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Foreword

Welcome to volume ten and the fifth edition of 2014. 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 third edition, we have presented thirty articles, discussing different issues of EFL/ESL, literature and translation studies. In the first article of the issue, Acquisition of Grammar through Consciousness-raising: A case of Relative Clauses is studied by Fatemeh Hemmati and Amin Khanjani. In the second article of the issue, Biook Behnam and Nahid Zarei have studied Facework and Disagreements in Computer Mediated Discourse Between Native and Non-native Speakers. In the third article of the issue, Roozbeh Arabi, Mohsen Masoomi and Adel Dastgoshaheh presented Investigating the Perceptions of Iranian Undergraduate EFL Students toward the Role of Literature in Their Success in Learning English Language. In the next article, The Translation Construed by Students in Translator Training Programs in Iran is presented by Masood Khoshsaligheh and Zahra Salari. In the fifth article of the issue, Ahmad Mohseni and Marziyeh Rabiei have presented The Relationship between Socioeconomic Status and Language Learning Strategies of Iranian EFL Learners. The next article which is Application of Newmark's strategies to the translation of culture-specific items in Boofe Koor and Dash Akol is done by Masoud Shariffifar and Narjes Rezaaeefar. In the seventh article of the issue; Sarah Torabian has studied The Washback Effect of Quizzes on the Grammar Skill. In the eighth article of the issue The Study of Learning and Retention of Vocabulary Through Keyword Method among Iranian EFL Learners is studied by Ali Sayyadi and Mohammad Javadi. In the next article, Masoumeh Ahmadi Shirazi and Shabnam Shabanluie have presented The Suppliance of Definite and Indefinite Articles: The Role of Test Method and Proficiency. In the tenth article, The Relationship between Self-assessment and Speaking Skill of Junior High School EFL Learners is done by Hamide Akbary, Shahin Sheikh and Narjes Sabouri.
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We hope you enjoy this edition and look forward to your readership.
Title

Acquisition of Grammar through Consciousness-raising: A case of Relative Clauses

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Abstract

Current trends in language teaching methodology generally agree on the importance of some forms-focused instruction, ranging from explicit treatment of rules to noticing and consciousness-raising (C-R) techniques. The present study aimed at finding evidence for the effectiveness of direct C-R instruction on the acquisition of relative clauses. To this aim, 28 pre-intermediate male EFL learners from a private institute in Rasht, Iran, took part in the study. They were divided into two experimental and control groups. Two teacher-made grammar tests targeting relative clauses (30 items), a timed Grammaticality Judgment Test (GJT) (40 items), a PET grammar test (60 items) and an attitude questionnaire (5 items) were utilized in the present study. The finding, \( t (26) = -4.83, p < .05 \)
revealed that there was significant difference between the control and the experimental groups. Besides, an attitude questionnaire developed to investigate the attitudes of the learners regarding the C-R activities indicated general positive attitudes of the learners.

**Keywords:** Consciousness raising, EFL, Relative clauses, Attitude

1. Introduction

Whether L2 grammar should be the focus of instruction, and if so, how it should be instructed effectively has been a great debate in teaching methodology research (Nassaji & Fotos, 2004). The debate, is in fact between two main positions: non-interventionists and interventionists (Graff & Hausen, 2009). Non-interventionists stick to an innatist, non-interface perspective and cast doubt on the value of explicit instruction, while interventionists believe in a connection between explicit and implicit knowledge, thus supporting the "weak-interface position" (Ellis, 2008, p.423) that L2 instruction can make a difference. Insights on how languages are acquired have cast doubt on the value of learning grammar rules, and have led somehow to a rejection of explicit grammar teaching in foreign/second pedagogy (Cook, 2008, Doughti, 2001; Ellis, 2003, 2005, 2006; Hall, 2011; Long, 2007). However, despite a great amount of support for implicit teaching of grammatical features through focus on form, there exist a number of studies which give priority to explicit teaching of grammar (Ellis, 2002; Ortega, 2009; Sheen, 2002; White, 2001, for example). These studies have, in fact, found that the metalinguistic awareness of the rules through explicit instruction can have significant effect on the L2 acquisition. Ortega (2009), for instance, provides some evidence that suggests both the rate of learning and linguistic accuracy increase when learners experience explicit grammatical instruction. Current trends in language teaching methodology generally agree on the importance of some form-focused instruction, ranging from explicit treatment of rules to noticing and Consciousness Raising (C-R) techniques that provide the learners the required input (Ellis, 2008). According to Gass and Selinker (2008), learners need to notice language before they can understand or produce it. Such information-processing models of learning, in fact, emphasize that language items should be noticed before they can be employed automatically by learners (Hall, 2011).

The majority of studies have reported the positive aspects of C-R on the acquisition of different grammatical structures (see Ellis, 2012). However, what is evident as Mohammed (2004) argues grammar C-R activities have not been fully researched and the evidence for the
efficacy of grammar C-R tasks as forms-focused tasks on the acquisition of relative clauses, especially in Iranian EFL context, is scanty. Furthermore, probing the attitudes of Iranian students on C-R activities made the present study more distinguished from the rest. Hence, the study aimed to shed some more light on the role of C-R activities in the acquisition of relative clauses and gave some insights regarding the attitudes of the Iranian EFL learners on these activities. The rationale behind the choice of this syntactic structure as the focus of this study was that the relative clauses have been covered in the course materials of Iranian high schools and universities, and based on the researcher’s experience of teaching in Iranian high schools for several years, relative clauses can be considered as one of the most difficult structures for the high school learners to grasp. Accordingly, it is indispensable for the Iranian students to master it. Thus, the following research questions were addressed:

1. Do consciousness-raising activities have significant effects on the acquisition of relative clauses in Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners?

2. Do Iranian pre-intermediate EFL learners have positive attitudes toward consciousness-raising activities?

1.1 Definition of the Term

Richards and Schmidt (2002) define C-R as:

Techniques that encourage learners to pay attention to language form in the belief that an awareness of form will contribute indirectly to language acquisition. Techniques include having students infer grammatical rules from examples, compare differences between two or more different ways of saying something, observe differences between a learner's use of a grammar item and its use by native speakers. A consciousness-raising approach is contrasted with traditional approaches to the teaching of grammar in which the goal is to establish a rule or instill a grammatical pattern directly (p. 109).

C-R activities are, in fact, new ways of teaching grammar developed in communicative contexts. They are classroom activities that draw student' attentions to the forms of language. They are designed to raise the learners' language awareness (Svalberg, 2007). They do not engage the learner in rote-learning as the purpose of this kind of grammar teaching is not to assist learners to perform structures correctly but to help them to gain some knowledge about it. Ellis (2002, p.169) distinguished C-R and practice arguing that, “while practice is primarily behavioral requiring repeated production, C-R is essentially concept forming in orientation.” C-R tasks permit learners to make assumptions and see examples of forms, make hypotheses, and then to form rules from the patterns, which builds explicit knowledge. Willis and Willis (1996). To them, such tasks encourage cooperative learning. Rather than
individually processing grammatical forms, and then producing them together, learners work together cooperatively to process the language. According to Ellis (2012), C-R can be divided into direct and indirect activities. Direct C-R is achieved through explanation of linguistic features either by teacher or textbooks. Indirect C-R is approached by activities that aid learners in discovering the rules for themselves. For him, indirect C-R that invites learners to discover the rules is highly effective. There are a variety of ways in which C-R might achieve this. Willis and Willis (1996) list seven categories of consciousness-raising activity types:

- Identifying and consolidating patterns or usages;
- Classifying items according to their semantic or structural characteristics;
- Hypothesis building based on some language data, and then perhaps checking against more data;
- Cross-language exploration;
- Reconstruction and deconstruction;
- Recall; and reference training (p.69).

1.2 Theoretical Rationale

According to Ellis (2012), both the interactionist-cognitive and sociocultural theories have emphasized the importance of C-R in the course of L2 acquisition. Accordingly, in terms of sociocultural theory, C-R mediates the intra/inter psychological processes involved in learning L2. Moreover, it is postulated that L2 learners can benefit from the explicit knowledge afforded by such C-R activities. In the same vein, Lantolf and Throne (2006) hypothesize that L2 communicative ability is not affected by implicit knowledge but can develop from automatized explicit knowledge. In terms of interactionist-cognitive theories, C-R can facilitate noticing, conscious rule formation, proceduralization, automatization and monitoring (Ellis, 2012). Along the same cognitive line, Gass and Selinker (2008), for example, postulate that learners need to notice language before they can understand or produce it. Such information-processing models of learning, in fact, emphasize that language items should be noticed before they can be employed automatically by learners (Hall, 2011). It can provide further evidence for the weak-interface position that explicit knowledge can facilitate the processes responsible for the development of implicit knowledge (Ellis, 2012). Moreover, more communicative approaches such as task-based language teaching, according to Ellis (2012), have indeed resorted to explicit techniques such as C-R as a very useful alternative to traditional PPP approach to language teaching. Integrating grammar with tasks, the learner can focus both on meaning and form (Carless, 2009), while providing a motivating and relevant learning experience. Irrespective of whether C-R activities adequately meet the most definitions of "task", they seem to be useful techniques to add to teachers' repertoires of grammatical options. As Ellis (2008) rightly states C-R is useful in
that it draws attention to forms, which can aid the learner in constructing hypotheses with respect to form-function relationships.

2. Review of the Related Literature

2.1 Research on C-R in Iranian EFL context

A number of empirical studies in Iranian EFL context have been undertaken to investigate the efficacy of grammar consciousness-raising. Shokouhi (2009) investigated the impact of C-R tasks in Iranian EFL setting by comparing them with deductive, grammar lessons common in the Iranian pre-university schools. The results showed that in the short-run, C-R tasks were as effective as deductive approach in promoting the learners’ grammatical knowledge while in the long-run, the CR group maintained their gains more effectively than the deductive group. Moradkhan and Sohrabian (2009) attempted to show the need for grammar instruction in the English language classroom. To this end, the experimental group was instructed using grammatical consciousness-raising (C-R) activities to reinforce the grammar points and the control group practiced grammar through the use of communicative techniques. A significant effect on the grammar knowledge of the experimental group was detected. Behrouzi and Kazemirad (2012), also, carried out a research to examine the effect of consciousness-raising tasks on the syntax acquisition of the elementary EFL learners at a language institute in Iran. The experimental results of this study supported the use of C-R tasks. Finally, Amirian and Sadeghi (2012) investigated different approaches in grammar teaching and compared the traditional approaches with C-R tasks. Analysis showed that using C-R tasks in grammar teaching was significantly more effective than the traditional approaches. Therefore, it was recommended that other teachers consider C-R as an option in teaching grammar in their classrooms. All the studies have reported the positive aspects of C-R on the acquisition of different grammatical structures. However, considering the paucity of such research in the Iranian EFL context especially on the relative clauses, it's hoped that the finding will shed some more light on how such grammatical structures to be dealt with in L2 classrooms.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

Twenty eight pre-intermediate male EFL learners at a private institute in Rasht, Iran, participated in the study. They were all native speakers of Persian with the ages ranged between 15 and 19. They all studied in Iranian high schools. They were selected based on
availability sampling. To ensure the homogeneity of the participants regarding grammar knowledge, a preliminary English Test (PET) grammar test was conducted. They were, then, divided into two groups: 14 students in control group and 14 students in experimental group.

3.2 Instrumentation

Two teacher-made grammar tests targeting relative clauses (30 items), a timed grammaticality judgment test (GJT) (40 items) adapted from Reinders (2009), a PET grammar test (60 items) and an attitude questionnaire (5 items) adapted from Jafari and Hashim (2012) were utilized in the present study. The grammar tests were adapted from Longman Preparation Course for the TOEFL Test and Longman English Grammar practice Test, and were used as main sources for the pre-test and post-test items. The tests consisted of two main parts. The first part was a cloze passage with 15 blanks followed by its 15 multiple-choice answers. The second part, namely the multiple choice part, consisted of 15 multiple-choice items. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient for the subsections of the tests was .73 and .75, respectively. To gather supplementary information regarding the acquisition of target structure, a timed GJT was administered to the experimental group on two occasions: as a pre-test, and a delayed post-test. This test consisted of 40 sentences, 30 of which contained the target structure (relative clause). Of these, 18 were grammatical and 12 ungrammatical sentences. The other 10 items consisted of sentences with distractor items. At each test administration the order of the items was changed. The reliabilities of the target items and the control items were assessed by means of Cronbach alpha (Table 1). The adequacy of timed GJT has been discussed by Han and Ellis (1998) as well as Reinders (2009). Ellis (2012) also believes that such tests can tailor the explicit knowledge C-R tasks aim at, and they can be considered as a valid method of assessing learning. To ensure the homogeneity of the participants in terms of grammar, a PET grammar test was utilized. It comprised 60 questions which focus on grammar and language used at PET Level (B1) - lower intermediate level. From a pilot test, a good index of reliability was obtained. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient for the grammar test was .78. The researchers also developed an attitude questionnaire, through which participants’ opinions and beliefs towards the role of C-R in grammar mastery was elicited. Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed with each statement using a 5-point Likert scale where 5 showed “strongly agree” and 1 showed “strongly disagree. The Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient for the questionnaire was .68.

Table 1

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<th>Reliability Indices for Grammaticality Judgment Tests (Cronbach alpha)</th>
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### Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of the PET Test

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<td>Participants</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28.80</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>.52</td>
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3.3 Procedure

The first step in conducting this research was dividing students in two groups: control group and experimental group. The participants had taken a PET proficiency test to ensure their homogeneity. The descriptive statistics of the PET grammar test is presented in Table 2. Participants in the experimental group, then, completed a timed GJT as a pre-test and were assigned to the treatment. After the pretest, the control group received deductive grammar lesson through the use of pattern drill practice on relative clauses and the experimental group through the use of grammatical C-R activities and tasks.

