that such feedback is probably too infrequent to be effective; although others argue that occasional contrast between the children’s own incorrect adult versions do enable developmental change. We see that children are more likely to repeat adults’ expansions of their utterances than other utterances, suggesting that they pay more attention to them. For Harley (2008) the debate about whether or not children receive sufficient negative evidence (sometimes called the no-negative evidence problem) information about which strings of words are not grammatical, is important because without negative feedback it is a challenge to specify how children learn to produce only correct utterances. One possible solution is that they rely on mechanisms such as innate principles to help them learn the grammar. Further justification for innateness was made by Gold’s (1967, p. 453) argument that positive evidence alone (i.e., exposure only to grammatical strings) is not sufficient for a machine learning the types of language. He found that when he wrote a program in which the computer received only positive evidence, it failed to acquire the language correctly. The difference between an informant and a text is that the text will provide only positive evidence, whereas an informant will provide both positive and negative evidence. Negative evidence is needed so learners can identify ungrammatical strings as ungrammatical and helps rule out some of the competing grammars. If this argument is extended to children, as it often is, then they too would need both positive and negative evidence in order to learn and to get rid of errors. If they didn’t receive any negative evidence, they would have to rely on some other (innate) source of information for learning (Chouinard and Clark, 2001).

In acquiring some patterns of language, children begin by learning specific instances but apply it incorrectly by using it in all instances. Only later do they learn the exceptions to the rule. Harley
(2008, p. 108) calls this type of learning as the U-shaped development—in which performance starts off at a good level, but then becomes worse, before improving again. U-shaped development is suggestive of a developing system that has to learn both rules and exceptions to those rules. Language development appears to be strongly based on learning the rules rather than simply on learning associations and instances. And this means that the child must generate ungrammatical sentences that must then be explicitly corrected by the parent. Pinker (1990 as cited in Carroll, 2008) argues that it would be very difficult to acquire a language from positive evidence alone. Without knowing what is ungrammatical in a language, it is impossible to rule out some of the various competing grammars. Pinker believes that on the whole parents do not provide sufficient negative evidence to enable a child to learn a language. Nearly all parental speech is grammatical, exact repetitions (verbatim repetitions of child utterances) necessarily follow more of children’s grammatical utterances than their ungrammatical utterances. Thus, internal mechanisms are necessary to account for the unlearning of ungrammatical utterances (Marcus, 1993).

Although negative evidence is present it is not systematically and consistently available to all children acquiring a language. Yet all children do acquire a language. Therefore, some innate linguistic mechanisms, such as the subset principle are needed to constrain the child’s search process. Fletcher and Garman (1986) believe that the question or model of how language acquisition proceeds rests on the presumption of semantic limitations on adult utterances—they describe those aspects of the situation at hand which are most obvious to the child, and that the adult utterances are limited to those topics about which the child has extralinguistic information. Pinker (1995) touches upon the same issue arguing that the child would set parameters on the basis of a few examples from the parental input, and the full complexity of a language will ensue when those parameterized rules interact with one another and with universal principles. The parameter-setting view can help explain the universality and rapidity of the acquisition of language, despite the arcane complexity of what is and is not grammatical (e.g., the ungrammaticality of “Who do you think that left?”). When children learn one fact about a language, they can deduce that other facts are also true of it without having to learn them one by one. Pinker’s (1990) argument follows that:

- Positive evidence alone is consistent with too many competing grammars.
- Negative evidence, which could constrain the problem space, is not generally available.
- Therefore, some constraints must be innate (cited in Carroll, 2008).
2.3. The effect of adult’s speech on first language acquisition

Adults’ speeches to children act as the prerequisite environmental factor to trigger their innate language acquisition device (LAD). Every child has limited exposure to linguistic input and children do not seem to have access to information about which of their words or sentences are ungrammatical. According to Pinker (1995) “When learning a language, children have to generalize from a sample of parental speech to the infinite set of sentences that define the language as a whole and children are innately guided to the correct solution by having some principles governing the design of human language built in” (p. 128). One often cited study on this point was by Brown and Hanlon (1970, p. 47), who examined parents’ responses to various well-and ill-formed child utterances. The study concluded that, “While there are several bases for approval and disapproval, they are almost always semantic or phonological. Explicit approval or disapproval of either syntax or morphology is extremely rare in our records and so seems not to be the force propelling the child from immature to mature forms” (cited in Marcus, 1993). On the other hand, Morgan et al. (1995) believe “Recasts could incrementally reinforce use of particular grammatical forms, resulting in their immediate increased use. It could make children more self-conscious about their grammar, prompting them to make more self-corrections and it could competitively strengthen grammatical forms, thereby gradually driving out ungrammatical forms and increasing overall grammaticality” (p. 184). According to Saxton (1997) negative evidence and positive input are identical in terms of the linguistic information conveyed to the child and they differ only in terms of the discourse context in which each occurs, since only negative evidence creates an immediate contrast between (erroneous) child and (correct) adult forms.

Fletcher and Garman (1986) believe that if one re-analyses maternal speech keeping the model of semantic matching in mind, then it becomes clear that the semantic content of speech addressed to young children is indeed severely restricted. Mothers limit their utterances to the present tense, to concrete nouns, to comments on what the child is doing and on what is happening around the child (Phillips, 1973; Snow et al., 1976 cited in Fletcher and Garman, 1986, p. 78). Brown (2007, p. 44) says that the earliest stages of child language acquisition may manifest a great deal of surface imitation since the child may not possess the necessary semantic category to assign “meaning” to utterances. But as children perceive the importance of the semantic level of language, they attend to a greater extent to that meaningful semantic level—they engage in deep-structure imitation. In fact, the imitation of the deep structure of language can literally block their attention to the surface
structure so that they become on the face of it, poor imitators. Marcus (1993) says that even when children understand that they are being corrected, they sometimes make incorrect generalizations, as McNeill (1966, p. 69) shows:

- Child: Nobody don’t like me.
Mother: No, say “nobody likes me.”
Child: Nobody don’t like me.

[Eight repetitions of this dialogue follow.]
Mother: No, now listen carefully, say “NOBODY LIKES ME.”
Child: Oh! Nobody don’t likes me (cited in Brown, 2007).

This example suggests that it is the child’s underlying linguistic system, rather than negative evidence, which forces children to change their grammars (Marcus, 1993, p. 58). Brown (2007) believes that “the child was looking for the “truth value” of the utterance” (p. 44). Fletcher and Garman (1986) contend “evidence that children can perform immediate and delayed imitations of complex adult utterances in situationally appropriate ways provides information about the size and the nature of the memory capacities young children use in learning language” (p. 89). They further state that certain forms which are modeled primarily, but not exclusively, within a single speech act category are acquired for use only to express that speech act implying that children operate with pragmatic, speech act-based categories during the early stages of language acquisition; and there is evidence that children acquire and generalize regular forms even when many irregular forms are also modeled in the input suggesting that the language learning mechanism is frequency-sensitive. Saxton (1997) believes that children are far more willing to reproduce the correct irregular model in their own speech output following negative, rather than positive, input. Several studies (Hirsh-Pasek, Treiman and Schneiderman, 1984; Penner, 1987) discovered that although mothers did not overtly correct their children’s language mistakes, mothers of 2 year-olds tended to repeat their children’s grammatically flawed sentences more often than their well-formed utterances (cited in Bohannon and Stanowicz, 1988, p. 684). For example:

- C: The ball failed down.
P: The ball fell down.

Repetition
C: The ball fell down.
P: The ball fell down.
Saxton (1995, 1997, 2000) in his contrast theory of negative input refers to two distinct kinds of corrective input: negative evidence and negative feedback. According to this theory, there is no expectation that the child will be able to identify categories like recast or expansion. Instead, the child need only be capable of recognizing a relevant point of contrast between child and adult speeches (Saxton, 1997, 2000). A large number of studies have demonstrated that adults often respond to grammatical errors with utterances which look *prima facie* like corrections (Hirsh-Pasek, Treiman and Schneiderman, 1984; Demetras, Post and Snow, 1986; Penner, 1987; Bohannon and Stanowicz, 1988; Morgan and Travis, 1989; Moerk, 1991; Farrar, 1992; Furrow, Baillie, McLaren and Moore, 1993; Post, 1994; Morgan, Bonamo and Travis, 1995; Strapp, 1999 cited in Saxton, 2000). These studies showed that there are some subtle cues in parental responses to child speech that might assist children in acquiring language. The exchanges below exemplify the fact:

- Child: He shut me out and *I telled*....
  *And I telled on him.*
  Adult: You *told on* him.

- Child: Yeah, so they won’t *come to apart*.
  Adult: Well, they won’t come *apart* if we put this on.

- Child: Does the bike go *more quicker*?
  Adult: No, the car’s *quicker*.

When the child makes a grammatical mistake, it is normally clear that the error arises from a partial understanding or misapplication of the rules of the target grammar. Therefore, the issue of negative input is language-internal, and pertains only to those situations in which the child produces sentences which transgress the grammatical rules or principles of the language being learned (Saxton, 1997). Negative evidence occurs directly contingent on a child grammatical error, and is characterized by an immediate contrast between the child error and a correct alternative to the error, as supplied by the child’s interlocutor (Saxton, 1997, 2000).

- Child: He was the *baddest* one.
  Adult: Yeah, he sounds like the *worst*.

- Child: He shooted the fish.
  Adult: He shot the fish!
Negative feedback (Saxton, 2000) occurs directly contingent on a child grammatical error, and provides a non-specific indication that something is amiss within the preceding child utterance, and is characterized by an immediate contrast between the child’s error and a correct alternative to the error, as supplied by the child’s interlocutor. This occurs most typically in the form of an error-contingent clarification request. Naturalistic data have revealed that children are more willing to adopt correct adult forms when they are modeled as negative rather than as positive input (Farrar, 1992 cited in Saxton, 1997).