The treatment in this study corresponded to different levels of C-R activities identified by Willis and Willis (1996) as well as what Ellis (2012) terms as indirect C-R. These steps were followed: examples were given, students were encouraged to discover the rule and an explanation of the rule were elicited from students and finally feedback was provided since rule explanations draw students' attention to the target linguistic system, namely the relative clauses. The teacher encouraged the students to discover the rules by themselves. First, the teacher handed in some papers containing examples of relative clauses which were highlighted at the beginning of the grammar session. The students were required to read the examples and induce the grammar rule by themselves in groups. They could explain the grammar point based on their understanding, individually or collaboratively. Then, the students were given some sentences which contained one error. They were asked to detect the errors and try to correct them.

At the end of treatment, the questionnaire was conducted to the experimental group. It's worth mentioning here that such task-based instructions require learners to use and attend to utterances in the target language to solve the task. However, Ellis (2003, p. 166) argues that “beginner learners will need to use their L1 to talk about language although the product of their discussion could still be in the target language”. Scott and De La Fuente (2008) found that L1 use in a C-R task led to more collaboration among dyads and more efficient language.
processing than a corresponding task where only L2 was used. At the end of the post-test, the attitude questionnaire was distributed among the experimental group. Moreover, one week after the treatment, the experimental group completed the GJT and their performance on target and non-target items was compared, too. All data were fed into SPSS version 20. Descriptive statistics, independent t-tests and paired t- test were run; the frequencies and percentages of the respondents on the questionnaire items were also calculated.

4. Results and discussion

The research question was to probe the effectiveness of C-R tasks on the acquisition of the relative pronouns. As Table 2 indicates, the performance of the participants on the PET proficiency test showed a low proficiency of the participants, \(M=28.80\ SD=2.34\). The descriptive statistics of the teacher- made grammar pre- test is also presented in Table 3. As Table 3 indicates, the performance of the two groups on the grammar test showed remarkable similarities. However, a t-test was run to compare the mean score of the experimental group \((M = 11.03, SD = 2.01)\) and the control group \((M = 12.75, SD = 2.5)\) in order to make sure that the two groups did not differ significantly before they were exposed to the instructional intervention. As we can see in Table 4, the \(t(26) = .60, \ p = .76\) (two-tailed) indicated that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups on the grammar pretest and thus the two groups belonged to the same population before the treatment. Table 5 represents the descriptive statistics for the experimental group \((M = 19.42, SD = 2.01)\) and the control group \((M = 15.70, SD = 1.53)\) for the teacher- made grammar post- test. As Table 6 indicates the obtained p value \(p = .000\) confirmed the equality of variances and \(t (26) = -4.83, \ p < .05\) suggested that the mean differences of 4.83 is significant and the null hypothesis was safely rejected. The descriptive data for the GJT's has been provided in Table 7. Table 8 demonstrates the mean differences of the participants’ performances on GJT's before and after the treatment. As it’s evident the C-R activities had a significant effect on the acquisition of the target structure, both the target grammatical structure, \(t (13) = 18.3, \ p =.000\) and the target ungrammatical structure, \(t (13) = 17.90\). However, it seems that non- target structures have not been affected by the treatment.

**Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of the Grammar Pre-test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.03</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moreover, the results of the questionnaire demonstrated that students had a positive attitude towards the C-R activities. An analysis of their responses is presented in Table 9. As Table 9 revealed more than 80% found the task useful. About 90% agreed that the task was interesting. Moreover, about 85% agreed that the task was clear and easy to understand. The majority of respondents (66%) also indicated that the task helped them more about the understanding of English grammar. Finally, about 86% agreed that they would like to do more tasks like this one. This finding is compatible with the results of a study conducted by

### Table 4 Comparing Means of the Grammar Pre-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>sig.(2-tailed)</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>mean difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants (n=28)</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5 Descriptive Statistics of the Grammar Post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.70</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.42</td>
<td>2.01</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6 Comparing Means of the Grammar Post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>sig.(2-tailed)</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>mean difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar post-tests</td>
<td>-4.83</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 7 Gain Scores for Relative Clauses and Non-target Items on the GJT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target Grammatical</td>
<td>8.90</td>
<td>5.70</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungrammatical</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-target Grammatical</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ungrammatical</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8 Mean Differences between Pre- GJT and Post- GJT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>sig.(two tailed)</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>mean differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Target-grammatical</td>
<td>18.3*</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target- ungrammatical</td>
<td>17.9*</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-target grammatical</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-target ungrammatical</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mohamed (2004) who reported that the learners viewed the tasks to be useful in internalizing new knowledge about the language. Their responses indicated that the tasks were effective learning tools, and that the learners viewed them to be so since they were able to state specific features of the structure that they had learnt as a result of having completed the tasks.

### Table 9  Frequency & Percentage of Students' Responses to the Attitude questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The task was useful</td>
<td>7 (50%)</td>
<td>5 (35.30%)</td>
<td>2 (14.30%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The task was interesting</td>
<td>6 (42.30%)</td>
<td>6 (42.30%)</td>
<td>2 (14.30%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The task was clear and easy to understand</td>
<td>5 (35.30%)</td>
<td>4 (29%)</td>
<td>3 (21%)</td>
<td>2 (14.30%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The task helped me understand more about how English works</td>
<td>6 (42.30%)</td>
<td>4 (29%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
<td>2 (14.30%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I would like to do more tasks like this one</td>
<td>8 (57%)</td>
<td>4 (29%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
<td>1 (7%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SA: Strongly Agree  A: Agree  U: Undecided  D: Disagree  SD: Strongly Disagree

As it was shown in the tables 6 and 8 the experimental group benefited from C-R activities. This indicates that C-R was more effective in developing learners' knowledge of grammar than traditional approaches. The results are consistent with those reviewed in the literature that demonstrated attention to the formal properties of language facilitates language learning effectively. They also corroborate Mohamed (2004) who found that the C-R tasks were useful in assisting learners to acquire new grammatical knowledge and can therefore be used to raise learners’ awareness of linguistic forms.

The findings support Skehan (1998) who came to the conclusion that structured input which focuses on the awareness of language features enhances acquisition. They also confirm Ellis (2004) who argues that C-R provide learners with opportunity to notice and understand new language features; such awareness naturally gives rise to the interlanguage development. They are also consistent with Nunan (2001, p.198) who contends grammar instruction will be more effective if “learners are provided with the opportunity to develop their own understandings of the grammatical principles through inductive learning experiences”. One possible explanation for the effectiveness of C-R might be the mediating role they can play in acquiring language features. As Vygotsky puts emphasis on the role of tools and signs as mediators in the process of language acquisition, it can be claimed that C-R activities might function such role in enhancing the co-construction of knowledge. Taking such sociocultural perspective (Ellis, 2012), it seems that C-R activities also aid learners to expand their ZPD through collaboration with other learners.
The data obtained by this study suggest that implementing C-R activities can help learners to improve their knowledge of grammar. This can be attributed to the instructional intervention provided for the experimental group involving planned focus on forms. The findings of the present study prioritize the central role for conscious mental operations in learning. It argues that learners need to notice the features of input for them to turn into intake. C-R is, therefore, useful in that it draws attention to forms, which can aid the learner in constructing hypotheses with respect to form-function relationships. This study can offer several implications for different aspects of teaching grammar in Iran ranging from teacher training and syllabus design to grammar methodology and assessment.

It seems that by utilizing C-R activities, we can teach the students to shoulder the responsibility of their own learning and to be an intellectual discover learner. This study also suggested that implementing C-R activities could help learners to improve their knowledge of grammar. It was demonstrated that the students were more active in class while they were learning the grammar point because they were asked to extract the grammar point themselves by focusing on the examples in their handouts.

5. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the effect of consciousness-raising activities on learning relative clauses. Most of the English textbooks in Iran have a grammar basis. Therefore, it is incumbent for a teacher to know the effective methods for teaching grammar. Among the different grammatical structures, the relative clauses were subjected to this study. Relative clauses have always been an important issue to the EFL/ESL educators because of their complex syntactic structure and therefore being a learning problem to the language learners (Gass & Selinker, 2001). Despite the significant role relative clauses play in the teaching and learning of English in Iranian educational system (Abdolmanafi & Rahmlausesani, 2012), little research has so far addressed this issue and the way it is instructed in Iranian EFL classes. We hope the findings could help English teachers who deal with this structure in EFL classrooms in Iran. Moreover, the study supported the effectiveness of C-R activities in teaching grammar to EFL learners in senior high school. Most practitioners are familiar with Task-Based Language Instruction and the notion of C-R activities; however, we need to apply such tasks in our teaching practices more. As Behrouzi and Kazemirad (2012) contend C-R activities may have many more applications along side developing a greater awareness of
target grammar which could induce further implications for developments in second language learning theories and pedagogical practices.

Although the study has shed some light on the role of C-R activities on the acquisition of a particular grammatical structure, it has some limitations. The first limitation was imposed by the non-random selection and the small number of participants which may pose some threat to the generalizability of the findings. Second, due to availability problem, only male EFL learners took part in the study. Third, interviews with the learners and the teachers could be conducted to elicit their attitudes on such tasks. The future study can replicate this present study and target such limitations. Another point worth mentioning here is the mediating role of individual differences in the receptivity of certain types of instruction (Ellis, 2012). Dornyei (2005), similarly, postulates that any instruction should accommodate a range of learning styles in order to increase learning opportunities for all L2 learners. Hence, the future study may investigate the effects of the consciousness-raising task with different language skills, learning styles and the personality types of the learners. The final point to be added here is that with the advent of new technology, specifically computer – assisted language learning, research on consciousness- raising activities can enter into new venues. Especially, in the Iranian EFL context, the need for such research is highly felt.

References


Title

Facework and Disagreements in Computer Mediated Discourse Between Native and Non-native Speakers

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Biodata

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Abstract

Without considering face-work, dynamic social and cultural relations will come to a halt. Therefore, in order to avoid any friction and hostility in everyday interactions, participants have to pay due care and attention to politeness strategies and face-work. In the technology-oriented world of today, communication is not only face-to-face, but it is also rendered through the Internet. As a result, the study of face work and disagreement in computer-mediated communication has become a bourgeoning area of study in pragmatics. Adopting the interactional approach, this research aims to investigate how native and non-native speakers of English disagree in the Internet forums and how they react when their face as recipients is threatened in on-line interactions. Accordingly, it uses the interactional approach and the concept of face-work to analyze the transcript of asynchronous interactions. The participants are a number of EFL LinkedIn, a social network, members who are English teachers and practitioners discussing EFL issues. The study followed both qualitative and quantitative method to examine the strategies of disagreement deployed by native and non-native speakers. The results revealed
different strategies used by each group, which shed some light on the complicated relational work in performing the speech act.

**Keywords:** Disagreement strategies, Native, Non-native, Face threatening acts, On-line forum, Polylogue interactions

1. Introduction

Thanks to the information technology, today, communication is not restricted to traditional ways and it has pushed its realm to mediums which wouldn’t have been thought of. The advent of computers ensued by the Internet has facilitated communication beyond borders and has dramatically shrunk the world of communication. The features of this medium, asynchronicity, synchronicity, potential anonymity, easy quoting (Herring, 2007), have spawned a different type of discourse displayed in different forums, such as weblogs, social networks, emails and so on, which has attracted researchers’ attention. English has been used as the most widespread language in these forums except for some national and local sites. However, there might be variations in the way it is used between native and non-native speakers of English particularly considering pragmatic aspects of the language. What has mostly been of special interest for the researchers is facework and (im)politeness features of CMC (e.g. Cherry, 1999; Harrison, 2000; Daric, 2010; Shum & Lee, 2013; Vandergriff, 2013; Luzon, 2013; Graham, 2007 and so on.) and disagreements posted on Internet discussion forums. The current study attempts to investigate and interpret facework and disagreement in CMC between native and non-native speakers of English in Linkedin, a social network for English teachers and practitioners, which is a polylogue forum in which ideas are exchanged. Taking interactional approach to disagreements and face-work issues, the current study aims to answer the following questions through both qualitative and quantitative approach: 1) What type of strategies do native and non-native speakers of English use to express their disagreement in the Internet forums? 2) What is the effect of aggravated disagreement on the interactants?

2. Disagreements

Sifianou (2012) defines disagreement as “the expression of a view that differs from that expressed by another speaker” (p.54). As Myers (2004) notes disagreement has acquired a bad name, being regarded as a kind of failure between interactants. Pomerantz (1984) believes disagreement is dispreferred because disagreeing with one another is uncomfortable,
unpleasant, difficult, risk threat, insult or offence, whereas agreeing with one another is comfortable, supportive, reinforcing, and perhaps sociable, since it demonstrates that interlocutors are like-minded. On the other hand, early research on disagreement (Schiffin, 1984; Tannen, 1984; Kakava, 1993a qtd. in Sifianou, 2012) indicated that in certain national groups, interlocutors prefer disagreements over agreements in daily interactions whose function is sociability rather than disaffiliation. What this brings us to is that while discussing agreements and disagreements, the significance of specific social situation should be taken into consideration (Sifianou, 2012). As Sifianou (2012, p. 1557) noted “disagreement should be understood not as a single speech act but as a situated activity, interactionally managed by interlocutors.” Accordingly, the analyst should go beyond the existing situation to discern the deeper roots of the activity. For instance, the emotional relationship between interlocutors influences the cooperative or antagonistic ambience of an interaction (Kienpointer, 2008). Locher (2004), too, discusses the relationship between power and disagreement. Rees-Miller (2000) thinks of power as determining factor in the choice of a specific strategy of disagreement.

Another factor which requires undue attention in analysis is the turns through which the interaction takes shape. Graham (2007) notes that, “all interactions are contextualized and interpreted within the frame of previous interactions that grow out of them” (p.758). Dersely and Wooten (2001, qtd. in Sifianou, 2012) aptly put that termination of the present interaction is not equal to resolving of the dispute, for it is likely that the issue may be raised on some future occasion. In other words, the reason for disagreement may reside in the turns exchanged previously in the discourse.

Within any context of interactions, participants are main contributors of the ongoing discourse. As Sifianou (2012) argues “participants have personal traits and may have relational histories which predispose them to particular strategies” (p.1558). Whether the interactant is more or less argumentative will determine the type of the strategy adopted in specific situation. Besides, “Some individuals object to certain kinds of FTAs more than others” (Brown and Levinson, 1987, p.78). Moreover, the disagreement in solidarity relationship will be way too different from the one expressed in antagonistic relationship (Sifianou, 2012).

The topic raised in each interaction might stir debates and disagreements as well (Sifianou, 2012). However, it should be mentioned that, as Sifianou puts, sometimes even a simple topic might lead to flaming depending on the interlocutors personal traits.
All the aforementioned factors, whether individually or in combination, might affect the type of disagreement constructed in an interaction.

2.1. Disagreements and face

Disagreements have commonly been considered as face threatening acts to the extent that to redress such threat, Brown and Levinson (1987) propose two positive politeness strategies: “Seek agreement” (e.g., by engaging in safe topics) and “Avoid disagreement” (by hedging, using token agreement, telling white lies). Similarly, Leech (1983, pp. 132,133,138) identifies “a tendency to exaggerate agreement with other people and to mitigate disagreement”. His politeness principle includes a “Maxim of agreement” in assertiveness, which includes two submaxims: “minimize disagreement between self and other” and “maximize agreement between self and other”. Sharing a similar idea, Infante and Rancer (1996) argue that those who are interested in maintaining social approval may avoid argumentativeness. However, Sifianou (2012) holds an opposite idea noting that pseudo-agreements may also be face-threatening if they are interpreted as “insincere, manipulative or ingratiating” (p.1559). Likewise, for Georgakopoulou (2001) mock agreements are self-threatening acts if one is unable to express his/her opinion openly and freely due to some social considerations. Moreover, Bousfield (2007) contends in conflictual situations, interactants may resort to the principle of “self-preservation” (p.27) which provokes self-defensive, disagreeing moves to deprecatory offensive assessment. Consequently, disagreements may be face-saving and face-enhancing acts if they are indicators of addressee’s interest through his/her involvement in interaction rather than indifference. Besides, they show the speakers’ interest in presenting themselves as skillful contesters (Sifianou,2012). They are also considered as face-saving when the addressee disagrees to counteract self-deprecating remarks (Pomerantz,1984). Georgakopoulou (2001), also, contends disagreements sometimes are aimed at achieving a solution in a discussion which might be beneficial to the addressee.

As it seems, the purpose behind disagreement is closely related to the context it is constructed. In some conflictual situations, it may be associated with an impolite, face-threatening act and in some others, it may be a matter of extending friendliness and intimacy.

2.2. Disagreements and (im)politeness

Politeness, albeit rarely defined explicitly, has been conceptualized as a means of avoiding conflict (Leech, 1993, Kasper, 1990) and since disagreement may lead to conflict politeness is there to avoid it. Nevertheless, disagreement is not always dispreferred in online Internet forums, which are a place for people to freely express their opinions, ideas, and feelings toward a certain issue. As Shum and Lee (2013) put “the anonymity feature of Internet
forums provides a platform for users to discuss issues with each other on an equal footing. It is a place where disagreement is both likely and expected to happen” (p.55). Consequently, whether an utterance is considered as polite or impolite or appropriate or inappropriate depends mainly on the norms of the local context. Locher (2004) identifies eight linguistic strategies deployed by interactants during an argument: the use of hedges, giving personal or emotional reasons for disagreeing, the use of modal auxiliaries, shifting responsibility, giving objections in the form of a question, the use of but, repetition of an utterance by the next or the same speaker, and unmitigated disagreement. Moreover, some may challenge or question (Bousfield, 2008), while others may use profane or abusive language, disagree outright, ignore, ridicule, frighten, criticize, dissociate from the other, be unconcerned, use an inappropriate identity marker, explicitly associate the other with a negative aspect, select a sensitive topic (Culpeper, 1996), use contemptuous and dismissive phrases to devalue personal qualities or abilities, mock or offer a on-line rhetorical question (Culpeper, 2005). All these linguistic strategies may happen in Internet forums when disagreement is an expected and preferred common practice. However, as Angouri and Tseilga (2010) contended, disagreement in Internet forums may not be regarded as an a priori negatively marked act.

There have been several studies addressing disagreement so far. Makri-Tsilipakou (1991, 1995) has explored the contrasting views of Greek men and women regarding the expression of function of disagreement, arguing that men usually exploit strong disagreement without mitigation whereas women tend to employ mitigated ones. Angouri (2012) discusses unmitigated disagreements in problem solving in company meetings. Marra (2013) investigates how disagreements are refrained in workplace interactions in New Zealand when skilled interns are involved. Langlotz and Locher’s (2012) study addresses disagreements on ‘The Mail Online’, an environment where the expression and escalation of disagreement are both frequent and normalized. Bolander (2013) studies the on-the-spot construction of disagreements in personal blogs which is decisively shaped by (new) media norms and affordances about types and roles of participation. Shum and Lee (2013) investigate impoliteness and disagreement in two Hong Kong internet discussion forums. Angouri and Tseilga’s (2010) research probes into the issue of the e-impoliteness of disagreements in two online forums by looking at the communicative strategies and how impoliteness is lexicalized by Greek Internet users. However, research on disagreement between native and non-native speakers of English in Internet forum is lacking. With this in mind, the current study aims to investigate (im) politeness and disagreement in CMC between native and non-native speakers of English in Linkedin, by adopting the crucial features of interactional approaches.
(Arundale, 1999, 2006), which is based on the co-constituting model of communication, understands (im)politeness as being interactionally achieved in a collaborative, non-summative manner through interaction by participants (Haugh, 2007). To achieve the aim, two related research questions were devised. 1) What strategies do native and non-native speakers of English use to voice disagreement? 2) How do they respond in case of face-threatening acts?

3. The study

3.1. Methodology

To answer the research questions both qualitative and quantitative method was adopted. First, the posts of 16 discussion topics were selected from LinkedIn. Second, the interactional approach was adopted to identify disagreements from the forum interlocutors’ interactions in the posts. A list of the disagreement strategies reported by Locher (2004), Culpeper (1996), and Bousfield (2008) were also prepared for reference. Then the strategies used by native and non-native speakers of English were identified. To answer the second and third research question, qualitative method was adopted.

3.2. Data collection and procedures

The data used in this research was collected from LinkedIn, a social network, in which EFL group made up of English teachers and practitioners share their ideas about EFL issues. The interactants are from different nationalities, both native and non-native speakers of English. The forum is asynchronous and polylogue, pushing analysis of face-work and disagreement beyond the dyad. The data, collected from June to February 2013, includes 16 posts with 748 answers.

3.3. Identification of disagreement strategies

As this internet forum is polylogue, based on the interactional approach, identification was made primarily based on series of turns made by the interactants while they were interacting with one another. To facilitate the identification, as previously mentioned, a list of disagreement strategies relevant to CMC interactions was taken from the work of Culpeper (1996), Locher (2004), and Bousfield (2008). New strategies were added during the analysis. What follows is the list of strategies found in the data plus the corresponding descriptions.

3.3.1. Giving negative comments

Person A makes comments on an issue prominently in a comparatively negative tone. S/he states what s/he thinks to be the right thing to do and proceeds to accuse person B or
make a comparison with what they think is the wrongdoing of Person B in a personalized way, using the pronouns of I and you/your (Culpeper, 1996, p.385; Bousefield, 2008, pp. 115-118).

3.3.2. **Using short vulgar phrases**
Person A uses taboo words when s/he disagrees with Person B (Culpeper, 1996, p. 385 qtd. in Shum & Lee, 2013) such as swear words and the use of abusive or profane language (Culpeper, 1996, p.385; Bousefield, 2008, pp. 115-118).

3.3.3. **Raising rhetorical questions**
Person A disagrees in the form of a question such as a negative tag question or a question using negative interrogatives (Locher, 2004, p.133) or another kind of question. The question displays a very clear opposite view.

3.3.4. **Making a personal stance**
Person A denies association or common ground with Person B (Culpeper, 1996, p.357; Bousefield, 2008, p. 103-104) by showing one’s position in a phrase such as ‘I don’t believe / I don’t think so’.

3.3.5. **Making an ironic statement**
Person A says something insincerely and it remains a surface realization only (Culpeper, 1996, p. 356) with the use of an inappropriate identity marker (Culpeper, 1996, p.357).

4.3.6. **Cursing**
Person A warns, threatens or tries to frighten the recipient by predicting that a certain consequence or detrimental event will occur to Person B (Culpeper, 1996, p. 385; Bousefield, 2008, p. 112).

3.3.7. **Giving opposite opinions**
Person A disagrees by giving an opinion that is contrary to what is said. S/he has no intention of giving negative comments on people or an issue.

3.3.8. **Rewording**
Person A shows disagreement by making minor changes to or reconstructing Person B’s original comments instead of repeating the utterance.

3.3.9. **Giving personal experience**
Person A refers to his or her previous experience to substantiate disagreement.

3.3.10. **Giving facts**
Person A disagrees by using quotations, statistical information, pictures, videos, etc, to show a completely opposite view.

3.3.11. **Reprimanding**
Person A tells person B that his/ her action/ behavior/ attitude is not approved and the message may involve emotion. (Locher, 2004).

Some other non-verbal strategies and cues taken form Vandergriff (2013) were discovered during analysis as follows.

3.3.12. **Punctuation**

1. Ellipsis: Person A uses ellipsis. S/he uses turn-medial ellipsis to mitigate disagreement and turn-final ellipsis to express openness to other points of view in conflitcual situation.
2. Multiple exclamations: S/he uses exclamations to voice aggravated disagreement.

3.3.13. **Emoticons**

Person A uses emoticons to orient to a dispreferred action.

3.3.14. **Non-standard orthography**

Person A uses capitalization to emulate increased volume (Vandergriff, 2013, p. 3).

3.3.15. **Claiming a common ground with another interactant**

Person A sides with another participant to express disagreement.

### 4. Findings and discussion

As it was already mentioned in section 3.1, to answer the first research question, what type of strategies do native and non-native speakers of English use?, a quantitative approach of calculating the frequency rate was adopted. The result of the study showed that from among 16 posts with 784 answers, 134 were related to disagreements (Table, 1). The number of disagreements shows each instance of answer provided by the speaker in which he/she adopted different strategies to voice disagreement. The results revealed that native speakers were more dominant considering the discussions and non-native speakers participated less in controversial discussions. As it is observed in table 2, some of the strategies like giving negative comments, cursing, non-verbal cues, rewording, making corrections, ridiculing were commonly and dominantly used by native speakers while some others like giving opposite opinions, making a personal stance, giving a personal experience, and reprimanding were used by non-natives. As it was revealed negative and face-threatening strategies like using a profane language, ridiculing, using an ironic statement is lacking among non-native speakers. The following conversational exchanges provide examples of the strategies discussed.

Sam, the blog owner, posted a question for which he received several answers.

**ALL FOR ONE? or ONE FOR ALL? (Sam)**
Which is more satisfying? Teaching a class of students or teaching one-to-one? What's your experience?

Do you think one is harder than the other?

Providing reasons or giving facts

*Ann (native)* • My favourite would actually be two students. Small enough to be able to help them as individuals but they can do speaking exercises together.

*Ajay (non-native)* • Teaching a group (any Size) makes the trainer more comfortable and is a huge responsiblity as u have to keep in mind that they have so many different learners in the same class for only one language. A one on one restricts a trainer and his thoughts.

Ajay, a non-native tries to provide some reasons to his contrary opinion without attacking Ann’s face.

Taking a personal stance, rewording, giving opposite opinions

*Sam* • @Ajay: I would have to disagree, Ajay. I find that private one-to-one tuition doesn't restrict me at all. In fact it liberates me to teach MY way, and not to have to slavishly follow a set curriculum imposed by a school as a one-size-fits-all course for a large number of students. You said yourself that a group means a "huge responsibility" as there are "so many different learners in the same class". That, to me, is far more restrictive than teaching one-to-one. Thanks for your view, though. It's interesting that others can see things so differently from how I do.

Sam voices his opposite opinion by resorting to several disagreement strategies. In his first statement, he takes a personal stance and of course he softens his message by using hedging. Then he disagrees outright by giving an opposite idea saying “I find that private one-to-one doesn’t restrict me at all” He goes on to convince Ajay by giving more reasons. To show his disagreement, he also uses a quantifying device of capitalization.

Giving a personal experience, using a verbal irony, punctuation

*Ann* • At the moment, I'm teaching nothing but one-to-ones so I must be hugely restricted! :) Ann expresses her opposite idea by giving a personal experience and then uses a verbal irony to show her disagreement. She ends up her statement with a single exclamation mark and a smiley emoticon to dismiss Ajay’s argument.

Claiming a common ground with another interactant

*Todd* (native) • I'm with Neal. I find it really difficult to teach one on one.

Todd makes a personal stance by claiming a common ground with Neal and disagreeing with others who agree with “one-to-one” teaching.

Giving negative comments
*Ashish (non-native)* • One to one teaching is not advisable. Rather calling it teaching we can say counselling. Learning process is a group process. Students love learning in group.

Ashish gives a negative comment on the idea. She sounds very negative and judgmental in her tone.

Rewording, cursing, reprimanding, asking a rhetorical question

*Sam* • @Ashish: WHO calls one-to-one EFL teaching "counselling"?!?!??! This is absolute rubbish and very insulting to all the private tutors in this group and everywhere, including me? Learning is NOT only a group process. SO WHAT if students love learning in a group? They DON'T always, you know! Every single private student I've ever had has told me they prefer one-to-one to a group, so clearly you have no experience of one-to-one teaching (or "counselling" as YOU like to call it!). You obviously like groups but in calling one-to-one classes "counselling" I fear you're in a class of your own!

Sam asks a rhetorical question “Who calls one-to one…?” , He repeats Ashis’s statement”counselling” , and He goes on to insist on his opposite idea by implementing reprimanding strategy and profane language “rubbish”.

Ridiculing

*Connie (native)* • @Ashish.... my i didn’t realise that we had finally solved the problem about how students best learn and what it is they like. I must have missed that gem of knowledge. neither did I realise that there were rules on advisability. So one to one is" counselling" I think I had better put up my prices, and buy a leather chaise longue for my classroom space, and probably retrain as a clinical psychiatrist, come to think of it, that’s probably where I have been going wrong for 40 years. Thank You.