- Child: Why is our car the only?
  Adult: The what?
- Child: I just blew on your dinner for a little bit.
  Adult: On my dinner?
- Child: Knights have horse, they do.
  Adult: They what?

Demetras, Post and Snow (1986 cited in Bohannon and Stanowicz, 1988, p. 684) reported that mothers tended to “break the flow of conversation” by asking their children for clarification more frequently after ill-formed utterances than following error-free sentences. Moreover, the following exchanges suggest that negative feedback can sometimes train the child’s attention specifically on aspects of faulty grammar. When the child produces an utterance containing an erroneous form, which is responded to immediately with an utterance containing the correct adult alternative to the erroneous form, (i.e. when negative evidence is supplied), the child may then perceive the adult form as being in contrast with the equivalent child form. Cognizance of this contrast can alert the child to the differing grammatical status of child and adult forms.

- Child: Why did they caught him when they ran away?
  Adult: Why did they what?
- Child: I say it gooder.
  Adult: Better.

Saxton (2000) believes that negative feedback can therefore be viewed as a special form of cue for helping in the retrieval of linguistic forms from memory. In the above exchanges, Saxton (2000,
p. 7) reports both the child and adult, are focused on the same topic of conversation at the same time. In consequence, the adult’s repudiation of the child form, *gooder*, is likely to be especially conspicuous to the child. This repudiation is achieved through the expedient of producing an alternative to the child form. Critically, the contrast between the two forms, *gooder* and *better*, is rendered especially salient by their immediate juxtaposition in the discourse. If *gooder* were a perfectly acceptable form, there would be no reason for the adult to go on to the trouble of selecting an alternative form. It is conceivable, therefore, that in the above conversation between the adult and the child, there may be an expectation in the child that the adult will also select *gooder* in this context of utterance. The violation of this expectation might then contribute to the child’s apprehension of the contrast in usage between child and adult forms.

In the direct contrast hypothesis, Saxton (2000) predicts that the discourse context in which linguistic forms occur can affect the quality of information conveyed to the child about grammar. The correct adult form may occur quite independent of the child’s erroneous productions. Alternatively, though more rarely (Bohannon and Stanowicz, 1988) the correct adult form may occur directly following a correct usage of that form by the child. Saxton (2000) in testing the effects of negative input observes that with respect to the immediate effects of negative input, it has emerged that children do sometimes drop an erroneous form in favor of the correct alternative modeled by the adult, as the examples illustrate:

- Child: I’m going to Colin’s and I need some toys.
  Adult: You don’t need a lot of toys.
  Child: Only *a little bit* toys
  Adult: You only need *a few*.
  Child: Yes, *a few* toys.

- Child: He wiped *him*.
  [Reflexive action of a 3rd person]
  Adult: He wiped himself.
  Child: Yes, he wiped *himself*.

In the prompt hypothesis Saxton (2000) believes that the negative feedback can prompt the child to attend to an ungrammatical form in a previous utterance, and apprehend it as such, in just those cases where the child has prior knowledge of its ungrammaticality. Certainly, negative feedback, by itself, can do no more than alert the child to the occurrence of a linguistic form which is already
known to the child as an error from past experience. Children when supplied with negative input are able to identify and respond to that input in an appropriate manner. Negative evidence supplies the correct adult model directly following a child error and, only after an overgeneralization has manifested itself in the child’s speech, while positive input supplies the correct form in all other discourse contexts.

Chouinard and Clark (2001) found that parental reformulations of erroneous child utterances provide children with information about the locus of an error and hence the error itself. Since the meanings of the child’s utterance and the adult reformulation are the same although the forms are different, children infer that adults must be offering a correction. Evidence that children attend to such reformulations comes from three measures: (a) their explicit repeats of such reformulations in their next turn; (b) their acknowledgements (yeah or uh-huh as a preface to their next turn, or a repeat of any new information included in the reformulation); and (c) their explicit rejections of reformulations where the adult has misunderstood them. Roger Brown and Camille Hanlon (1970 cited in Pinker, 1995) attempted to test B. F. Skinner’s behaviorist claim that language learning depends on parents’ reinforcement of children’s grammatical behaviors. Using transcripts of naturalistic parent-child dialogue, they divided children’s sentences into ones that were grammatically well-formed and ones that contained grammatical errors. They then divided adults’ responses to those sentences into ones that expressed some kind of approval (“yes, that’s good”) and those that expressed some kind of disapproval. They looked for a correlation, but failed to find one: parents did not differentially express approval or disapproval to their children contingent on whether the child's prior utterance was well-formed or not (approval depends, instead, on whether the child's utterance was true). Brown and Hanlon also looked at children’s well-formed and badly-formed questions, and whether parents seemed to answer them appropriately, as if they understood them, or with non sequiturs. They found parents do not understand their children’s well-formed questions better than their badly-formed ones.

Other studies (e.g. Hirsh-Pasek, Treiman and Schneiderman, 1984; Demetras, Post and Snow, 1986; Penner, 1987; Bohannon and Stanowicz, 1988 cited in Pinker, 1995) have replicated that result, but with a twist. Some have found small statistical contingencies between the grammaticality of some children’s sentence and the kind of follow-up given by their parents; for example, whether the parent repeats the sentence verbatim, asks a follow-up question, or changes the topic. But Marcus (1993) found that these patterns fall far short of negative evidence (reliable
information about the grammatical status of any word string). Pinker (1995) believes that different parents react in opposite ways to their children’s ungrammatical sentences, and many forms of ungrammaticality are not reacted to at all -- leaving a given child unable to know what to make of any parental reaction. Even when a parent does react differentially, a child would have to repeat a particular error, verbatim, hundreds of times to eliminate the error, because the parent’s reaction is only statistical: the feedback signals given to ungrammatical signals are also given nearly as often to grammatical sentences.

Fletcher and Garman (1986, p. 81) believe that a large proportion of maternal utterances are responses to child utterances, and almost all maternal utterances are directly preceded and followed by child utterances. In other words, mothers and children carry on conversations with one another. These are, in fact, very special kinds of conversations, in that the partners are very unequal. The mother can speak the language much better, but the child nonetheless can dominate the conversation, because the mother follows the child’s lead in deciding what to talk about. A very common pattern is for the child to introduce a topic and for the mother to make a comment on that topic, or for the child to introduce a topic and make a comment and for the mother to then expand that comment. Thus, at a semantic level, the mother’s speech is very much shaped by the child’s linguistic abilities, his cognitive abilities, his ideas and interests.

- Child: He likes cat.
Adult: Yes, he likes the cat.
Child: He likes cat.
Adult: Yes, and he likes the dog, too.

Saxton (2000) believes that “given the occurrence of this partial overlap, one might want to argue that the child’s propensity to switch to the correct form is dictated largely by the adult’s modeling of the correct form in some cases (negative evidence), rather than the pressure exerted by the clarification request (negative feedback)” (p. 25). And Carroll (2008) believes that “these results leave the force of the nativist argument largely intact. Although negative evidence is present and may assist language development, research has not shown that it is necessary.” And “language, under normal rearing conditions, is quite robust. This contrast between the poverty of the stimulus and the robustness of the child’s language remains the most soundest justification for innate mechanisms” (p. 348). Saxton (1997) argues that “while Universal Grammar may or may not
contributeto the initial learning of linguistic structures, negative input may or may not contribute
to the subsequent process of ‘unlearning’, that is, the shedding of ungrammatical forms” (p. 159).
From their study Chouinard and Clark (2001) concluded that:

- Negative evidence is available in adult reformulations;
- Negative evidence is available to children learning different languages, and for different
types of errors; across cultures the form such evidence takes and the way it is presented
may range from reformulations to explicit directions about what to say when.
- More reformulations are available to younger children; and
- Children detect and make use of the corrections in reformulations.

The possibility that adult responsiveness to children’s errors may be partly determined by the ease
with which the adult can determine that the child’s meaning fits nicely with certain features of
current processing theories of language use (Bock, 1982 cited in Bohannon and Stanowicz, 1988)
and language learning (Bates and MacWhinney, 1982; Nelson, 1981 cited in Bohannon and
Stanowicz, 1988, p. 687).

3. Conclusion

Negative evidence refers to information about which strings of words are not grammatical
sentences in the language, such as corrections or other forms of feedback from a parent that tell
the child that one of his or her utterances is ungrammatical. But it does not tell a child why a
particular utterance is ungrammatical. If children don’t get, or don’t use negative evidence, they
must have some mechanism that either avoids generating too large a language the child would be
conservative -- or that can recover from such over generation (Pinker, 1995).

People do not reproduce their parents’ language exactly. If they did, as Pinker (1995) believes
we would all still be speaking like Chaucer. But in any generation, in most times, the differences
between parents’ language and the one their children ultimately acquire are small. Judging by their
spontaneous speech, we can conclude that most children have mastered their mother tongue. We
hear of some communities with radically different ideas about children’s proper place in society
and people tacitly assume that children aren’t worth speaking to, and don’t have anything to say
that is worth listening to. Such children learn to speak by overhearing streams of adult-to-adult
languages; but they appear to do so without requiring negative evidence: complete feedback and
partial feedback do not exist. With language so close to the core of what it means to be human, it is not surprising that children’s acquisition of language has received so much attention. Focusing on the question whether negative input constitutes a necessary component of language acquisition, Saxton (1995) believes that even if one could demonstrate that negative input was necessary, one could not thereby reject the concept of innate knowledge of grammar (Bohannon, MacWhinney and Snow, 1990, p. 222). The simple reason is that the child’s genetic endowment at birth is entirely unaffected by the state of the linguistic environment.