Connie expresses her disagreement by using verbal irony and ridiculing as well as scolding her because of her aversion to this method of teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Number of posts, answers, disagreements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of posts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of answers</td>
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<td>Number of disagreements</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 2. Frequency rate of type of disagreement strategies used by native and non-native speakers</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of posts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of answers</td>
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<td>Number of disagreements</td>
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<td>Types of disagreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giving opposite opinions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giving negative comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reprimanding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using short vulgar phrases</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raising rhetorical questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making a personal stance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Making an ironic statement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cursing / threatening</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rewording</td>
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<tr>
<td>Giving personal experience</td>
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<td>Giving facts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claiming a common ground with another interactant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corrections</td>
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<td>Ridiculing</td>
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<td>Emoticons</td>
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To answer the second research question, how do native and non-native speakers respond in case of deprecating and face-threatening acts? a qualitative method was adopted, which is going to be elaborated in detail. As Dobs and Blitvitch (2013, p.130) argue “when a participant produces an impoliteness act, the face threat recipient has the potential to act”, but the way they act might be different from one another considering different conditions, that is, they might decide to respond or keep silent. The following analysis will reveal some of these reactions. To avoid invasion of privacy, the writer changed the names of participants to pseudonyms before beginning to analyze them. For this part of the analysis, the writer selected the most face-threatening and aggravated disagreements which stirred controversies and led to conflict or impoliteness. The transcripts were copied without any kind of changes. The following question was posted by the blog owner of the group which provoked negative reactions in some participants.

**ALL FOR ONE? or ONE FOR ALL? (Sam)**

*Which is more satisfying? Teaching a class of students or teaching one-to-one? What's your experience?*

*Do you think one is harder than the other?*
Ann(native) • My favourite would actually be two students. Small enough to be able to help them as individuals but they can do speaking exercises together.

Ajay (non-native) • Teaching a group (any Size) makes the trainer more comfortable and is a huge responsibility as you have to keep in mind that they have so many different learners in the same class for only one language. A one on one restricts a trainer and his thoughts. 

Ajay, a non-native voices his contrary opinion without using any politeness strategies of hedging and softening the aggravated disagreement, which draws an angry and defensive response from Ann.

Ann • At the moment, I'm teaching nothing but one-to-ones so I must be hugely restricted! :) 

Ann, as the recipient of face-threat expresses her opposite idea by giving a personal experience and then uses a verbal irony to show her disagreement. She counters Ajay’s opinion defensively, and ends up her statement with a single exclamation mark and a smiley emoticon to dismiss Ajay’s argument. In the following turns, Ajay whose face is threatened keeps silent and does not respond.

Ashish (non-native) • One to one teaching is not advisable. Rather calling it teaching we can say counselling. Learning process is a group process. Students love learning in group.

Ashish gives a negative comment on the idea. She sounds very negative and judgmental in her tone. Actually, like Ajay, she makes no effort in softening and hedging her message and accuses the others of having the wrong idea of “one-to-one” teaching. Finally, she gives her personal idea about this method by providing a reason and making a stance for herself. She also does an off-record face threatening act or an intentional attack on the members’ face who are in favor of one-to-one teaching. She, in fact, has threatened collective as well as the individual face in as much as she has undervalued the idea held by most members.

Sam • @Ashish: WHO calls one-to-one EFL teaching "counselling"?!?!?!? This is absolute rubbish and very insulting to all the private tutors in this group and everywhere, including me? Learning is NOT only a group process. SO WHAT if students love learning in a group? They DON'T always, you know! Every single private student I've ever had has told me they prefer one-to-one to a group, so clearly you have no experience of one-to-one teaching (or "counselling" as YOU like to call it!). You obviously like groups but in calling one-to-one classes "counselling" I fear you're in a class of your own!

Sam, whose face as a supporter of one-to-one has been threatened, sounds very irritated and hurt; consequently, he resorts to different disagreement strategies to voice his disagreement. He asks a rhetorical question “Who calls one-to one…?” , repeats Ashis’s statement “counselling” , and capitalizes some words “ Who,Not,So What?,Don’t” You”. The
first sentence ends with quadruple exclamations and question marks to express excitability and aggravated disagreement. He goes on to insist on his opposite idea by implementing reprimanding strategy and profane language “rubbish”. He also gives reasons by referring to his personal experience and his students as a kind of justification of his disagreement.

**Connie (native)** • @Ashish.... my I didn´t realize that we had finally solved the problem about how students best learn and what it is they like. I must have missed that gem of knowledge. neither did I realise that there were rules on advisability. So one to one is" counselling" I think I had better put up my prices, and buy a leather chaise longue for my classroom space, and probably retrain as a clinical psychiatrist, come to think of it, that’s probably where I have been going wrong for 40 years. Thank You.

Connie starts her criticism of Ashish’s harsh and face-threatening act by addressing her directly and establishing rapport followed by ellipsis to delay her disagreement. The word “my’’ shows her tone of sarcasm .She goes on to express her disagreement by using verbal irony and ridiculing as well as scolding her because of her aversion to this method of teaching. Connie is surprised by the fact that Ashish does not use any mitigating strategies to avoid face threatening act. She maintained her sarcastic tone to the end of the message and finally brings it to the end by thanking her ironically.

**Neal (native)** • Really now, I don't see the need for several of you to have been so harsh and sarcastic when you responded to a recent post. Perhaps the issue was a simple misunderstanding over the precise meaning of the words "teach," "learn" and "counsel." Of course, it's easy for me to counsel other people to not take things so personally when I am guilty of doing the same thing, myself, so often :-)

Neal is just inviting everyone to keep poised because he thinks of the whole event as a kind of misunderstanding. Not agreeing with the others about being so aroused, he expresses his opposite idea .Neal finishes his message by including an emoticon and expressing delight. He thinks they all took offence just because of taking criticism as a kind of personal assault.

**Sam** • @Neal: You don't see the need..... As a private tutor, I DO! But perhaps he has suffered enough.

In fairness to myself and Connie, though, I don't think there should be ANY misunderstanding of the meaning of the words, "teach", "learn" and "counsel" by a "Language Lab Coordinator", which is the stated job title of our commenter above.

Sam makes use of a turn medial ellipsis to soften his message and avoid aggravated disagreement. He makes a stance for himself and capitalizes “I Do” and “Any” to intensify his message. Siding with Connoie against Asish, he tries to substantiate his disagreement.
Sam reprimands Ashis by saying that as a “Language Lab Coordinator” her idea is not approved.

*Sam* • .....In other words, let's not patronise and excuse and label as a "misunderstanding" a matter of simple disagreement. Connie and I are entitled to feel insulted and have a right to express this as we have.

Once more, Sam resorts to volitionality device of ellipsis to delay dispreferred action. He, also, impersonalizes the message by using “Let’s”. He refers to Connie repeatedly to express their shared disapproval of Ashish’s idea. He thinks if he does not react, he might be accused of being patronized and fooled.

*Connie* • I enjoy my work as a teacher and I particularly enjoy being in the position to opt to teach on a One to One basis. I have taught in many different scenarios. One to Many in University classes One to Too Many in Schools and finally One to One, which has been my position for the last 15 years. This is the one that has produced best results and happier, more contented and satisfied students. We still do not know how students LEARN, if we did then our job would be a lot easier. All we can do is embrace the different modes there are and hope as professionals that we continue to learn from our students. There is NO RIGHT way. Anybody who really wants to learn WILL. I accept that One to One is a privilege both for student and teacher, and feel privileged that I work in this way. I don’t accept the premise that "one to one is not advisable". I would never make a statement about teaching that could not be proved empirically. The Greeks were wrong about lots of things, but not about this!

Connie, once more, provides personal experience and reason to justify her disagreement and soften her message. Resorting to off-record strategy of hints, “We still do not know how students Learn”, and the other examples, not only does she mean to suggest that Ashish made a gaffe but she also tries to avoid aggravated disagreement. Like Sam, she capitalizes some of the words as a kind of intensifying device of voicing a contrary opinion. Connie repeatedly uses first person plural pronouns to hint at Ashish’s collective face threatening act. Having prefaced the disagreement by the aforementioned strategies, she sets a personal stance and expresses her opposite opinion directly and without the action of redressing in this statement, “I don’t accept the premise that “one-to-one” is not advisable.” Approaching the end of her message, she hedges her message through modality.

*Sam* • @Connie: But the Greeks were damn right to build the Parthenon right in the middle of modern Athens and to make it look so old and broken. That really gets the tourists going, doesn't it? Great job by the special effects people. :-)

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Sam brings the arguments to the end by changing the topic and asking a rhetorical question. Finally, he closes the discussion with a smiley to extend friendliness and delight.

As there was a dearth of examples of face-threatening act in this forum, the information provided in this study may not suffice. Accordingly, more research is required to delve into the depth of this cyberspace to uncover the subtleties of this newly-introduced world of communication. However, what came out of the analysis done above was sometimes non-native speakers did not soften their disagreement; in other words, they did not use hedging, or preface their aggravated disagreement and they voiced their opinion openly and without repressive action, which was taken as an intentional attack on the recipients’ face; therefore, it provoked harsh reactions and high affect in native speakers. As a result, they deployed different unmitigated disagreement tokens like profane or abusive language, disagreeing outright, ignoring, ridiculing, criticizing, dissociating from the other, being unconcerned, using an inappropriate identity marker, explicitly associating the other with a negative aspect to express their flaming. Faced with this deprecating response, the non-native speakers kept silent and quit the discussion.

5. Conclusion

As Lorenzo-Dus et al. (2011) noted, “CMC research is experiencing an academic shift away from what is nowadays as an excessive focus on the influence of the computer medium on communication to focus on user variation within that medium. This shift has been described in terms of a third wave of CMC research and seeks to demythologize the alleged homogeneity and highlight the social diversity of language use in communication” (p.2581). In spite of rejecting “technological determinism” in CMC, they believe that two medium features play an influential role therein, namely the lack of physical presence and its polylogal communicative affordances. The present study examined facework and disagreement strategies deployed by native and non-native speakers of English in Linkedin, an internet forum. The results of this study have shown that the NNS participants’ disagreements to posts in this forum are typically characterized by significant directness and underuse of mitigating strategies, which in some occasions led to face threatening act and were interpreted as impolite on the part of the NS interactants, although they may not have meant to attack the recipients’ face. Nevertheless, NNSs avoided aggravated strategies like cursing, reprimanding, ridiculing and so on while these strategies were dominantly deployed by NS deliberately as an intentional attack on the recipient’s face. It seems that non-native
speakers often struggle with language use in order to achieve their communicative purposes while demonstrating politeness as well. Having a limited or no contact with the target language culture or politeness conventions put them at a disadvantage. Non-native speakers usually resort to their own culture’s politeness conventions, which sometimes leads to communication breakdown.

Undoubtedly, the area of face-work and disagreements has still plenty of room for further research. This study has just scratched the surface of the complex and multifaceted influences on determining and enacting disagreements online. It is hoped that more interlanguage and cross-cultural studies will focus on examination of these forums to expand the inquiry scope of non-native speakers’ speech act production.

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Investigating the Perceptions of Iranian Undergraduate EFL Students toward the Role of Literature in Their Success in Learning English Language

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the perceptions of Iranian undergraduate English students toward the role of literature in their success in learning the English language as well as their favorite literary genre regarding their development in English language competence. The participants of the study were forty undergraduate English students. Three main instruments were used in the study in order to collect the required data, literature questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and reflective journals. The results of the study indicated participants’
positive perceptions toward literature’s efficacy, it also revealed that short story is seen as the most helpful literary genre in this regard, and poetry as the least helpful one. It was concluded that using proper literary works can motivate the students to a large extent and consequently lead to improvements in their language competence.

**Keywords:** Perception, Literature, Success in learning language, EFL

### 1. Introduction

Language learning and teaching have always been demanding tasks for both learners and teachers; as a result, the practitioners of this field have always tried to seek help from various sources in order to make this task easier. Literature is one of those sources which has been used extensively by different institutes and teachers. Throughout the history of language teaching there had been serious changes toward the belief in literature’s efficacy in the EFL/ESL context. For instance, at the era of Grammar Translation Method (GTM), literature was considered to be the main source or even the main aim of instruction; but later on with the emergence of structural linguistics and behavioral psychology, literature’s popularity diminished to a considerable extent and was replaced by repetitions and drills of prefabricated fractions of language. Obviously literature was considered to be useless in an EFL/ESL classroom; although this is not the case in today’s world of ELT.

Recent studies have revealed that literature can be very helpful in motivating and advancing students in the process of their language development. Researchers have argued that literature is beneficial in the language learning process as it offers valuable authentic material, stimulates personal development in readers and helps contribute to readers’ cultural as well as language enrichment (Yilmaz, 2012). Literature is considered as a promising tool for language learning purposes. Scholars in the field have proposed the following advantages for the use of literature in EFL/ESL classes:


So using literature properly in the EFL/ESL context had proved to be beneficial for the students in different ways and conducting researches on this regard is not only worth of the time and energy but also can affect the language learners all around the world. The focus of
this study and studies alike are on getting to know the different aspects of using literature as a tool in the EFL context in order to ease and facilitate the process of learning.

2. Literature Review

While a large body of research on students’ attitude towards general foreign language study has developed over the past two decades, few studies have focused on students’ attitude toward literature. As earlier studies have shown, eliciting information on students having different perceptions of literature does shed some light on our conception of students’ attitudes toward literature. To illustrate, in their study, Davis, Gorell, Kline and Hsieh (1992, p. 320) examined undergraduates’ attitudes toward the study of literature in a foreign language as well as factors affecting their opinions. As the participants’ responses to a questionnaire revealed, more than two-thirds of the respondents indicated positive attitudes toward foreign language study. In addition, two factors statistically treated as independent variables in the questionnaire, namely, the amount of leisure reading done in the foreign language, and the preferred learning styles, were found to be significantly related to students’ attitudes towards literature study.