Chouinard and Clark (2001) believe that children (like adults) rely on well-established paths for the retrieval and articulation of forms when they speak. Changing these paths and articulatory patterns takes time and practice. The fact that children attend to the changes adults make, and the fact that they repeat or acknowledge these changes strongly suggests that they are adding the conventional forms to their representations for how to express those meanings. But for this information to show up in their speech production may take a long time.

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Title

TQA of Morgan’s International Construction Contract Management Based on House’s Model

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Abstract

Translation criticism or assessment is an essential component of translation in translation studies. The purpose of this study was TQA of D. Bryan Morgan's International Construction Contract Management by Arbabi based on House TQA model (1997). To accomplish this purpose the researcher evaluated 56 randomly selected samples, English / Persian pairs and seven raters evaluated this translation based on this model and their own experiences as translators, legal / contract persons and PhD students of international contract management to remove subjectivity from the outcomes of this study. The results based on these two assessments revealed that however mismatches found in Arbabi’s work, it was appropriate because it kept the track of original. These results could be used in translation workshops for training translating students. The researcher, in the process of assessment faced with some problems about House TQA model. They were sent to Dr. House through e-mail, she answered them, so this study enjoys having the model author’s opinion. More information about this article could be found in TQA of Morgan’s
1. Introduction

In 20 century, translation is not in artistic form but as means to know about facts and other communities. Nowadays, people all over the world became interested in translation because being witness to the impact of translation practices on everyday's life. From Nord’s point of view (1991) translation is for communication. Bell (1993) introduces a good translator as a good communicator. Translation is international phenomena (Bates, 1943); it shows the importance of translation in today's life. Mistranslation leads to misunderstanding, confusion, unpleasant happenings (Newmark, 1981). This factor highlights the importance of translation roles (Nida, 1964), competent translator (Newmark, 1988), adequate translation and assessment the quality of translation (House, 1997). Therefore translation is a great job and it is more complex than replacement. But how to understand translation is perfect or not? How the merits and defects of a translation version can be assessed?

2. Review of Related Literature

TQA includes management of the quality of translation in strategies, parameters; and procedures. It is considered as a sub-field in translation studies. Translation theory is prerequisite of assessment of translation quality. It is an essential link between translation theory and its practice (House, 2001). Various approaches lead to varied TQA models proposed by scholars such as: Nida (1969), Newmark (1981), Reiss & vermeer (1984), Bell (1993), House (1997), Williams (2004), Nord (2006), ect. Two important factors in TQA are the goal of assessment and the valid framework (House, 1997). TQA needs a valid criterion. This criterion is ST in which TT is compared. In semantic translation the criterion of assessment is the accurate reproduction of the significance of the ST. And in communicative translation the criterion of evaluation being the accurate communication of ST message in the target language (Munday, 2001). Comparison between the ST and TT must be quantitative and qualitative and a good translation is the one which fulfill its function (Newmark, 1981). Vermeer’s inquiries lead to Skopos theory (1984) it states that the appropriate quality is determined by product users, clients or customers, not by society.
Nida’s point of view (1964), good translation depends on what the purpose of it might be. The benefits of applying TQA could be found in translation training and improvement of translation knowledge. TQA expands critics of ST and TT knowledge and understanding of his own and the foreign language as well the topic, it will help the translator to sort out his ideas about translation (Newmark, 1988). TQA increases translator’s grammatical competence, socio-linguistic competence, discourse competence, strategic competence. (Bell, 1993)

Today TQA is the focused of attention of professional translators, client, researchers and those engaged in translation training courses. The specified translation needs TQA to improve translation quality (O’Brien, 2012). Offshore industry which fabricates and installs offshore facilities for oil and gas industry is a good example; it involves international language and international activities. Affiliated companies enter into international contracts with contractors and sub-contractors to fulfill the projects. And technical translation precise services are required deeply in this area. The main purpose of the present study is, in fact, assessment the quality of translated version of International Construction Contract Management by Arbabi based on House TQA model (1977).

3. Statement of Problem

Translation is not merely an inter-linguistic process, but it is more complex than replacing source language text with target language text. It cannot be isolated from the context in which the texts are embedded. In creation of a translated text, not only competency of translator but also factors such as differences between the languages are involved which makes translation difficult (Dingwaney & Maier 1995). Translation has to be discussed; assessment the translation quality is a great of importance. In this study House TQA model (1997) is applied as framework to evaluate translation quality through comparative analysis by highlighting mismatches and errors. The purpose of this study is to assess the quality of International Construction Contract Management’s translation based on House TQA model (1997) and based on seven rater’s opinions. It lead to seek which strategies and techniques were ignored by translators which results in poor quality of translation and conversely considering which principles of translation provided a valid and appropriate translation.

4. Statement of the Research Question

To what extent the quality of translated version of D. Bryan Morgan, International Construction Contract Management by Arbabi is appropriate based on House TQA model?
5. The Significance of the Study

“A translator is severely criticized if he makes a mistake, but only faintly praised when he succeeds” (Nida, 1964). Many studies have been carried out upon different texts of Novels applying House TQA model (1977), but no investigation about TQA of the translated version of International Constriction Contract Management based on House TQA Model found by researcher. Although many inquiries done about the concept of International Contract Management in Iran and recently PhD degree in international contract management is provided in universities to train contract engineers but translation practices in this field are extremely rare. So translation and evaluation the quality of these kinds of texts is a great of importance. Moreover the significance of this study is in the results of this research, which was attempted to be met such as:

b. Displaying how identification of genre helps the translator to focus on special needs, determining the function of ST and appropriate method for translation
c. Emphasizing that translation of EPCI contract needs technical translators
d. Identifying problematic areas in translation based on House TQA model (1997), using in technical translation teaching courses
e. Using the ideas of raters to remove subjectivity to make the result valid and tangible
f. Revealing the features of a good technical translation based on House model (1997)
g. Providing the pros and cons of House TQA model

6. Limitation and Delimitation of the Study

This study developed under limitation as researcher had no chance to choose another book related to this topic for the corpus of the study. It was rare to find original books under this title and its Persian translation in the field of oil and gas in Iran. Morgan's book selected as the ST, it could not be found in book shops by the researcher; she borrowed it from a colleague. It is technical text and needs technical translation. There was only one available Persian translation of this book by Arbabi, his work selected as the TT. Difficulty of finding raters to remove subjectivity from the result of this study was another challenge, finding those knew linguistics, possessed the domain knowledge and have time to cooperate. Researcher found them among colleagues

7. Context of the study

The present study was qualitative, comparative, and descriptive study. The qualitative analysis was needed to identify different text types to identify a number of distinctive features based on genre
and register. This study carried out in two phases: first phase was comparative analysis of Contract Management text which was consultative, informative formal text. The second phase was comparative analysis of contract and legal definitions, with consideration that contracts are the legal documents and Legal / Contract Language are inseparable. The aim of this analytical qualitative, comparative procedure was TQA based on House TQA model (1997) which is qualitative analysis based approach.

8. Method

8.1. Participants
Seven raters including researcher were participants of this study. The corpus of the study consists of three genres including contract management (consultative text), contract and legal definitions. For each part two raters were chosen to remove subjectivity of assessment. Raters were technical translators, legal / contract persons from IOEC company and PhD students of International Contract Management of Imam Sadeq University.

8.2. Corpus
Morgan's book and its translated version into Persian provided the corpus of this study. The original text is a practical reference book for construction professionals working on overseas projects. The author shares his over 40 years' experiences of engineering projects in different countries to the addresses in consultative formal language. Project managers, claims consultants, contract administrators and contract engineers use this book. Contract management is successful implementation of contract. It is appropriate application of legal / contract language in contractual clauses. It helps to reduce the expanses and cost arising out of the breaches of the contract during the execution of the contract (Morgan, 2005). Researcher selected this book to emphasis the role of technical translator in offshore industry. This sort of economic business book is always welcomed by experts. In Iran translated version of these kinds of books are requested because of being new science.

8.3. Theoretical framework
This study was conducted in accordance with House TQA Model (1977) as the framework.

8.3.1. Evaluation scheme in House TQA model (1997)
a. Assessing the translation based on the House TQA model (1997) through three main dimensions of genre including Field, Tenor, Mode in three aspects of syntactic, lexical and textual means
b. Finding mismatches and overt errors through comparative analysis of both texts with consideration of two types of translation overt / covert.
c. Assessing translation (selected English / Persian pairs) by seven raters based on House TQA model (1997) and their own understandings.

8.3.2. The procedure

8.3.2.1. Data Collection

Having data and raters were based on following criteria:

a. International Construction Contract Management” by D. Bryan Morgan as the source text, (56 samples selected randomly, and then researcher categorized them based on genres into contract management, contract and legal definitions. There were 30 contract management, 17 contract and 9 legal definitions samples)
b. Translation version by Arbabi as the target text
c. House TQA model (1997) as the framework
d. Two raters for each part
e. Given the copies of English / Persian pairs of original & translation to the raters
f. The raters were given explanations about the House TQA model features
g. Gathering their assessment and ideas via email

8.3.2.2. Data Analysis, Process of Assessment

To conduct this research these steps were taken: Researcher produced profiles for both texts, first the analysis of the ST, determined the genre and function including the ideational and interpersonal components. The same profile created for the TT, the same descriptive process was carried out. Then translations categorized as overt / covert translations. Later comparative analysis of the English / Persian texts carried out. Then “mismatches” or “errors” found and categorized based on the situational dimensions of register and genre, determined dimensional errors, referred to as “overtly and covertly erroneous errors”. Since House TQA model (1997) did not prepare a quantitative explanation for measurement of these features, for removing subjectivity from the outcomes of this study, researcher used raters; they gave the outcome of their analysis with their
personal ideas to the researcher. These separated assessments together provided the answer to the question research.

9. Results and Discussion

The results of this study are organized in the following sections:

9.1. Analysis of the Original Contract Management (Consultative Text)

9.1.1. Filed: The topic is a contract claims consultant text substantiated by following linguistic means:

9.1.1.1. Syntactic means: complex syntactic structure including various sentence structures such as obligatory, imperative, informative, subjunctive, rhetorical, interrogatives, detailed description, ample use of model auxiliary verbs, archaic verbs. 9.1.1.2. Lexical means: unambiguous, consultative, legal / contract items, negative legal lexical items to explain contract management matters, ample use of “otherwise” plays important role in creating appropriate consultant environment by author, ample use of lexical items such as “suggested, advisable” to make advisory statements.

9.1.1.3. Textual means: Cohesion achieved by theme dynamic through repetition of contractual technical words, anaphoric referencing, conjoined phrases and adversative, causal linkage as coordinating conjunction, conjunction whereas, and temporal linkage.

9.1.2. TENOR

9.1.2.1. Author’s Temporal, Social, and Geographical Provenance: It is unmarked, does not point to special time or place; it is contemporary and standard American English.

- Author’s personal stance: substantiated by the following linguistic means:

9.1.2.1.1. Syntactic means: complex structure; contractual advices.
9.1.2.1.2. Lexical means: consultative, contractual lexical items.
9.1.2.1.3. Textual means: theme dynamic, casual linkage, iconic linkage casual linkage

9.1.2.2. Social Role Relationship

9.1.2.2.1. Syntactic means: impersonal it / existential there, added the text impersonality.

9.1.2.2.2. Lexical means: consultative tone uses lexical items like “suggested, advisable” to make advisory statements in consultative language.

9.1.2.2.3. Textual means: theme dynamic, clausal linkage, iconic linkage.

9.1.2.3. Social Attitude

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9.1.2.3.1. **Syntactic means:** Absence of contractions, elliptical, interjection, use consultative formal style, complete form of the verb to make formality, impersonal construction using “it” and “there”.

9.1.2.3.2. **Lexical means:** items & phrases marked [+abstract] to restrict in formal style by presence of social distance, absence of gambits, exclamation & other subjectivity makers, use of qualifying adverbial.

9.1.2.3.3. **Textual means:** presence of passive voice as means of complexity syntactic linkage for preserving theme-rheme sequence.

9.1.3. **Mode**

9.1.3.1. **Medium**

9.1.3.1.1. **Syntactic means:** Absence of spoken signals.

9.1.3.1.2. **Lexical means:** Absence of spoken mode.

9.1.3.1.3. **Textual means:** Use of consultative language.

9.1.3.2. **Participation**

9.1.3.2.1. **Syntactic means:** complex structure, monologue.

9.1.3.2.2. **Textual means:** etic text.

9.1.4. **Contract management genre:** It is formal consultative text with contract language.

9.1.5. **Statement of the Function:** The interpersonal function, as well as the ideational component is strongly marked through the genre of text and on each of the dimensions.

9.2. **Analysis of the Contract / Legal Definitions**

9.2.1. **Filed:** The topic is contract which is a private agreement between the parties within the field of law.

9.2.1.1. **Syntactic Means:** Ample use of certain, precise legal / contract terminologies, through complete structure in contract language. Ample use of “passive voice”, “mandatory verbs” to convey the obligation, imposed by present or by future tense. Ample use of “Phrasal Verbs” by author makes legal environment and legal English in contract. The author uses subjunctive structures in contract clauses to show impersonality nature of the text. Present tense uses for legal definitions to talk in general. Per formative verbs used to show legalese atmosphere in legal / contract text. Legal documentation instead of personal pronouns uses common gender-neutral pronouns to avoid using sexist language. It helps the text to be more formal and impersonal. Archaic adverbs creates legal environment in contract text. Informative legal language uses model.
auxiliary “may” to show certainty. Archaic “shall” creates legal environment. Conjoined phrases in contract text are typical of legalese to show contract environment

9.2.1.2. Lexical Means: Contract technical terms, legal items including “purely legal technical terms”, “semi-technical or mixed legal terms”, Latin words, negative-meaning legal lexical items play important role in creating suitable contractual world.

9.2.1.3. Textual Means: Contract text is predominantly etic. The text achieves theme dynamics through repetition of lexical items, adversative, clausal Linkage.

9.2.2. Tenor
In contract there is contractual tone, imperative, subjunctive sentences.

9.2.2.1. Author’s Temporal, Social, and Geographical Provenance: Geographically unmarked, contemporary middle class Standard English

- Author’s Stance & Provenance: The author emphasizes on the mutual intention of the parties, their rights and obligations. Author’s writing style is formal / contractual, uses contractual terms though contractual language substantiated by following linguistic means:

9.2.2.1.1. Syntactic means: Ample use of “shall” and “will”, and present tense with mandatory connotation is revealed in this text.

9.2.2.1.2. Lexical means: Repetition of contractual lexical items instead of references for restrict the interpretation of the contractual clauses, frequency of legal terminology.

9.2.2.1.3. Textual means: It is a highly coherence text by linguistic cohesion through cohesive devices, theme dynamic through repetition of anaphoric, cataporic, references, comparative reference and clausal linkage through use of additive, adversative such as causal, temporal and iconic linkage make the text cohere.

9.2.2.2. Social Role Relationship
Relationship between the writer and contracting parties is impersonal and asymmetrical the author gives instructions about contract duties to the parties.

9.2.2.2.1. Syntactic Means: Lack of the personal pronoun shows impersonality through subjunctive structures. Author in this way states that if one of the parties fails undertaking and liabilities, should bear loss and legal consequences.

9.2.2.2.2. Lexical Means: Parties are treated by impersonal [+abstract] terms employer and contractor.
9.2.2.3. Textual Means: Detailed description of the parties’ obligations presented through strong textual cohesion, achieved through additive, adversative and iconic linkages.

9.2.2.3. Social Attitude
It is formal and contractual, marked by social distance resulting from this impersonality.

9.2.2.3.1. Syntactic Means: The writer uses contractual language, complex structure and complete form of verbs to make formality. Ample use of “There” as pronoun and infinitive phrases emphasizes impersonality of the formal text, using determiner and demonstrative references help the author to keep track of information.

9.2.2.3.2. Lexical Means: Particular legal / contract language is used and lexical items marked as [+formal] in contract text.

9.2.2.3.3. Textual means: it is written based on the pre-established plan, strongly elaborate and coherent, includes clausal linkage through use of adversative and iconic linkage

9.2.3. Mode
Situational dimension which is revealed in this kind of text is analyzed as follows:

9.2.3.1. Medium: It is written to be read, marked as simple. This medium in contract text can be characterized along Briber’s Dimensions as explicit and abstract presentation of information including obligations to the parties.

9.2.3.1.1. Syntactic Means: Ample use of subjunctive structures show that the main characteristic of this text is impersonality, extensive use of mandatory sentences, negative / passive constructions are syntactic features of this text.

9.2.3.1.2. Lexical Means: Ample use of [+archaic] derivative from adverbs “here” and “there” such as: “hereof” “herein” to keep formality and legal style of the text.

9.2.3.1.3. Textual Means: Contract is etic text, achieves theme dynamic through repetition of the lexical items to remove ambiguity, avoid using pronouns to make impersonality of the text. The text is strongly cohesive due to ample use of cohesion devices.

9.2.3.2. Participation
Text of contract is simple and monologue with imperative eliciting participation. The addressees directly address for giving obligations and liabilities through sentences with illocutionary force. Ample use of [+archaic] derivative from adverbs “here” and “there” such as: “hereof” “herein” to keep formality and legal style of the text.
9.2.3.2.1. **Syntactic Means:** In contract text usually presence of obligations and commitment of the parties through the use of the verbs in present and future tense, mandatory verbs, modal auxiliaries of obligation, and mandative subjunctive in that clause and sentence with illocutionary force revealed.

9.2.3.2.2. **Lexical Means:** Contract is impersonal text includes ample use of lexical items such as “the sub-contractors”, “the contractor”

9.2.3.2.3. **Textual Means:** This is a predominantly etic text. Theme dynamics is achieved through the use of clausal linkage through causal and Iconic linkage.

9.2.4. **Legal / Contract Genre:** Language of law, its words, syntactic structures and concepts are closely related to the legal system. The style and pragmatic aspects revealed in legal genre. Contract is considered as sub-genre of legal text, it is explicit, actual wording of a contract is important when disputes arise. Style writing like capitalization, bold type words and phrases, legal / contract terminologies and concepts are features of this text.

9.2.5. **Statement of the Function:** Interpersonal and ideational functional components marked through genre of the text and each dimension.

The same analysis of the situational dimensions carried out for the target text.

9.2.6. **Type of translation:** Translation of legal document requires functioning translation (Newmark, 1988). In contract documentation, functional translation is required; translator must try to provide correct terminologies, technical terms, concept and formal style as the source text (Sarcevic, 2000). According to ST, translation in contract management, contract and legal definitions realized as overt one. Translation carried out without applying localization and corresponding with the regulations of our country and legal system. According to House (1997) being overt or covert translation is not based on text types but the purpose of translation determines it. The purpose of this translation was giving information about contract management. Legal system, articles, cases of constitution of claims in court, dispute settlements regarding to legal system, governing law of contract, remained without applying cultural filter. Through comparative analysis mismatches found in different dimensions and parameters, some considered as overt errors as follows:

9.2.7. **Mismatches**

9.2.7.1. **Mismatches of Contract Management Samples**
9.2.7.1.1. **On Field dimension**: lexical, syntactic mismatches changed impersonality of the original text, textual mismatches were found.