Given the wide scope of literature containing different literary genres such as novel, short story, poetry and drama, selecting appropriate literary texts appealing to students’ tastes and needs is of particular interest. It is at this point that students’ perception of literature becomes a valuable resource as this, in effect, leads us to highlight the relationship between the type of literary text and linguistic and literary competence. To give an example, Akyel and Yalçın (1990) investigated EFL students’ perceptions of prose fiction (i.e. novel and short story), poetry and drama together with their resulting contributions in developing language competence and literary competence. They concluded that the students viewed ‘novel’ as “the most effective literary form for helping them develop their linguistic skills and cultural awareness”, and ‘drama’ “as the most effective in helping students improve oral expression and gain self-confidence in using English” (Akyel and Yalçın1990, p. 175). In contrast, ‘poetry’ and ‘short stories’ were thought to make the least contribution to students’ language skills development.

Carroli (2002) has carried out an investigation on both students’ and educators’ views of literature. He explains about his research as follows:“While debate on the role of literature in second-language curricula has been under way for a long time, there has been little attention
to students’ perspectives on this question. There is a need for qualitative studies, focused on learners, to explore the relationship between literature, language and students.”

Tseng (2010) has done a study in which he documented a teacher-researcher’s presentations of 24 literary works to a class of EFL senior high school students, and reported on those students’ perceptions of the text introduced and their attitudes towards literature in general. The results of his study showed that most of the students liked the presented novels most, followed by plays, short stories and then poems. Furthermore about half of the students liked to read contemporary literature rather than classic literature, and such works as movie novels, realistic fiction, fantasies and mysteries were the participants’ favorites.

In his study “Introducing Literature to an EFL Classroom: Teacher’s Instructional Methods and Students’ Attitudes toward the Study of Literature” Yilmaz (2012) reported on a teacher-researcher’s instructions of literary works to undergraduates of English. The main focus of his study was on the investigation of the undergraduates’ attitudes toward the study of literature in English, as well as factors affecting their opinions. He aimed to explore one possibility of how the teaching of literature can be made more accessible to EFL students, incorporating students’ literature preferences and attitudes along with the teacher’s own goals and selection of literary texts. The results of his study indicated that such a strategy for the teaching of literature which incorporates students’ literature preferences into teacher’s instructional practices will help students make considerable gains in both the literary and language competence.

The above surveys do shed some light on our knowledge of how students feel about studying English literature thereby providing valuable implications for contextualizing the factors surrounding the integration of literature into ELT classroom. Nevertheless, there is still a need to investigate EFL learners’ perceptions or attitudes towards studying literature. For one thing, the educational settings and students’ literary tastes as well as their individual pace of learning can to a large extent vary.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study were 40 undergraduate male and female EFL students at Islamic Azad University, Sanandaj, Iran. The study has been carried out in two classes, 20 students in each one. They were chosen based on the idea of purposeful sampling. All the participants had passed the university entrance exam of English major at the same time and
are homogenous in this regard. It is documented that all the students hadn’t taken any literature course during their university lifetime which is one of the reasons why they were chosen for this study; so this was the first time that the researcher had introduced literary works to them. It should be mentioned that participants were taking a formal university course while being examined; in other words it was a teacher-researcher study that was conducted throughout the students’ formal course; this affected the study in a positive way that students took the study seriously and cooperated completely with the researcher since they were supposed to pass that course anyway.

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 Literature Questionnaire
A literature questionnaire which is a modified version of the literature questionnaire developed by Davis, Gorell, Kline and Hsieh (1992) was used at the end of the semester to elicit the students’ opinions and attitudes toward both the value of literature and its efficacy in English language learning (see Appendix A). Since the questionnaire has been modified to meet the aims of the study, its validity had been checked by experts in the field and the value of the Cronbach Alpha observed (i.e. 0.81) proved its reliability.

3.2.2 Semi-structured Interview
Interviews used in this study consisted of nine questions and were constructed in order to triangulate the information gathered through the other two instruments. The interview questions were all picked from the literature questionnaire and have gone through the same validation process to those of the literature questionnaire, with the difference that the participants could give extra information or explanation if they wanted to and the researcher was open to new topics and issues in this regard. Each interview lasted about 15 minutes and was recorded and transcribed later for further analysis.

3.2.3 Reflective Journals
“Ever since the beginning of psychological research at the end of the nineteenth century, psychologists have been trying to find ways of obtaining information about unobservable mental processes such as thoughts, feelings and motives. One obvious source of information about these processes is the individual him/herself, and the various ways of eliciting self-reflections from respondents is usually referred to under the umbrella term ‘introspective method’. It subsumes several different approaches that all aim at helping the respondents to vocalize what is/ was going through their minds when making a judgment, solving a problem or performing a task (Dornyei, 2007)”.
In the present study, the researcher asked the participants to reflect on their experiences of the course they had with the researcher by writing a journal at the end of the course. They were asked to express their feelings and opinions about how positive or negative were their experiences with English literature regarding their development in English language knowledge.

3.3 Teaching Materials

Regarding each genre (i.e. short story, novel, drama and poetry) two literary works were chosen after consulting experts in the field of English literature, and taking into account the universal popularity of the literary works. Literary works used in this study are as follows: for short story, ‘The Most Dangerous Game’ by Richard Connell and ‘The Lottery’ by Shirley Jackson; for novel, ‘Animal Farm’ by George Orwell and ‘Ethan Frome’ by Edith Wharton; for drama, ‘The Glass Menagerie’ by Tennessee Williams and ‘Trifles’ by Susan Glaspell and finally for the poetry, ‘The Eagle’ by Alfred Lord Tennyson and ‘The Road Not Taken’ by Robert Frost were chosen.

For each of them, an analysis consisting of its plot summary, character analysis, themes and symbols were provided on hard copy beforehand and distributed among the students. Since time mattered in the context of the classroom, it was assumed that with having these pamphlets prepared for them, they would have more time and information at hand in order to engage more and be challenged by English literature. All the information used for the pamphlets was retrieved from valid online sources, and was reviewed and checked by two practitioners in the field of English literature.

3.4 Procedure

The study lasted for five months throughout the whole fall semester of 2012. Since the students were taking the reading course in this semester and it was a part of their formal syllabus, they participated quite better than a situation in which they were asked to take part in a study like this with no obligation on them. As it was mentioned earlier, participants of the study were forty undergraduate English students, with twenty students in each class. One session per week was held for each class throughout the whole semester. The students were given pamphlets for each literary work beforehand. The pamphlets included the plot summary (for poems the complete version were included), character analysis, themes, symbols and extra background information for each literary work. The participants were told to read the assigned pamphlet for each session in advance. Each session started with reading some biographical and background information about the author and the literary work itself. After that they were asked to retell the summary of the literary work in their own words.
When students were done telling the summary, the plot summaries were read to them. Following the plot summary the students read and discussed the analysis in the class. Throughout the whole session the students were free to discuss and talk about the events and other elements of that literary work. Based on the required demand for each literary work, one to three sessions had been assigned to each one of them. After the semester was finished, the researcher utilized the instruments of the study; namely, reflective journal, literature questionnaire and semi-structured interview to gather the required data.

4. Results and discussion
The researcher used the qualitative content analysis method to interpret the participants’ expressions elicited from two of the instruments of the study (i.e. reflective journals and interviews). This model of content analysis which has been used in this study is explained by Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) as follows: “It consists of the following sequences; a. coding for theme, b. looking for patterns, c. making interpretations and d. building theory.” The researcher has read the reflective journals and the interview transcriptions for several times and marked out the important themes and expressions that can help to develop the research questions, the unit of analyzing the texts was sentence. Afterwards, the important expressions and themes were categorized under seven groups coded A to G. It should be mentioned that the codes C, D, and E are not used in the analysis of the reflective journals since the students were not asked to specifically reflect on the most and least helpful genre. At that stage, they were just asked to wire a report generally on what they had experienced and later on with the help of the other two instruments their preferences for the most and least helpful literary genres were investigated. Each category is labeled with a phrase or sentence as it is presented below:

Code A: The amusing and motivating nature of literary works.
Code C: Short stories being more effective than other literary genres in learning English language.
Code D: Poems being less effective than other literary genres in learning English language.
Code E: Novel is one of the useful genres in learning English language.
Code F: Facing difficult vocabularies and structures.
Code G: Literature has no effect on learning the English language.
4.1 Results of Research Question One: What are the perceptions of Iranian undergraduate EFL students toward the efficacy of literature in their success in English language learning?

Based on the analysis of the reflective journals the researcher was able to interpret that the participants saw English language literature effective and helping in learning the language. They believed that although some precautions should be taken into account, such as proper choice of literary works and a systematic approach of integrating the literary works in their classes, literature helped them to develop their English knowledge to a considerable extent. The frequency of code B (see Table 1) confirms the participants’ positive perceptions towards the role of literature in learning English language.

In order to answer this research question using the questionnaires, the researcher first calculated the cut-off point of the questions so that the participants who scored lower than the cut-off point have positive perceptions toward the role of literature in English language learning and those who scored higher than it, have negative perceptions. In his article *Methods for Decision-Making in Survey Questionnaires Based on Likert Scale*, Barua (2013) elaborates on the necessity of calculating the cut-off point as follows: “It is necessary to set up a cut-off point on overall items considered to assess Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) levels in Likert scale-based questionnaires to decide whether the overall knowledge of the respondents is adequate or not, their overall attitude is positive or negative and their overall practice is satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Setting up a cut-off point is also necessary for opinion-based questionnaires on health care utilization, facilitating factors and barriers to arrive at a conclusion of whether people are utilizing or recommending a procedure adequately or not, but it is often difficult to determine it.” According to the cut-off point calculated, which is approximately 77, the participants who scored above this value have negative perceptions (group two); and those who scored below the above mentioned value, have positive perceptions and are presented as group one (see Table 2). According to the resulted data, 28 participants which form 70% of all the participants scored lower than the cut-off point value; in other words, it can be interpreted that they hold positive perceptions on the research question issue, and on the other hand, 12 participants that form 30% of all the participants scored above it and have negative perceptions toward the role of literature in ELT.

After analyzing the data gathered through the interviews, the researcher could verify the data received from the reflective journals and questionnaires. They once again expressed their positive perception on the efficacy of literature in helping them to learn the English language.
The frequency of Code B (i.e. finding literature helpful in learning English language) is specifically responsible for the first research question. According to the resulted frequency of code B (40%), it is interpretable that participants hold positive perception toward the role of English literature in helping them to learn the English language. This is the same result gained from the analysis of the reflective journals, in other words, the results of the interviews’ analysis validated the results gained from the analysis of the reflective journal (see Table 3).

4.2 Results of Research Question Two: What are the reasons of those who believe or don’t believe in the efficacy of literature in English language learning?

Based on the analysis done, most of the students showed positive perceptions toward the efficacy of literature in helping them learning the English language. The most important and eye catching reason they mentioned in their reports was the nature of literature. That is, literary works by nature are enjoyable to be read, the sense of suspense and motivation that the literary works create make the learner feel like he/she is doing a leisure activity not studying; this is what the researcher would like to call “the magic of literature”. The most important reason mentioned by the students for believing in literature’s efficacy in helping them to learn the English language was the attractive and amusing nature of literary works, the observed frequency of code A (31.7%) was the source of this interpretation (see Table 1).

The same reason found in the analysis of the reflective journals was found in the analysis of the semi-structured interviews; most of the participants believed that the nature of literature that makes it enjoyable and amusing is the main reason they found literature helping in learning the English language. The interviewees believed that the main difference they experienced in the course they had with the other ones was the pleasure and fun created by the literary works. Based on the analysis done, the researcher could interpret that although the students were troubled by the vocabularies and structures existing in the literary works, the motivation and joy resulted by this very nature of literature caused them to overcome that difficulty and learn the language and have fun at the same time. The frequency of code A (i.e. the amusing and motivating nature of literary works) confirms the above mentioned claim (see table 3).

4.3 Results of Research Question Three: Which literary genre do they find more effective?

The results gained from the analysis of the semi-structured interviews revealed that the participants believed that short story and novel are among the most helpful genres to be used for English language teaching and learning purposes, although short stories were more
favored due to their length. They believed that the short stories used in the course were most effective in helping them develop their English language competence. Poetry on the other hand was seen the least helpful genre, participants expressed negative attitudes and perceptions on using poems to learn and teach English language. Frequencies observed of codes C (13.3%), D (16.7%) and E (6.7%) made the researcher to conclude the above mentioned results (see Table 3).

To answer the third research question using the literature questionnaire, the researcher had devised 4 items (i.e. items 22, 23, 24 and 25) in the questionnaire specifically with the intention to measure the participants’ preferences in case of literary genre. Since the participants of the negative group didn’t believe in literature’s efficacy, only the answers the above mentioned 4 items of the positive group had been analyzed by the use of Friedman test (SPSS), the results of which are presented in table 4. The analysis presented in table 4 consists of the calculation of mean, standard deviation, maximum score and minimum score of the participants. According to these results, the most favored literary genre for students is short story with the mean rank of 3.27 and the least favored is the poetry with the mean rank of 1.86 (see table 5).

The participants’ perceptions were found mostly positive (70% of the participants) and helpful regarding using English literature in their success in learning English language. This result is consistent with the findings of the study done by Davis, Gorell, Kline and Hsieh (1992) in which they concluded that more than two-thirds of the respondents indicated positive attitudes toward foreign language study. Regarding the students’ favorite literary genre, the findings showed that short stories were the most helpful, and the poems, the least helpful genre in students’ books. In other words the data received and analyzed from the questionnaires revealed that students saw the short story as the best genre in teaching English language, although later on in the follow up interviews they added some information that short story and novel were among the top two favorable genres, what made the short story to take over the novel was the length issue. On the other hand poetry had been seen the least helpful genre in learning English language, they believed that the language of poems are to a considerable extent different from everyday language and may not be helping in the process of learning. These results are consistent with those of previous studies that show that prose fiction (i.e. novels and short stories) is perceived to be the most effective literary form while poem is regarded as the least effective literary form in helping them develop their literary and language skills (Akyel and Yalçın, 1990; Tseng, 2010; Yilmaz 2012).
The results of this study yield some pedagogical implications in terms of students’ perceptions toward the efficacy of literature in language learning and the best choices of literary genres to be used in EFL language classes. Literature is one of the most important sources used by university instructors and curriculum designers in language courses such as reading; it is surprising how most of the aspects of this integration (i.e. integrating literature and language teaching) have been investigated by different researchers while only a few of them have tackled the issue from students’ perspectives. The findings of this study which revealed the students’ positive perceptions and their better taste for short story among the literary genres can help the university instructors and course designers to approach the issue of mixing literature and their EFL classes through a much wider scope of view. By being aware of the students’ perceptions and preferences they would be able to conduct curricula that are both pedagogically acceptable and motivating for the students; this combination will definitely lead to better results in students’ performances.