9.2.7.1.2. **On Tenor dimension**: textual mismatches found which changed author’s stance, translation’s tone is weaker than the original, legal tone is lessened and lexical, syntactic, textual mismatches changed the social role relationship, relationship between author and addresses changed from symmetrical to asymmetrical and lessen consultative language and affected interpersonal functional component.

9.2.7.1.3. **On Mode dimension, Medium**: Syntactic mismatches changed the form of communication and textual meaning. For example changes in the form of “if clause” of subjunctive sentences into declarative ones changed denotative meaning, and massage, ideational function component is strongly weakened, and interpersonal functional component is affected, making the text less consultative. Ideational function is changed.

9.2.7.1.3.3. **On Province dimension**: Lexical mismatches changed consultative contractual language, sometimes precision is lost in rendering of the technical terms, legal / contract, engineering, commercial, economical changed ideational functional component.

9.2.7.2. **Mismatches of Contract samples**: Contract clauses and legal definition mismatches found as the result of comparative analysis of ST & TT as overtly and covertly erroneous errors which are discussed as follows:

9.2.7.2.1. **On field dimension**: mismatches with the original in the case of meaning and verb form of the legal verb in syntactic parameter found; in this respect translation is rendered less neutrally and or not powerful in legal point of view. Changes in verb tense and passivisation changed the meaning aspect of ST. Ideational functional component on field dimension detracted and interpersonal one on social role relationship changed. Lexical mismatches included mismatches with the original in the cases of legal / contract terms and religious jurisprudence terms were found. Textual mismatches including loss of theme dynamic by omission preposition, adverb phrase and coordinating conjunction revealed.

9.2.7.2.2. **On Tenor, Social Role Relationship**: Syntactic mismatches including passivisation changed in the translation, Ideational functional component is changed.

9.2.7.2.3. **On Mode, Medium**: Syntactic mismatch including wrong legal verb, loss of some parts of meaning explained of subjunctive sentence which is omitted from the text, lack of formal and written style is observed.
9.2.7.2.3.1. **On Participation:** Lexical mismatches comprising mismatches of legal / contract terminologies revealed.

9.2.7.3. **Mismatches of Legal Definitions**

9.2.7.3.1. **On Field dimension:** lexical mismatches (legal terms and terminologies), syntactic mismatches (verb tense and modality), textual mismatches (demonstrative adjective) were found.

9.2.7.3.2. **On Tenor dimension:** In social role relationship syntactic mismatches including model verb and on Province including legal jargons and terminologies were revealed.

9.2.8. **Overtly / Covertly Erroneous Errors:** In contract management, contract and legal definitions samples, some of the errors considered to be as overtly erroneous errors. They were mismatch of denotative meanings of ST & TT elements or any deviation as a breach of the target language system as follows:

9.2.8.1. **Breaches from source language:** Changes of denotative meaning through omissions, additions, substitutions, wrong selections, and wrong combinations of elements.

9.2.8.2. **Breaches of the target language system:** Cases of ungrammaticality, and cases of dubious acceptability.

In legal definitions samples, overtly erroneous errors found on Province dimension in lexical parameter like legal jargons and terminologies, changed denotative meaning, taken into account as breaches of legal language system. Moreover in contract, some of the errors considered to be as covertly erroneous errors as deviations from functional dimension of ST. Sometimes Legal concepts in rendering changed, Ideational Functional Component on Field dimension of ST’s function violated to a considerable extent. In ST impersonality marked but TT is personal, so denotative meaning changed in translation. On Social Role Relationship, Social Attitude, and Participation dimensions, Interpersonal Functional Component of the ST’s function changed. These mismatches considered as covertly erroneous errors or hidden errors on mentioned parameters; author's intention changed.

10. **Discussion**

Pervious parts included analyses of sample investigated based on House TQA model (1977), they will be discussed below including statement the quality of translated version, assessment by raters, some points about House TQA model (1997).

10.1. **Statement of the Quality of Translation by Arbabi**
The result of comparative analysis based on House TQA model (1977) showed some ideational and interpersonal changes in translation as follows:

a) **In contract management**, translation by Arbabi is an overt one; some mismatches and cases of omission changed the transmission of information, interpersonal functional component detracted to great extent more than ideational functional component. Despite the loss of some linguistic aspects of the main book and some overt / covert errors, this translation is much near to environment and tone of ST.

b) **In contract**, translation by Arbabi is an overt. Interpersonal functional component was strongly marked. In some instances omission of commentary parentheses from the ST was like filtering, omission would not be justified, and interpersonal functional component is detracted more than ideational functional component.

c) **In legal definitions**, mismatches along the dimension of Field, Mode and Tenor revealed that overt errors detracted from ideational functional component. In a few instances covertly erroneous errors found, the legal concepts, pragmatic meaning changed, so both components affected. In some instances lexical items omitted from the original which was like filtering. Since translation of legal documentation type is an overt translation in accordance with House model (1977), then filtering should not have been applied. In spite of mismatches by Arbabi’s in contract / legal definitions, translation kept the track of the original, tone and environment.

10.2. Assessment by raters

In this study assessment by raters includes assessment based on House model and raters’ self-assessment. Based on House model raters found translation as overt one, the same mismatches as the researcher, for each part they had worthy opinion as follows:

a. Author’s goal was transmission of information to the readers; translation transmitted the same information for the Persian readers, as ST transmitted for English readers.

b. Translator kept the paragraphing, style and punctuation close to the original.

c. Descriptive statements identified undertakings to the parties; in the contract imperative provisions consisting of rights and obligation preserved in structures of the clauses as original, provide appropriate quality in contract clause translation.

d. Translator often tried to use the exact technical terms and terminologies as close as possible but sometimes had wrong selections, used less prevalent terms, in province dimension
including legal jargons, contract terminologies, and technical words, used literal translation for equivalence of a legal jargon. Sometimes legal concepts changed in rendering and exact equivalences for legal terms were not used.

e. For translation of titles, pragmatic meaning must be considered to choose the best equivalent often translation of them were not taken care enough by translator.

f. Instead of paraphrasing in his rendering, translator could use translation techniques such as foot note which is necessity for translation of this scholarly text

g. In contract management samples, as the ST, translator used the complex long sentences in Persian translation to follow the original as close as possible in form and meaning but made understanding the Persian translation difficult. Translator could break them down into a number of shorter ones without shifting the meaning and style which often is a difficult job. Translator in few instances used this technique, but slightly lost meaning and the style of the wording of the original.

10.3. Points about House TQA model

Some noticeable points found in this study in the process of performing House TQA model (1997) by researcher such as:

a) Preferable existence of tables of text type including features and factors

b) Necessity of English explanation for the German parts in House book (1997)

c) Random selection causes ambiguity in assessment of descriptive text

d) Misprinting in translated version is an over error

e) Omissions & additions can be both overt / covert error depending on the analysis

f) Ignorance of strategies and techniques (in overt translation such as footnote)

g) Lack of criteria for assessment the features such as overt / covert translation

h) Lack of determination of criteria for selection of words by translator and its acceptance area by evaluator

i) Weigh of the errors

j) Sampling & overt judgment

k) Lack of translator’s stance on Tenor dimension

11. Conclusion

Particular conclusions obtained from this analysis and interpretation of TQA of the translation by Arbabi based on House TQA Model (1997). This study was an attempt to put House TQA model into practice. The main findings will be discussed in following section.
11.1. Findings

Scrutiny and subtle investigation provided by House TQA model (1997), makes it a good model to TQA of these texts. In spite of some overt / covert errors and some deviations from functional components of the ST it could be said that all mismatches are not serious. This model did not determine manner of decision about the quality at the end of analytical procedure, researcher decided to count numbers of serious errors in each part to know which part was translated better but unequal numbers of samples made it impossible. So random selection used for sampling selection is under question. According to assessors translator tried to follow the tracks of the original text, function and features in this respect TT is equal to ST. Furthermore this translation is invaluable because of transmission of information about Management of Contract which was the intention of the author and the purpose of translation. Regarding to readership, it is highly respected because representing this information. Demand of the market and rareness the translation versions of such books increase the significant. With consideration of merits of this translation practice, assessors could not judge about the translation quality absolutely as good or bad one according to House TQA model (1997), because good translation is not just replacement (Dingwaney & Maier, 1995). How evaluators only based on mismatches of some samples, selected randomly could judge the quality? How evaluators could ignore transmission of information to the reads and its effect on the readers? Therefore translated version assessed as appropriate one, pro and cons of House TQA model (1997) remained. It is hoped that the outcomes of this study through using this model could reveal the strategies, techniques and methods for translation of these kinds of documents to obtain more reliable translation.

11.2. Applications and Implications

According to practicability of this model based on the result of this study, translators could use House model (1997) as a correction tool for correcting their translations before publishing. Translation workshops in universities and translation studies students could benefit from these features to produce better translations.

11.3. Suggestion for Further Studies

This study was limited to TQA of Morgan's book based on House model (1997). The same study could be carried out using other text types and genres with application of other TQA models or combination of them with more raters and scales or with books which translated by different translators in order to make a comparison between them to judge the appropriate one.
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Title

Cohesion Shifts and Explicitation in English Texts and Their Persian Translations: A Case Study of Three Novels

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Biodata

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Abstract

Explicitation as a universal of translation has been one of the important topics in recent translation studies. It may challenge translation process because of the differences of the two languages. The explicitation hypothesis used in this study was the first systematic study of explicitation formulated by Blum-Kulka (1986) and based on the shifts of the cohesive markers also related to the different grammatical systems. The objectives of the present study was to examine the issue of cohesion shifts in translating English literary texts into Persian, considering validate Blum-Kulka's (1986) hypothesis, considering the inevitability of the occurrence of cohesion shifts through translation because of the difference of the two language systems. So, two different cohesion systems, also the effects of these shifts on the level of explicitness of translated texts were considered. In so doing, the study followed a hybrid design that combines both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis procedures. To examine the frequencies and types of cohesive devices Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) framework was used. For exploring the effects of cohesion shifts on the level of explicitness of Persian translated texts, the researchers
compared the occurred cohesion shifts with the cohesion explicitation list presented by Gumul (2006), in a descriptive comparative way. The findings revealed that English and Persian are different in cohesion. It also concluded that because of the differences between the two languages regarding cohesion, the translators used some shifts in transferring cohesion that lead to explicitation of the TTs. So, there was an overall tendency toward explicitation in all target texts. An implication of the study for the teachers, is that, translators could use these devices as the way of explicating TT also increasing the quality level of TT.

**Keywords:** Translation universals, Explicitation hypothesis, ST, TT, Cohesion Shifts

### 1. Introduction

By the expansion of knowledge and intensifying international communication, translation as a medium of communication has become important. Thus, Translation both commercial and literary is an activity that is growing phenomenally in today’s globalized world (Hatim & Munday, 2004). It provides the interaction between people who have different languages. Thus, communication in translation becomes its fundamental feature. Raffle mentions that, “as long as the need to know (other culture) is great; the need for translation will be great” (as cited in Golestany, 2009). Then, the advent of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), helped growth interest in text linguistics. As De Beaugrande (2011) mentions, by the emergence of text linguistics some linguists looked "beyond the sentence boundary” (p.287). They also believed that a text has some organizational features which distinguish it from a non-text, that is, from a random collection of sentences and paragraphs. According to Bell (1991), cohesion is one standards of textuality and as a formal surface features (syntax and lexis) to interact with underlying semantic relations to create textual unity. Halliday and Hassan (1976) made noteworthy contributions to the analysis on cohesion. They described cohesion as a semantic concept that refers to relation of meaning which exist within the text, and that defines it as a text. They state that cohesion plays an important role in the creation of a text and makes the continuity in the text. Blum-Kulka (1986) asserts that, depending on the language into which one is translating, the type of cohesive devices and their distribution would have to change accordingly. So, shifts in the types of cohesive markers and inserting additional words done by the translators (based on his/her interpretation of the ST) would lead to redundancy in target text. This redundancy could be expressed by a rise in the level of cohesive explicitness in
the TT. She believes that failure to recover cohesion in translation can result in miscomprehension. Thus, disregarding these cohesive relations in different texts and their translation will lead to invalidate the TT and misinterpretation of the message. Baker (2001) defines “Explicitation” as one of the retrievable features which typically occur in translated rather than original texts. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the Halliday and Hasan (1976), framework for exploring the frequencies and types of cohesive devices. Then shift of cohesive devices through translation of English medical texts into Persian were analyzed, by comparing them with the cohesion related explication presented by Gumul (2006). For exploring the effect of cohesion shifts on the level of explicitness of the Persian translated texts, the Blum-Kulka’s (1986) hypothesis was used in a descriptive comparative manner in the study.

The issue of ‘universals of translation’, as one of the controversial areas of translation studies, has been examined by so many scholars and translators. Explicitation also as one items of Translation Universal has been focused across the world. However, the problem is that no one could be found with the knowledge of all the languages. So, analysis, focused on the two or three languages. Most of the studies have been done on American and European languages. Furthermore, Because of the significance of the literary texts and especially their expressive type, there seems to be an urgent need to focus on literary texts for better understanding and interpretation of the aims of the authors. The sensitivity and significance of literary texts are the matters of importance that should be taken into account while translating.

The objectives of this study were to explore the issues of cohesion shifts in translating English literary texts and their Persian counterparts that would lead to explicitation in Persian translated texts and promotion of the translation quality also better interpretation of the message.

2. Review of the related literature

2.1. Cohesion

In any successful process of translation, the issue of cohesion is significance for their help in identifying semantic relation in the text, also interpretation of the text message. Many studies have been done on cohesion. According to Traugott and Pratt (1980), the earliest study of cohesion in English was conducted by Jackobson (1960), who analyzed syntactic structure and parallelism in literary texts with reference to poetry. Bell (1991) also asserts some standard for textuality that can be traced and measured because it has its obvious identifiable tools. He also adds, any text, in any
language, exhibits certain linguistic features that allow us to identify it as a text. We identify a stretch of language as a text partly because we make a sense of it as a unit, and partly because we get connections within and among its sentences. In 1964, it was Halliday who first divided cohesion into grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. In 1968, Hassan made a detailed exploration into grammatical cohesion (as cited in Traugott & Pratt, 1980). Then, Halliday & Hassan (1976) largely speak of cohesion and do so out of a different perspective. In their view, the concept of cohesion is a semantic one; it refers to relations of meaning that exist within the text also as a text-forming component in linguistic system and as a factor that indicates whether a text is well-connected or merely a group of unrelated sentences. The taxonomy of cohesive devices proposed by Halliday and Hasan in their popular work *Cohesion in English* (1976), was used for the purpose of this study. They provided taxonomy of cohesive devices and, for the first time, made a distinction between grammatical and lexical cohesion.

### 2.1.1 Grammatical cohesion

Grammatical cohesion can be divided into four kinds:

**Reference** Reference, in the textual sense, occurs when the reader has to get the identity of what is being talked about by referring to another expression in the context (Baker, 1992). Halliday & Hassan (1976) establish three types of reference, namely personal, demonstrative, and comparative reference.

**Substitution.** It is used to describe the substitution of a word by a word that has the same structural function, but is semantically weaker (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). There are three types of substitution: nominal, verbal and clausal.

**Ellipsis.** According to Bell (1991), ellipsis is the omission of a previously explicitly expressed form. So, it could be interpreted by the previous knowledge are three kinds like substitution: nominal, verbal, clausal.

**Conjunction.** The fourth grammatical cohesive device in Halliday and Hasan’s model is conjunction which is considered as "a relation between what follows with what has gone before. Conjunctions can be categorized according to relations as additives, adversatives, causal and temporal.

### 2.1.2 Lexical cohesion

According to Halliday and Hasan (1976) lexical cohesion refers to: "the cohesive effect achieved by the selection of vocabulary in a text"(p.274). There are two types of lexical cohesion: reiteration and collocation.
**Reiteration**: Reiteration includes all phenomena which include the fact that one lexical item refers back to another, to which it is related by having a common referent (Halliday and Hassan, 1976). It is subdivided into repetition, synonym (or near-synonym), super-ordinate and general word.

**Collocation**: collocation is the possibility of lexical cohesion between any pair of lexical items which are in some way associated with each other in the language. Collocation involves the association of lexical items that regularly co-occur. This classification used in this study to describe the types of cohesive devices in 3 literary English books and their Persian translations.

2.2. **Shifts of Cohesion**

Mutesayire (2005) points out that translating is a kind of language use; therefore, shifts in translation belong to the domain of linguistic performance (as cited in Chung Ling, 2008). Thus, shifts of translation are different from the systematic differences that exist between source and target languages and cultures. Generally speaking, any shifts carried out by the translators in translation have the purpose of making the reader be aware of the content of the source text. Blum-Kulka (1986) argues that the process of translation includes shifts both in textual and discoursal relationships. She points out that these shifts occur on two levels, i.e. cohesion and coherence. On the level of cohesion that is the focus of this research, Blum-Kulka (1986) points out two shifts on the level of cohesion:

a) Shifts in the level of explicitness,

b) Shifts in the text meaning

The first one mentions that the translated text is more explicit than the original text. The latter means the meaning of the source text changes through translation. Blum Kulka (1986) commented that, the changes committed by the translator are so necessary to get the textual equivalent across, because they are due to differences in the grammatical systems between the two languages. So, in any translation, cohesive devices are manifested differently in different languages, so it is common to find some shifts in the internal cohesion of the text.

2.3. **Explicitation**

In all translations, the translators do their best to transfer the meaning as well as they can. Explicitation is the way of achieving this goal to transfer what is ambiguous in the original text. Explicitation has been defined variously by different scholars.
Pápai (2001) states that explicitation is technique of translation involving a shift from the source text (ST) concerning structure or content (as cited in Murañen & Kujamak, 2004). Moreover, he believes elucidation, and adding linguistic information as explicating procedures required by target readers. Baker (1996) asserts that explicitation is "the tendency to spell things out in translation, including the practice of adding background information" (p. 180). The first systematic study of explicitation done by Blum-Kulka (1986). According to her, the interpretation of the translator on the source text might lead to the target text which is more redundant than the source text. She also express that this redundancy can be expressed by a rise in the level of cohesive explicitness in the target text called “explicitation hypothesis”.