Another noteworthy implication of this study would be the data showing the taste of the students to which literary genres and works they considered most and which ones least helpful. A teachers’ awareness of students’ perceptions of literature should be fundamental in selecting texts and pedagogical practices aimed at facilitating optimal interaction with literature and best learning outcomes. Other considerations such as cultural distance are also important, especially as the students are reading texts in a language other than their own. So the results of this study and studies alike would be of great help in this regard. Instructors can use their students’ perceptions to become aware of the cultural barriers existing in their EFL classes and choose the most helpful literary genre and work for the specific purpose they have in mind.

5. Conclusions

This study documents a teacher-researcher’s experiment of implementing an integration of literary works and a reading course, the students were introduced to eight literary works, which included two novels, two short stories, two plays and two poems. Based on the results of the data analysis, this study draws the following conclusions; first, literary works specially short stories and novels are seen as helpful and motivating tools to learn and teach English language by undergraduate students of English. Since literary works challenge the students with a story, characters and a sense of suspense, they feel like they are doing a leisure activity
not an assignment. Thus using literature as a tool to teach English language can to a large extent motivate the students and improve their performance and competence in the language.

The second important conclusion is the choice of literary works to be used for English language teaching purposes; not all the literary works are suitable for this aim. Prose fiction (i.e. short story and novel) are believed to be the most helpful genres in the students’ points of view. As a result, choosing literary works among these two genres would lead to better gains in case of language developments in universities. As Obediat (1997) states, literature helps students acquire a native-like competence in English, express their ideas in good English, learn the features of modern English, learn how the English linguistic system is used for communication, see how idiomatic expressions are used, speak clearly, precisely, and concisely, and become more proficient in English, as well as become creative, critical, and analytical learners. Custodio and Sutton (1998) explain that literature can open horizons of possibility, allowing students to question, interpret, connect, and explore.

In sum, literature provides students with an incomparably rich source of authentic material over a wide range of registers. If students can gain access to this material by developing literary competence, then they can effectively internalize the language at a high level (Elliot, 1990). Especially, for students with verbal / linguistic intelligence, the language teacher’s using literature in a foreign language class serves for creating a highly motivating, amusing and lively lesson. Literature is not only a tool for developing the written and oral skills of the students in the target language but also is a window opening into the culture of the target language, building up a cultural competence in students.

References


**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics for the Codes A, B, F and G of the Qualitative Content Analysis of the Reflective Journals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<td>31.7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>80.0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>98.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</table>
Table 2. The Descriptive Statistics of Group One (participants with positive perceptions) and Group Two (participants with negative perceptions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for the Codes A, B, C, D, E, F and G of the Qualitative Content Analysis of the Semi-structured Interviews

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<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>98.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. The Descriptive Statistics of the Positive Group’s Answers to Items 22, 23, 24 and 25 of the Literature Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.4286</td>
<td>.92009</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2.7857</td>
<td>.95674</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.7143</td>
<td>1.15011</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.5714</td>
<td>.92009</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. The Descriptive Statistics of Participants’ Preferences Regarding the Most and Least Helpful Literary Genre in Learning English Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literary genre</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short story</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novel</td>
<td>2/88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>2/00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Appendix A: Literature Questionnaire**

*Place a check (√) after the number or word that most closely agrees with your opinion.*

1. I find studying literature in my own language personally rewarding.
   1……….2……….3……….4……….5……….
   Strongly agree     Strongly disagree
2. I find studying literature in English personally rewarding.
   1……….2……….3……….4……….5……….
   Strongly agree     Strongly disagree
3. Write your own brief definition of literature.

4. I read "literature"—as the term is usually understood in university classes (i.e., such texts as poetry, short stories, novels, and biographies)—in my own language for enjoyment.
   1……….2……….3……….4……….5……….
   Often     Never
5. I read any type of literary text in English for pleasure.
   1……….2……….3……….4……….5……….
   Often     Never
6. I read unassigned Persian/Kurdish Literature for pleasure.
   1……….2……….3……….4……….5……….
   Often     Never
7. Literature is the highest form of writing in a culture.
   1……….2……….3……….4……….5……….
   Strongly agree     Strongly disagree
8. Have you taken classes in literature given in English since you began college?
   Yes………. No……….
9. I enjoy reading literature in my own language if I will be expressing my personal opinion about it.
   1……….2……….3……….4……….5……….
   Strongly agree     Strongly disagree
10. I enjoy reading literature in English language if I will be expressing my personal opinion about it in English.
    1……….2……….3……….4……….5……….
    Strongly agree     Strongly disagree
11. I enjoy reading literature in my own language if I will be looking for its underlying meaning.
    1……….2……….3……….4……….5……….
    Strongly agree     Strongly disagree
12. I enjoy reading literature in English language if I will be looking for its underlying meaning.
    1……….2……….3……….4……….5……….
    Strongly agree     Strongly disagree
13. I enjoy reading literature in my own language if I can choose what I want to read.
    1……….2……….3……….4……….5……….
    Strongly agree     Strongly disagree
14. I enjoy reading literature in English language if I can choose what I want to read.
    1……….2……….3……….4……….5……….
    Strongly agree     Strongly disagree
15. I like to read literary works.
    1……….2……….3……….4……….5……….
    Strongly agree     Strongly disagree
16. I like to read novels.
    1……….2……….3……….4……….5……….
    Strongly agree     Strongly disagree
17. I like to read short stories.
    1……….2……….3……….4……….5……….
    Strongly agree     Strongly disagree
18. I like to read plays.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I like to read poems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>I like to be introduced to more literary works.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>I find using literature effective in learning English language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>I find using novels more helpful than other literary genres in learning English language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>I find using short stories more helpful than other literary genres in learning English language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>I find using plays more helpful than other literary genres in learning English language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>I find using poems more helpful than other literary genres in learning English language.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>I find using literature helpful for adult EFL learners.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>I find using literature helpful for teenage EFL learners.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>I find using literature helpful for young (children) EFL learners.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>I find using literature helpful for advanced EFL learners.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>I find using literature helpful for intermediate EFL learners.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>I find using literature helpful for elementary EFL learners.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>I would use literature in my classes as an EFL English teacher.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Using literature in an EFL classroom can help to improve the reading skill of the students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>Using literature in an EFL classroom can help to improve the writing skill of the students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Using literature in an EFL classroom can help to improve the speaking skill of the students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
36. Using literature in an EFL classroom can help to improve the listening skill of the students.
1…………2…………3…………4…………5…………
Strongly agree Strongly disagree
37. Using literature in an EFL classroom can help to improve the vocabulary knowledge of the students.
1…………2…………3…………4…………5…………
Strongly agree Strongly disagree
38. Using literature in an EFL classroom can help to improve the grammatical knowledge of the students.
1…………2…………3…………4…………5…………
Strongly agree Strongly disagree
39. Using literature in an EFL classroom can help to improve the students’ cultural knowledge of the English speaking countries.
1…………2…………3…………4…………5…………
Strongly agree Strongly disagree
40. English language centers and institutes should use literature as a supplementary source in their courses.
1…………2…………3…………4…………5…………
Strongly agree Strongly disagree

Thanks for your time.  
Wish you the best.
Title
The Translation Construed by Students in Translator Training Programs in Iran

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Biodata
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Abstract
Translation like any concept in humanities is a controversial notion which defies definition. Examples include the concept of cultural translation introduced by HomiBhabha, the cultural translation known in British Social Anthropology, the term translation in casual American English, and the one referred to in source-oriented and target-oriented translation studies. This phenomenological descriptive study intends to shed light on the perception of translation and some of its related notions construed by the prospective Iranian translators. The used sample comprises of sixty-six Iranian MA and PhD students of English translation at three Iranian universities. The results demonstrate that the understanding of some dimensions of the notion of translation is apparently more straightforward than their internationally discussed definitions in the literature. The study mainly focuses to seek students’ interpretation in terms of ethics of translation, translation and manipulation, translator in the society, and translator-translation relation.

Keywords: Translation, Perception, Intervention, Ethics, Metaphor

1. Introduction
Translation is a social and purposeful activity in which the translators always deal with numerous challenges. Some of these challenges relate to ethical issues; that is, translators always have to observe a myriad of moral issues while translating, such as fidelity and faithfulness to the source text as well as the author of the original text due for translation which has been for a long time the commitments of the translator. The ethical rules, however, are fairly shady, and translators at often times are relatively perplexed of what to do.

It is assumed that the variety of translation theories and their implications for ethical and professional conduct of the translator of the time can have a confusing effect of the trainee and fledgling translators. This study aimed at investigating the perceptions and understanding of the graduate translation students at a number of Iranian universities in terms of how they construe a number of main translational concepts using a less direct way of data collection, namely, metaphor analysis.

The research for the current design, using this method of data collection was to reach as deep as possible beyond the doctored and forged superficial, pure theory-infected layers which clouds the actual perception of the students of the concepts. In the following, initially, a background of basic notions in modern translation studies is reviewed and then to address the research questions of the study, the data collected in the form of translational metaphors are discussed and analyzed.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Translators, Intervention, Ethics
Translation, like other disciplines deals with ethics. It means that translators should observe ethical points and moral boundaries while engaged in any type of translatorial activity. But the problem is that these ethical lines are not as lucid and clear as one expects, and translators are always confused of what to do. As ethics in translation is unclear, there are just few scholars who have addressed the problem.

Chesterman (1997a, 1997b) regards norms of translation in relation to professional ethics. He contends that translation calls for the creation of a truthful resemblance between the original and the translated text, preservation of trust between the parties involved in the translation and minimization of misunderstanding. Chesterman (2001) also proposes that translators and interpreters need to be required to take to a Hieronymic oath.

Pym has addressed numerous ethical aspects of translation (1992, 2002, 2004, 2010). He believes that ethics is concerned mainly with what individuals do in concrete
situations, and the proposed moralities are but abstract principles which are secondary in such situations. To him, as translation is cross-cultural transaction, the translator should attempt to achieve mutual benefit and trust of the two parties involved in the cooperation.

In terms of ethics of translation on a larger scale, Venuti (2008) advocates Berman (1992) and suggests ‘minoritizing’ or ‘foreignizing’ translation. Spivak (2004, 2005) also encourages the translator to go beyond transferring content and to submit themselves to the original and use a literal (English) translation language.

According to Mossop (1983), the translator can be regarded as re-enunciator. In this view, the translator does not just redirect pre-existing messages; they re-voice the new text, intervene, and also change (Munday, 2012). From different moral perspective, Kingscott (1990, p. 84, cited in Pym, 2010) contends that the translator in terms of professional ethics resemble a legal counselor. The translator or interpreter, when he or she is translating and interpreting, is in the same position as an advocate. An advocate, during the course of his career, may occasionally appear on behalf of an unfortunate victim, but it is more than likely that his client will be a double-dyed villain who would make him shudder with disgust if he had not learnt to take an attitude of professional detachment. Our clients rely on us to put their case, in the foreign language, as they would like to see it put, not as we would like to see it put.

To Ladmiral (1979, p.15, cited in Pym, 2010) the moral responsibility of the translator and as a result a translation is to serve a particular purpose; “the purpose of a translation is to enable us to go without reading the original text.” Venuti (2008) ethically rejects fluency in the translated text because it erases the otherness of the source text. Likewise, the strategy of naturalness or fluency in the translation language makes the translator invisible.

The summary of the code of ethics for the translator to observe according to the Association des Traducteurs Litteraires des France (ATLF), 1988 are the following (Pym, 2010, pp. 167-168):

A translator:

1. Must have adequate linguistic competence.
2. Must have knowledge of the pertinent subject matter.
3. Must refuse to translate from a TT unless with the consent of the author.
4. May only alter a text with the author’s consent.
5. Have the right to accept or refuse a translation.
6. May demand the documents necessary for the translation.
7. Must respect professional secrets.
8. Must translate personally and ensure that their name appears on TT.
9. In the case of co-translation, the names of all the translators must appear on TT.
10. Must demand the same conditions if co-translating.
11. Must refuse work detrimental to a fellow translator.
12. Must not accept work conditions inferior to those established by the profession.

Pym (2010) criticizes that despite the clear priority given to the author over the translator no guarantee of equivalence is even conceivable. Another code of ethics has been provided by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd. (NAATI). According to this code of ethics, translators or interpreters should:

1. Respect their clients’ right to privacy and confidentiality.
2. Disclose any real or perceived conflicts of interest.
3. Decline to undertake work beyond their competence or accreditation levels.
4. Relay information accurately and impartially between parties.
5. Maintain professional detachment and refrain from inappropriate self-promotion.
6. Guard against misuse of inside information for personal gain.

2.2 Translation Dichotomies

A myriad of dichotomies of translation approaches and strategies have been proposed in the past few decades. To Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), there are two methods of translation: direct and oblique translation, which closely resemble the infamous literal versus free translation, respectively. Newmark (1981) suggests semantic and communicative translation. Nida’s formal and dynamic translations are another of the widely recognized dichotomies (Nida & Taber, 1969). House (1997) discusses overt and covert translation. Similarly, Nord (2005a) classifies documentary versus instrumental translation. Following Schleiermacher’s (2004) alienating and naturalizing methods of translation, Venuti (2008) suggests foreignization and domestication translation methods. The methods among numerous others lie within the usual two extremes of source-orientedness and target-orientedness, and the proposing scholars have usually favored one side. For example, Schleiermacher’s preferred strategy was alienating. Toury (1995) is the forerunner of the scholars with a target-oriented position. Dryden (1992 cited in Munday, 2012) also belittled the word for word translation which he called metaphor.

Lefevere (1992) regards translation as rewriting, while the translator can even improve the source text. On the other hand, others found it imperative for the translator to be loyal to the source text, like Kelly (1979) who advocates fidelity as being faithful to the source text meaning. Cicero and also Horace emphasized producing an aesthetically pleasing and creative text in the target language and as such they disapproved of the word for word translation, since it would not result in a beautifully designed text (Munday, 2012). Likewise,
Jerome assimilates transferring the ST meaning to the TT, to a prisoner who is marched into the TL by its conqueror (Munday, 2012).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The present study is based on a cross-sectional, phenomenological design (Lunenburg & Irby, 2007). This descriptive study draws on metaphor analysis to tap into the cognition of the participants in a less hindered and filtered way. Metaphor analysis as a method of research in psychology and applied linguistics has been used for a long time. Yet the advantages of this method seem not to have been benefited in translation research. Metaphors are a considerable way of making sense of the world by constructing analogies and making connections between older ideas. Metaphors are also an important way of using language to explain conceptual and abstract ideas or get feelings across (Cameron & Maslen, 2010). As metaphors entail the projection of the metaphor source domain onto the metaphor target domain (Moser, 2000), they facilitate the understanding of a more complicated subject in terms of a simpler one. Metaphors can convert the complex structure of qualitative research findings to more comprehensible patterns (Schmitt, 2005). “The multifaceted properties of metaphors allow for the study of micro-interactions between cognition and culture in open and qualitative research designs” (Moser, 2000, p. 87).

3.2 Participants

Using purposive sampling, over 80 graduate English translation students were invited to participate in the study to complete a 14-item questionnaire, and in the end 66 completed questionnaires were obtained. The participants, as can be seen in table 1, were graduate students in translation studies (English) at Imam Reza University, ShahidBahonar University of Kerman, and Ferdowsi University of Mashhad (Main and International Campus). The Iranian male and mostly female participants were native of Persian language and in their early or mid-twenties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ShahidBahonar University of Kerman</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imam Reza University</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, International Campus</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Main Campus</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Main Campus</td>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Instrument

The study used a 14-item questionnaire which was originally designed and applied for data collection. Each item comprised of an incomplete statement which indicates to a translational concept or relation. The statements are followed by a series of five options the first four of which could be chosen by participants as a metaphor which closely or remotely shares a point of similarity with the concept or relation stated in the item’s statement. The fifth option is none, in order to give the liberty to the participants not to have to choose any of the first four options. The fifth option served as disclaimer that the participants did find a commonality between the translational concepts in the statements and the selected metaphors and they did have the possibility to choose none.

After the researchers selected several key translation-related concepts and relations from the literature and their intuitions, four possible metaphors for each were chosen and the items and their corresponding options were subjected to the comments and revisions of a number of scholars in translation and intercultural studies. The comments and suggestions were reviewed and several revisions and rewritings were applied. In a pilot stage, a number of potential participants were asked to review the items of the questionnaire and after choosing the most appropriate answer in their opinion, justify their answers and write a brief commentary about the item of their choice as well as the other options. The purpose of this stage was to make sure that the items and the options are readable, reasonable, and comprehensible to the target population of the study. The recent stages resulted in further revision of some of the options.

3.4 Procedures

After the construction of the initial version of the questionnaire, it was subjected to the comments and revisions of a number of potential participants and translation studies scholars to establish face and content validly. Later, a cluster of PhD students and four clusters of MA students in translation studies from three universities in Iran were selected and invited to complete final revised version of the questionnaire. After explaining the task and giving an example other than the items of the instrument, they were given as much time as they needed. By the end of data collection procedure, sixty-six completed questionnaires were achieved and used for analysis. For the ease of discussion, the percentages were rounded up, when necessary. The frequency and percentage of the answers to the questionnaire items were calculated and reported. To address the research question, the highest and the lowest rated answers to each question was marked. To establish response validity of the answers given qualitatively (Dörnyei, 2007), a number of participants were invited for an interview in terms
of their understating of the questionnaire items and selected answers. Eventually, the implications of the answers of the participants were discussed in the light of the earlier seminal theoretical insights from the translation research literature.

4. Presentation and Analysis of the Data

In the following, the results of the study are presented and discussed. Initially, the items are thematically divided into four categories under which each item and the percentage of the ratings for the options are reported. Next, the implications of the participants’ most and least frequent responses are discussed in consideration of the seminal translation theories in the literature.

4.1 Translator to Translation

Q1- The relation of the translator to the translation is like that of …. a) A doctor to a patient (12%), b) An employer to an employee (3%), c) An architect to a building (46%) d) A photographer to a photo (30%), e) None (9%)

As for the first item, over 46% of the students consider the relation of the translator to the translation like that of an architect to a building. In follow up interviews to establish response validity, the participants’ understanding of an architect’s job and the point of similarity between the architect and the translator was asked. The participants in different ways indicated to the fact that an architect designs a building based on an intended function and purpose and considers aesthetics and practically in their design to fit the location of the building, and so does a translator. A translator also designs the translated text based on a function and gives it a proper form to be acceptably natural sounding, functional, and pleasing. This view of the participants to translation reminds of the opinions of scholars like Cicero and Horace who would emphasize on producing an aesthetically pleasing and creative text in the target language (Munday, 2012), as well as the instructions of functional translation theorists like Nord (2005b) who stressed on the functionality of the translated text based on a pre-determined goal and purpose sought in the target culture.

On the other hand, just 3% of these students believe that the relation of the translator to the translation is like that of an employer to an employee. In this kind of relationship, the employer is dominant over the employee and has the possibility to exert power and interventions, indicating that regarding translation, the translator possesses the ability of intervening and manipulating to fairly extended scope. It brings the Jerome’s military image—the original text, a prisoner being marched into the TL by its conqueror—explaining
the concept of transferring the ST meaning to the TT, and says it is like (Robinson 1997, p. 26, cited in Munday, 2012). Thus, as the very low percentage suggests, this is not a prevalent understanding among the participants.

Q5- The relation of the translator to the translation is like that of …. a) An author to their book (40%), b) A father to his child (21%), c) God to the Holy Book (2%), d) A language editor to their assigned book (15%), e) None (22%)

As for the fifth item, over 40% of the participants consider the relation of the translator to the translation like that of an author to their own original book. It can be understood that the participants consider original authority for the translator in terms of the text they have at hand. To them, like what Lefevere (1992) regarded, translation is creative improvement and re-writing to promote the work to the highest deserving level. To them translator is as rightful and caring for the text as the original author of the work. Just around 2% of the participants consider the relation of the translator to the translation like that of God to the Holy Book. It seems that few consider an absolute yet learned power for the translator as God has on the Holy Book which is His own word. Yet, the idea is shared with too few of the participants.

Q6- The relation of the translator to the translation is like that of …. a) A wolf to a sheep (2%), b) A dog to a cat (2%), c) A cat to a rat (17%), d) A shepherd dog to a sheep (43%), e) None (36%)

As for the sixth item, over 43% of the students consider the relation of the translator to the translation like that of a shepherd dog to a sheep. As a shepherd dog can and takes care of the sheep, a translator by directing and redirecting the message takes care of it and makes sure that it is not lost. This choice of nearly half of the participants represent their perspectives to translator-translation relation in which the translator may and will change paths in the course of translation, but they aim at reaching the proper destination. Nearly 2% of the answers consider the relation of the translator to the translation like that of a wolf to a sheep, indicating to possible destructive force of the translator over the translation.

Q10- The relation of the translator to the translation is like that of a … to a film. Critic (14%), b) Actor (20%), c) Audience (9%), d) Director (54%), e) None (3%)

As for the tenth item, 54% of the participants considered the relation of the translator to the translation like that of a director to a film. It seems that to over half of the participants, as a director controls every aspects of the course of film production; the translator also handles different dimensions of the process of translation production. The director intervenes in the script and alters it according to one’s own vision of the work, and so does the
translator. The translator intervenes in the translation to produce a fluent target text. Venuti (2008) refers to the invisibility of the translator as the tendency of the translators to intervene and change in the text to translate fluently and in order to produce the most reader-friendly target text. In some ways, such modifications in the translation resemble what House (1997) advocates, as she determines two types of approaches to translation: overt versus covert translation. Covert translation is a translation that is fluent and has the status of the original text in the target culture—like a well-received movie by the public audience, thanks to the director in particular. Nearly 3% of the participants cannot find a relevant metaphor among the options.

Q11- The relation of the translator to the source text is like that of …. a) Scissors to a piece of paper (6%), b) An eraser to a piece of writing (10%) c) A stone to a piece of glass (7%), d) A camera to a picture (60%), e) none (17%)

As for the eleventh item, around 60% of these students consider the relation of the translator to the source text like that of a camera to a picture. It seems most of the participants see that a translator transfers every aspects of the ST like a camera to the picture, yet the angle and framing chosen to accommodate the picture can differ from one photographer to another. So still using the same camera and the same scene, different pictures may be resulted. Therefore, as the picture is a document of the source scene, a translation is a document of the source message and yet it is one of the several possible ones. This reminds us of the documentary translation of Nord (2005a) which “serves as a document of a source culture communication between the author and the ST recipient” (p. 80). Just 6% of these participants consider the relation of the translator to the ST like that of a pair of scissors to the paper. They seem to think that as the scissors cuts out a desired piece out of a piece of paper, the translator also takes a preferred portion of the ST. Yet, as the ratings show, this is not a prevalent understanding among the sample of the students.

4.2 Ethics in Translation

Q2- Ethics in translation is more like …. a) Driving regulations (28%), b) Divine revelations (3%), c) Laws of Physics (6%), d) Friends’ promises (44%), e) None (19%)

As for the second item, around 44% of the students consider ethics in translation like friends’ promises. This understanding of the ethics in translation shows the significance of translational ethics as a sacred bond between true friends yet possible to bend at certain dilemmas as it happened between friends. It is implied that ethics in translation is not as critical as divine revelations, nor unexceptional as laws of physics. It also seems to indicate that ethical issues in translation are not fixed and differ in various circumstances. As in
friendship relations people determine the rules and these rules are somehow changeable, ethical issues in translation are variable and assigned by translators themselves. Similarly the ethical codes specified by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd. (NAATI) are not indicated as hard-and-fast musts, and NAATI does not prescribe the codes of ethics for the profession. The organization merely wishes that all translators are conscious of these points and consider them (Pym. 2010). Nearly 3% of the participants surprisingly consider ethics in translation as important as divine revelation and holy rules. In their opinions, the ethical issues must not be violated and the translator must observe them throughout their translatorial profession. Yet, as unlikely as this interpretation of translation ethics seems, it is not a prevalent thought among the participants.

Q3- The translator who observes the ethical issues is more like … a) A sportsman (12%), b) A loyal friend (30%), c) A fair salesperson (22%), d) A wise man (27%), e) None (9%)

As for the third item, 30% of the participants view the ethical translator as a loyal friend. They believe that as a good friend is loyal to their friend, the translator also should be loyal to the original author and the source text. To the participants, friendship is not legally binding, yet a friend chooses to think of the best interest of one’s friend; in the same way, even though a translator has the possibility of exercising interventions and changes, they are not after that and they try to stay as close to the source text meaning as possible. This view recalls the ideas of Kelly (1979) on the concept of fidelity as being faithful to the source text meaning among other scholars with similar ST equivalence-based beliefs (e.g., Newmark, 1981; Nida & Taber, 1969). However, there has been a close distribution of the answer among all the options, and close ratings can be noticed for other options, like translator as a wise man or a fair sales person.

Q7- The importance of ethical issues in translation is like that of …. a) Medicine for a patient (32%), b) A pen for a writer (33%), c) A shovel for a construction worker (3%), d) A ball for a soccer player (8%), e) None (24%)

As for the seventh item, over 33% of the students consider the importance of ethical issues in translation like the importance of a pen for a writer. They seem to assume that as a pen is a prerequisite for a writer, ethical considerations are also necessary for the translator. They think of ethics as the basic tool for proper creation. On the other hand, almost 3% of the students consider the importance of ethical issues in translation like that of a shovel for a worker, without which worker cannot work. The highest and lowest rated metaphorical equivalents seem to share a lot, yet the two differ in term of creativity of the tools in question,
and the choice of the participants show their recognition of the element of creativity and ingenuity in translation.

4.3 Manipulation in Translation

Q4- Manipulation in translation is like …. a) Theft (12%), b) Giving a hard sell (30%), c) Selling defective goods (15%), d) Redecoration (34%), e) None (9%)

As for the fourth item, 34% of the participants consider manipulation in translation simply like redecoration. In this opinion, manipulation of the ST is not a destructive act. As a decorator adds, removes, and moves around to embellish a scene and improve the beauty, the translator also promotes the ST message and re-presents it in a better and more intriguing format. This idea reminds one of the notion advocated by Mossop (1983) that the translator is re-enunciator. In this view, translators do not just redirect pre-existing messages, but they give new voice to the new text, intervene, and change it, as they should, to promote. The view also reminds us of the opinions of scholars like Cicero and Horace who would emphasize on producing an aesthetically pleasing and creative text in the target language (Munday, 2012). Around 9% of the students agree with none of the options, and they do not consider manipulation of the ST neither as theft, giving a hard sell, selling defective goods, nor redecoration. Again, the answers to this item are also widely dispersed, and no single view is particularly held by the majority.

Q8- Changing the ST meaning by the translator is like what a … does. a) Hair stylist (33%), b) Cook (14%), c) Forger (29%), d) Painter (21%), e) None (3%)

As for the eighth item, about 33% of these students consider changing of the ST message by the translator like the work of a hair stylist. As a hair stylist improves the appearance of an individual, the translator also adorns and improves the original text by certain modifications. This view is to some extend reminiscent of the view of Kingscott (1990, cited in Pym, 2010) who considers the translator as an advocate who is employed to improve a given text on behalf of the victim/client. Approximately, 3% of the students agree with none of the available options, and they do not consider manipulation of the ST as the work of a hair stylist, a cook, a forger, or a painter.