2.4. Related studies

Indeed, Cohesion is an important stratum in the organization of the discourse. So, the numbers of researchers have incorporated the issue of cohesion and cohesion shifts when they go through a translation process. Researchers have shown that cohesive markers through translation are not quite the same among various languages. There are some works on cohesion in translation as well. Levenstone (1976) has contrasted English and Hebrew, and noted the preference of Hebrew for lexical repetition or pronominalization. Levenston claims that given the choice between repetition as the lexical cohesion and pronominalization, Hebrew writers tend to prefer the former while English writers tend to choose the later. He revealed that lexical repetition is far more frequent in Hebrew than in English. In the domain of language teaching, some researchers focus on cohesion and its beneficial effects. Rassouli and Abbasvandi (2013) investigated the effects of explicit Instruction of Grammatical cohesive devices on Intermediate Iranian learners' Writing to examine the effectiveness of explicit teaching of cohesive devices on Iranian EFL learners’ use of these features and the extent to which it can improve the learners’ writing quality. The findings of the present study suggested writing teachers to have instruction of cohesive devices alongside improving learners’ knowledge in vocabulary, grammar and other filed that may affect quality of writing in their writing courses.

Many scholars performed some investigations on the shifts of cohesive markers and explicitation phenomenon in translation. It has also been one of the contentious issues in translation studies in current decades. For example, in 1998, Øverås investigated the number of different cohesive markers in translations between English and Norwegian and found that added connectives and replacement of connectives with more explicit ones are forms of cohesive
explicitation in translation. According to Øverås, additions, specifications, neutralizing metaphorical expressions and shifts from metaphor to simile are instances of explicitation in English- Norwegian translation. In 2009, Palavannejad investigated four different kinds of explicitation: obligatory, optional, pragmatic and translation-inherent explicitation in ten stories of Gulistan to find different kinds of explicitation in three English translation by: Rehatsek, Ross, and Eastwick. The researcher concluded that translators used all types of explicitation with different frequencies. This study revealed that, all translators also used explicitation in cohesion translation. In (2013), Monshi Toussi and Jangi also carried out a study on Cohesion Shifts in English Medical Texts and their Persian Translation to explore the issue of cohesion shifts in translating English medical texts into Persian, with a view to Blum-Kulka's (1986) hypothesis, regarding the inevitability of the occurrence of cohesion shifts through translation, as well as the consequences of these shifts on the level of explicitness of translated texts. The data of the present study revealed that shifts of cohesion were evident in translation English medical texts into Persian, and cohesion was an area where explicitation was evident.

2.5 Research Questions
Based on the mentioned research objectives, the following research questions can be posed:
1. What are the discrepancies between English literary texts and their Persian translations regarding quantity and types of cohesive devices based on Halliday and Hassan's (1976) model?
2. How are cohesive devices in English literary texts shifted in their Persian translation?
3. Is there any relationship between shift of cohesion and explicitation as a universal of translation in literary texts translation according to Blum-Kulka (1986)?

3. Method
3.1. Corpus
Mutrsayir (2005) belives, the number of investigation done on translation within descriptive approaches point to some regularities in translated texts and mention that there are some recurrent features that are typical of translated language. According to Toury (2008), since translators belong to the literary systems, three popular novels were selected as the corpus of the study and some examples were extracted from these books. The reasons for choosing these samples were: reputation and accessibility and quantity.
In terms of reputation, each book is adopted from original materials which were written by popular authors. In terms of accessibility, the selected books are available in many bookstores in different cities in Iran. At last; their quantities were enough to allow the researchers to arrive at valid generalization. In other words, the texts represented a variety of authors and translators to minimize the influence of individual preference in translation. The corpus of the present study entails three popular English novels and their Persian translations.

The corpus used in this study was selected from three books:
- “A farewell to arms” by Hemingway which is translated by Daryabandari (1392);
- “Pride and Prejudice” by Jean Austen, translated by Jamei (1372).
- “Great Expectations” by Dickens translated by Hadadi (1380).

3.2. Procedures
Cohesive ties are used as the most distinctive medium to study the degree of explicitation because they are observable. In this study, the procedure consists of two main steps: The first step was collecting the paragraphs as the unit of analysis and the second part was the process of data collection. Instances of the five categories of cohesive ties, namely, ellipsis, reference, conjunction, substitution, and lexical cohesion, are analyzed, based on their shifts in translation, by the researcher. They are counted out by the researcher manually, in lack of an objective instrument, followed by the triangulation technique. According to Golafshani (2003), there are four categories of triangulation. They are: data source triangulation, investigator triangulation, theoretical triangulation, and methodological triangulation. In the present study, the researcher used two types of them, namely, investigator triangulation and methodological triangulation. For investigator triangulation, two other M.A investigators, one in translation studies, and the other in teaching English, analyzed the shifts of cohesion on the same sample, using the same theoretical framework and similar procedure, as the main researcher. For triangulation of the research method, the researcher looked into the data twice by using the same method but on different occasions. Doing this, helped the researcher to be sure of the answers and also increased the reliability of research findings. The total shifts occurrences were then calculated based on the types of shifts and types of devices being shifted. Lastly, based on Blum-Kulka’s (1986) hypothesis, the level of explicitness of Persian texts is evaluated. This was done according to the types of shifts as mentioned by Gumul (2006), and the total number of words in ETs and TTs.
4. Results

Shifts in the cohesive devices, following Blum-Kulk’s (1986) explicitation hypothesis, can cause shifts in the levels of explicitness. The data analysis of this study consists of two main parts: Quantitative analysis and Comparative analysis.

**Quantitative analysis:** In order to find the frequency of English and Persian cohesion in literary texts, the researcher used quantitative analysis. In order to do this, the researcher found each type of cohesion to be counted. Then the researcher calculated the percentage of each type of cohesion. The occurrence frequencies of each types of cohesive device is calculated. The highest percentage shows that particular type of cohesion devices is the most commonly used types of cohesion in each language.

**Comparative analysis:** After calculating all English and Persian cohesive devices, each category of them was analyzed for their differences in two languages.

The last step of this study was based on Blum-Kulak’s (1986) explicitation hypothesis for analyzing shifts of cohesion in translation. Shifts of cohesion in the Persian texts were examined by considering how cohesive markers were translated in the Persian texts. For exploring the effect of cohesion shifts on the level of explicitness of Persian texts, the categorized these shifts according to the list of explicitation phenomena presented by Gumul (2006).

**Shifts in Gramatical Cohesive Devices:**

- **Examples regarding instances of Reference shifts:**
  1) There was the wind came from was the sea…and that small boy becoming afraid of it all, and beginning to cry was Pip (Dickens, 1992, p. 9).

  محلی که باد از ان می وزید دریا فرود گرفت تا کلینه که از تمام آن عوامل می ترسید و شروع به گریستن کرده بود پیپ بود (حدادی، 2831، ص. 12).

  In this example, the translator has made a shift by turning the personal reference to Demostrative+noun. In fact in this example, the translator has inserted additional word in the target text. This strategy has used to increase the target text's level of explicitness compared to the corresponding source text.

  It (personal reference )  آن عوامل (lexical cohesion)

  2) How did you happen to do that? Why didn't you join up with us? (Hemingway, 1957, p. 16)

  چطور شد که رفتن توی ارتش ایتالیا..................چرا به ما ملحق نشدی؟ (دربای بندی، 1382، ص. 40).
In this example, the translator, has translated this demonstrative reference to the phrase (ارتش ایتالیا). So, here the translator has made a kind of shit in cohesion to make a unity in the target text and also avoid ambiguity for the readers. This shift is because of the difference of two systems of languages.

- **Examples regarding instances of Substitution shifts:**

3) ….. Was angry that the ball closed so early, and talked of giving one himself to Netherfield (Austen, 1993, p. 17).

"از اینکه میهمانی زود تمام شد ناراحت بود و صحبت از آن می‌کرد که خودش در عمارت ندرفیلد میهمانی خواهد داد." (جامعی، 1380، ص. 17)

Different systems of cohesion make the translator use some shifts in translating this type of cohesion (nominal substitution) to another type (lexical cohesion). Literal translation in Persian causes ambiguity. To avoid ambiguity, the translator has used lexical cohesion.

One (nominal substitution) ➔ میهمانی (lexical cohesion)

4) He doesn't want any food (Hemingway, 1957, p. 11).

'I thought he looked as if he did ', I said.

 او غذایی نمی‌خواهد گفتم: فکر می‌کردم اینطور بنظر میرسید که می‌خواست (دریا بندری، 1381، ص. 83).

In this sentence, the writer has not repeated want, but the translator repeated it. In comparison with Persian, English doesn’t use a lot of repetition. Most of the time, Persian translators use repetition to convey the meaning hidden in substituted and ellipted structures. So, by doing this, the translator change the grammatical cohesion (substitution) to (repetition) as a Lexical cohesion to explicit the meaning of did.

did (verbal substitution) ➔ انتظار داشتن (lexical cohesion)

5) He wanted to ask what the strange silver instrument was for, but before he could do so, there was a shout…….(Austen, 1993, p.47).

او می‌خواست بپرسد آن ابزار ظریف نقره‌ای برای چه کاری است اما پیش از آنکه بتواند سوالش را مطرح کند صدای فریاد بلند شنید (جامعی، 1380، ص. 53).

In this example, the verb *do so* is substituted by the clause (wanted to ask what the strange silver was for). The translator made some shifts in translation of the grammatical cohesion (clausal substitution) and replaced it by a phrase (lexical cohesion).
Examples regarding instances of ellipsis shifts:

6) It will be no use for us, if twenty such (0) should come since you will not visit them (Austen, 1993, p.51).

In English, ellipse is a kind of leaving something unsaid which is nevertheless understood. The translator filled the missing part (0) in English sentence by using another category of cohesion (repetition). Here, the translator also used a noun phrase to make the meaning of the sentence clear for the reader by making some shifts in cohesion.

7) Mr Wopsle said that he would go if Joe would (0) (Dickens, 1992, p.57).

Here, expansion has been used to avoid any ambiguity and make the meaning clear for the reader.

According to Catrord's (1965) taxonomy of textual equivalence, two languages are different at linguistic level, so, the translator used some shift because of this level difference.

8) "Have you heard that Netherfield park is let at last?"

Mr Bennet replied that he had not (0) (Austen, 1993, p.11).

In this example, there is also a clausal ellipsis in English sentence. The modal verb hadn't is used instead of repeating the clause (heard that Netherfield is let at last). But the translator filled the missing part (clausal reference) by repeating the word. So another shift in cohesion is done:

Examples regarding instances of Conjunction shifts:

According to Blum-Kulka (1986), shifts in the types of cohesive markers can cause shifts in the levels of explicitness. Explication devices adopted by the translator to explicate the implicit marks conjunctive relations of the ST include: a) addition of conjunction, b) replacing punctuation with conjunctions. The following examples indicate conjunctive shifts for explicitation.
9) That night was a storm. I woke up to hear the rain lashing the window panes (Hemingway, 1957, p.178).

آن شب توفان آمد و من بیدار شدم ، صدای باران را شنیدم که به شیشه های پنجره شلاق می زد ( دریا بندری ، ص.332).

Ziahosseiny (1999), mentions that, while English prefers short sentences, Persian overrides the sentence boundaries of the ST by the extensive use of conjunctions instead of the full-stop to form longer sentence. Conjunctions are used as a stylistic feature of Persian. In fact, Persian emphasizes more on the explicit forms to show semantic relations between sentences or paragraphs rather than English.

\[ \text{punctuation mark (.)} \rightarrow \text{(additive conjunctions)} \]

In addition, one method for translators to make the meaning of the translated texts so clear is adding some connective devices. In the following, the translator used shift by adding connectives.

10) I rowed in the dark keeping the wind in my face (Hemingway, 1957, p.183).

\[ \text{در تاریکی پارو می زدم و قایق را در جهتی می راندم که با رینگ چهره ام باشد} \text{ ( دریا بندری ، ص.341).} \]

One method for translators to make the meaning of the translated texts so clear is adding some connective devices. In this example, again, the translator used shift by adding connectives.

\[ \text{(adding connectives)} \]

**Shifts in Lexical Cohesive Devices:**

In every text, lexical cohesion is the result of chains of related words that contribute to the continuity of lexical meaning. Lexical chains make an easy-to-determine context to help in the resolution of ambiguity, also narrowing the specific meaning of a word. They help in determining the flow of ideas and the change in the topics or ideas being discussed.

In Persian, the different categories of lexical cohesion are not separated from each other like English. Therefore, facing the translator with these different categories of lexical cohesion would lead to the lexical cohesion in general that is in the form of repetition of the words in most cases. So, there is no need to give some examples here.

From the data obtained by comparing these three novels with their Persian translated texts, the following tables achieved.

**Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Cohesion in English Target Texts (ETs)**
Cohesive Device | **Grammatical Cohesion** | **Lexical Cohesion** | **Total**
---|---|---|---
ETs | Reference | Substitution | Ellipsis | Conjunction | Reiteration | Collocation
Frequency | 100 | 22 | 38 | 134 | 186 | 150 | 630
Percentage | 15.87 | 3.49 | 6.03 | 21.27 | 29.52 | 23.81 | 100

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage of Cohesion in Persian Translated Texts (PTTs)

| Cohesive Device | **Grammatical Cohesion** | **Lexical Cohesion** | **Total**
---|---|---|---
PTTs | Reference | Substitution | Ellipsis | Conjunction | Reiteration | Collocation
Frequency | 62 | 14 | 22 | 182 | 286 | 196 | 762
Percentage | 8.14 | 1.84 | 2.89 | 23.88 | 37.53 | 25.72 | 100

The English corpus of lexical cohesive devices includes 53.33% and the Persian corpus consists 63.25% of all cohesive devices. Comparing ETs and PTTs showes that the grammatical cohesive devices are more frequently used in the English texts 46.66 %, than in their translations 36.75%. Accordingly, it shows that English language system has used grammatical cohesive devices more than the Persian one. However, the percentage difference shows that distribution patterns of both grammatical and lexical cohesive devices in the English texts and their Persian translations are different.

**Chart 1: Frequency of Different Types of Cohesive Devices in English and their Persian Translated Texts**
The frequency of each type of cohesive devices is shown in the above chart to facilitate the task of comparison and discussion. It is clear from the chart that lexical cohesion concludes the majority of all cohesive devices. In the subcategories of grammatical cohesion, it indicates that reference is more common in the English texts (15.87%) than in their Persian translations (8.14%). In translating English texts into Persian, 38% of references were omitted. So, references were less frequent in Persian translated texts rather than their English. Regarding the subcategories of substitution (in English 3.49%, in Persian 1.84%) and ellipsis (in English 6.03%, in Persian 2.89%), it revealed that substitution and ellipsis occur rather more in ETs than in PTTs respectively. In translating ETs into PTTs, 40% both ellipsis and substitution in English omitted and shifted into lexical cohesion in Persian texts. It revealed that, these two subcategories in English texts are filled by lexical repetition in Persian and it shows the Persian translators' tendency towards explicitation in translation. Reagarding the subcategory of conjunction, in English 21.27% and in Persian 23.88%, it can be said that Persian translators have tendency to use conjunctions instead of the full-stop to form longer sentence. Addition is used more frequently in the category of conjunctions where the Persian translator shows an overrepresentation of this type of cohesive device. The PTTs contain 35.82% addition of conjunctions which have no counterpart in the ETs. Because, Persian emphasizes more on the explicit forms to show semantic relations between sentences or paragraphs rather than English.
Regarding lexical cohesion in ETs and PTTs, it shows that the frequencies of reiteration and collocation in Persian are more than English texts. The PTTs consists of 63.25% and ET consists of 53.33%. The PTTs contain 57% addition of lexical cohesion with no English counterpart in the ETs. It is because in Persian, Reiteration, especially repetition is often used to substitute pronouns or general words. Catford (1965) points out that, cases of shifts from grammar to lexis are quite frequent in translation between languages. We have already mentioned an example of level shifts in translation. Therefore, most of the grammatical ties (pronouns, demonstratives, deictic expression, etc...), that are used to refer to entities and events in the source text, shift to lexical terms in the target language.

5. Discussion and conclusion

Based on the data obtained from the total frequency of cohesive devices in Persian texts and their English counterparts, the first question of this study answered. The findings revealed that, the higher frequency was for lexical cohesion, followed by conjunction, and then came reference, ellipsis and substitution respectively. Having different patterns of distribution for cohesive devices in both languages, may be the result of the different nature of two languages. Some of the discrepancies between the use of reference in ETs and PTTs may be due to the differences in the language system and some by the translator tendency to make the target texts more explicit. As Ziahosseiny (1999) mentions, the omission of references in the process of translation could be explained by the fact that in some cases in the Persian language, personal references may be avoided while in English they are usually necessary. In some cases, the translators replace the references by lexical cohesion. Thus, using lexical devices makes Persian texts more explicit than their English ones. Regarding the subcategories of substitution and ellipsis, it can be said that in many cases, these two subcategories in English texts are filled by lexical repetition in Persian and it shows the Persian translators' tendency towards explicitation in translation. Having analyzed the category of conjunction, it revealed that the most common type of shifts in translation of this category is addition.

According to Ziahosseiny (1999), while English prefers short sentences, Persian overrides the sentence boundaries of the ST by the extensive use of conjunctions instead of the full-stop to form longer sentence. In fact, Conjunctions are used as a stylistic feature of Persian. In other words, Persian emphasizes on the explicit forms to show semantic relations between sentences or
paragraphs rather than English. To answer the second question, investigation of the examples from these three corpora replied to the second question. It indicates that the translators used different devices and made some shifts in order to make the translation more explicit. As Blum-Kalka (1986) asserts, the aim of investigating the shifts of cohesion in translation is to examine “the effect of the use of cohesive features in translation on the TL text’s level of explicitness and on the TL text’s overt meaning(s), as compared to the SL text” (p. 312). Thus, in reply to the third question of the study, the researcher used Gumel’s explicitation phenomena list (2006) to validate Blum-Kulka’s (1986) explicitation hypothesis:

a. Adding conjunctions / connectives
b. Shifts from referential cohesion to lexical cohesion
c. Filling out elliptical/substitutional constructions

Accordingly, because of the 35.82% adding conjunction, 38% replacing referential cohesion with lexical cohesion and 40% filling out elliptical and substitutional constructions for lexical cohesion through translation of ETs, general levels of explicitness in the PTTs are higher than that of the English source texts.

The fact that the degree of explicitness in the PTTs are higher than that of the English source texts, meaning that, the English translator have tendency toward explicitation in translation that is supported by Blum-Kulka’s (1986) hypothesis. So, explicitation is rooted in the structural dissimilarities between languages, the SL and the TL. In other words, cohesion could be considered as a significant medium through which explicitation is observable. Changes in the levels of explicitation occur as a result of differences between two languages. One language showing a tendency for higher levels of redundancy through cohesion and cohesion shifts that could be observed in translation suggested to be inherent to translation.

If a translator be conscious of the different cohesion system of languages and explicitation as the way to promote the quality of translation and better interpretation of the message, he/she could use some shifts in translation of the cohesive devices in STs in order to have a make the TTs more intelligible and natural.

Since the focus of the current study was on literary texts, further researches are needed to replicate the study in other genres such as journalistic and political text. Any researcher attempting in this area may want to study a larger corpus and use of machine textual analysis that will result
in more accurate and conclusive findings. Also, such an study can be done on other text types to determine the higher degree of explicitation by source language and culture.

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