Q12- Free translation is more like …. a) Photoshopping (30%), b) Flying (48%), c) Captivity (0%), d) Walking (16%), e) None (6%)

As for the twelfth item, around 48% of sample seems to believe that free translation is more like flying in that the translator does not limit themselves to the source text and expands and extends to any sides they see fit in a limitless way.
Q13- Literal translation is more like looking …. a) In the mirror (42%), b) At water (21%), c) At a piece of glass (6%), d) At a wall (19%), e) none (12%)

As for the thirteenth item, around 42% of these students believe that literal translation is more like looking in the mirror. It seems that as the mirror shows every detail without any change, this type of translation also attempts to reflect every detail of the ST without any change, addition, or deletion, just like what Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) would refer to as direct translation. Just about 6% of these students consider the literal translation as looking in a piece of glass. It seems that they think as a piece of glass shows a vague image; this type of translation also shows a vague and unclear image of the ST.

4.4 Translator and Society

Q9- The responsibility of the translator to the society is like that of a …. a)President to the society (8%), b) Guard to the border (30%), c) Teacher to a class (42%), d) Policeman to the public (6%), e) None (14%)

As for the ninth item, over 42% of the students believe that the responsibility of a translator to the society is like that of a teacher to a class. It is understood by nearly half of the participants that a translator, like a teacher who is responsible for the development and upbringing of the students, is responsible for the development of a given message in text. The implication of the response is partly reminiscent of Toury’s (1995) law of interference and his consideration that the interference from the ST to the TT is a kind of default. Just 6% of these participants consider the responsibility of a translator to the society like that of a policeman to the people. It is implied that as a policeman defends the people from harms, a translator also has the responsibility of defying harm to the message in translation, but that is not as can be seen a prevalent thought.

14- The relation of the translation to the social norms is like that of …. a)Nuts and bolts (55%), b) Thread and needle (9%), c) Wrench and screwdriver (22%), d) Nail and hammer (11%), e) None (3%)

As for the fourteenth item, around 55% of the responses choose the metaphor of nuts and bolts for the relation of translation and norms. Toury (1995) defines translation norms, as “the general values or ideas shared by a community—asto what is right or wrong, adequate or inadequate—intoperformance instructions appropriate for and applicable to particular situations” (p. 55). In the follow-up interviews for the purpose of establishing response validity, the representing participants generally in different ways indicated that if the bolt fits the grooves of the nut, the two will secure tightly. Similarly, if a translator follows the
product or expectancy norms (Chesterman, 1997a), the social expectations, the outcome will result in success.

5. Conclusion
The paper has used metaphor analysis as the method of data collection, which has an advantage over the more direct ways of data collection in terms of obtaining data which are less filtered and self-censored. This advantage assumes more significance as self-report questionnaires are most suited for the Western society which self-expression and individualistic opinions are more easily expressed and declared. However, the Iranian public is more reserved and conservative and indirect ways of expressing opinion are thought to work better.

The present qualitative study uses a fairly small sample of sixty-six participants of graduate translation students in Iranian universities, prospective English translators and future intercultural mediators. It is of critical value to realize their understanding of the concept of translation, as a social and cultural activity as well as their realization of the main related notions like ethics and interventions. The results indicated that the ethics of intervention, despite their fuzzy and controversial nature, in translation is fairly straight-forward and figured out for the sample of the students, as they consider it allowed and ethically acceptable as long as the manipulation is for a justified reason, and the intervention aims to improve the language of the target text.

The translation for the participants is understood as a social activity which is based on rules that are common social agreements rather than fixed principles and can be bent if justified in terms of the intended function. The translator is construed as a social actor which is expected to enlighten and guide and is most successful if conform to the norms and implied expectations of the society. Translation is also understood as a creative activity which should aim at improving the original text aesthetically and functionally.

Considering the qualitative nature of the research and as such the small non-random sample employed, the study cannot and does not intend to generalize the findings. However, as any qualitative description, the study provided insights which can shed light on the current interpretation of the future Iranian translators and the way they construe the relevant notions like morality and intervention.

References

Appendix
Translation Metaphors Questionnaire

1- The relation of the translator to the translation is like that of ….
a) A doctor to a patient 
b) An employer to an employee 
c) An architect to a building 
d) A photographer to a photo 
e) None

8- Changing the ST meaning by the translator is like what a … does.
a) Hair stylist 
b) Cook 
c) Forger 
d) Painter 
e) None

2- Ethics in translation is more like ….
a) Driving regulations 
b) Divine revelations 
c) Laws of Physics 
d) Friends’ promises 
e) None

9- The responsibility of the translator to the society is like that of a ….
a) President to the society 
b) Guard to the border 
c) Teacher to a class 
d) Policeman to the public 
e) None
3- The translator who observes the ethical issues is more like …
   a) A sportsman
   b) A loyal friend
   c) A fair salesperson
   d) A wise man
   e) None

10- The relation of the translator to the translation is like that of a … to the film.
   a) Critic
   b) Actor
   c) Audience
   d) Director
   e) None

4- Manipulation in translation is like …
   a) Theft
   b) Giving a hard sell
   c) Selling defective goods
   d) Redecoration
   e) None

11- The relation of the translator to the source text is like that of …. 
   a) Scissors to a piece of paper
   b) An eraser to a piece of writing
   c) A stone to a piece of glass
   d) A camera to a picture
   e) None

5- The relation of the translator to the translation is like that of …. 
   a) An author to their book
   b) A father to his child
   c) God to the Holy Book
   d) A language editor to their assigned book
   e) None

12- Free translation is more like …
   a) Photoshopping
   b) Flying
   c) Captivity
   d) Walking
   e) None

6- The relation of the translator to the translation is like that of …. 
   a) A wolf to a sheep
   b) A dog to a cat
   c) A cat to a rat
   d) A shepherd dog to a sheep
   e) None

13- Literal translation is more like looking …. 
   a) In the mirror
   b) At water
   c) At a piece of glass
   d) At a wall
   e) None

7- The importance of ethical issues in translation is like that of …. 
   a) Medicine for a patient
   b) A pen for a writer
   c) A shovel for a construction worker
   d) A ball for a soccer player
   e) None

14- The relation of the translation to the social norms is like that of …. 
   a) Nuts and bolts
   b) Thread and needle
   c) Wrench and screwdriver
   d) Nail and hammer
   e) None
Title

The Relationship between Socioeconomic Status and Language Learning Strategies of Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract

This study was an investigation on language learning strategies from an aspect remaining somehow intact in Iranian society. It investigated the relationship between socioeconomic status and language learning strategies of Iranian EFL learners. The participants of the study consisted of 194 freshmen majoring in English Translation, English Literature and Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at Islamic Azad University - South Tehran Branch. Two instruments, the 50-item Strategy Inventory for Language Learning and the standard questionnaire of determining the socioeconomic status of students residing in Tehran, were administered. A MANOVA was conducted to reveal the results. The results showed that there is a relationship between socioeconomic status and language learning strategies of language learners.

Keywords: Language Learning Strategies (LLS), Socioeconomic Status (SES).

1. Introduction
Since 1975 when Rubin published her article on “what the good language learner can teach us”, a plethora of studies have been done on language learning strategies. It is believed that employing appropriate language learning strategies accelerates language learning process and encourages learners in the process of language learning. Oxford (1990) asserts “language strategies are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning” (P. 2). From this statement we can find that language learning strategies lead to self-direction and learner autonomy. Self-direction is particularly important when there is no teacher around to guide the learner; and it is necessary for the active development of ability in a new language (Oxford, 1990).

Definitely, all learners use some learning strategies without being aware of exercising them. Meanwhile, there are some factors such as; age, intelligence, learning style, motivation, socioeconomic status etc. influencing the employment of a particular language learning strategy by a particular language learner. Among these many factors, socioeconomic status is the one which has somehow remained intact. Socioeconomic status refers to the social standing, class, power and control of an individual or group. Actually it is the combination of education, income and occupation of a person which defines his or her socioeconomic status. (American Psychological Association [APA], 2012)

The present study is an investigation of the relationship between socioeconomic status and language learning strategies of Iranian EFL Learners.

2. Review of the Related Literature
2.1 Language Learning Strategies
Oxford (1990) defines learning strategies as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferrable to new situations” (p. 8). She categorizes language learning strategies into two classes; direct and indirect strategies. Again she divides direct and indirect strategies into other sub-categories. Direct strategies consist of memory, cognitive and compensation strategies. Indirect strategies comprise metacognitive, affective and social strategies (1990). As we can observe in this category, language learning strategies are not just restricted to cognitive functions. They also include metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

In her view, memory strategies (sometime called ‘mnemonics’) are essential for remembering and retrieving new information (1990, p. 38). Cognitive strategies help us understand and produce the language. Their unifying function is manipulation or

Generally, indirect strategies refer to general management of learning. In this classification, metacognitive strategies are responsible for coordinating the learning process. Oxford (1990) defines the word ‘Metacognitive’ as beyond, beside, or with the cognitive (p. 136). Oxford (2003) enumerates some of the metacognitive strategies as; identifying one’s own learning style preferences and needs, planning for an L2 task, gathering and organizing materials, arranging a study space and a schedule, monitoring mistakes, and evaluating task success, and evaluating the success of any type of learning strategy. Affective strategies help us control our emotions, motivations and attitudes. She divides affective strategies into three main sets; (a) lowering our anxiety, (b) encouraging ourselves and (c) taking our emotional temperature. Finally, Social strategies help learners learn through interaction with others. (Oxford, 1990).

Douglas Brown (2007) refers to strategies as “specific methods of approaching a problem or task, modes of operation for achieving a particular end, planned design for controlling and manipulating certain information” (p.119). He also asserts that strategies vary from moment to moment or from one situation to another or even from one culture to another. Even he believes that strategies vary within an individual.

Bialystok (1978, as cited in O’Malley et al., 1985, p. 559) defines learning strategies as “optional means for exploiting available information to improve competence in a second language”. She (1975, as cited in O’Malley and Chamot, 1990, p.10) recognized four categories in her model of second language learning consisting of inferencing, monitoring, formal practicing, and functional practicing.

Rubin (1975, as cited in Carol Griffiths, 2004, p. 2) says learning strategies are “the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge”. She (1981, as cited in O’Malley & Chamot, 1990) divides language learning strategies into two broad categories; Strategies that directly contribute to learning and strategies that indirectly contribute to learning. She subdivides direct strategies into classification/verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive reasoning, deductive reasoning, and practice. Indirect strategies in her classification consist of creating practice opportunities and using production tricks such as communication strategies.

Cohen (1996) defines language learning strategies as “the steps or actions selected by learners either to improve the learning of a second language, the use of it, or both” (p.2).
As it can be understood from above definitions and classifications and according to Oxford and Cohen (1992), a language learning strategy classified under a specific category by an expert may be classified under another category by another expert. This disagreement results from different views on language learning strategies, obtaining different research methodologies and consequently having different research goals.

2.2 Socioeconomic Status and Education

The significant influence of socioeconomic status of learners on their academic achievements is examined a lot. O’Conner (2009 as cited in Ramburuth & Härtel, 2010, p. 154) says that “sociological literature is unequivocal about the significance of socioeconomic status in affecting individuals’ education and social outcomes”. According to Khan (2008), National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) classifies students into high, middle, and low SES based on their family income, education, and occupation. Moreover, location of residence, membership in civic or social organizations, and certain amenities in the home are also accounted in determining the SES by this entity. Sirin (2005) notes that the three indicators of SES for children and adolescents are parental income, parental education and parental occupation. Obviously, parental income reflects the potential for social and economic resources available to the children/learners. Parental education is defined as the most stable aspects of SES because it is usually established at an early age and remains the same over time. The third indicator, occupation, is determined on the basis of the education and income required to have a particular occupation. (Sirin, 2005)

Willingham (2012) believes that household wealth correlates with IQ and school achievements. He asserts that wealth provides access to opportunities and he refers to three capitals providing opportunities for learners as; financial capital, human capital, and social capital. Financial capital refers to wealth which can provide opportunities to access educational resources. Human capital refers to knowledge of individuals based on their education and experiences. It is proved that educated parents with a good deal of human capital can impart their knowledge to their children. Social capital refers to useful connections in social networks. Parents with these kinds of connections (e.g., having educated wealthy and sociable friends) can provide helpful internships for their children (Willingham, 2012). Yang and Gustafsson (2004, as cited in Khan, 2008) also mention that SES influences learners’ intellectual development and academic achievements besides influencing their quality of life and emotional well-being.
3. Methodology

3.1 Participants
The participants of the study were 194 freshmen A.A. or B.A students majoring in TEFL, English Translation or English Literature at south branch of Azad University in Tehran. Their mother tongue was Persian and they resided in Tehran.

3.2 Instruments

3.2.1 General Information
Socioeconomic Status questionnaire commences with some demographic and background information such as the age, gender, number of family members (as it is needed to calculate the living space available for each member of the family in section IV and allocate the related score), their present studying term and the reason they study English.

3.2.2 Socioeconomic Status Questionnaire
The socioeconomic status questionnaire designed by Mr. Garmaroudi and Mr. Moradi (1389) to measure the socioeconomic status of population living in Tehran begins from section II and it consists of four sections. Section II and III elicit the educational attainment of father and mother or head of family and his wife respectively. Section IV asks about the residential neighbourhood of participants, the area of their house and the price of land per square meter in their neighbourhood. Finally, the last section of this questionnaire relates to available facilities and spare time.

Note that determining the socioeconomic standing is done by allocating a predefined score to each answer and it should be mentioned that the participants were not aware of the scores and the scores were given after collecting the questionnaires.

3.2.3. Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)
The employed version of SILL in this study is a kind of self-report instrument designed by Oxford (1990). It is especially employed for students of English as a second or foreign language.

In the present study, the Persian translation of this instrument was used. In order to ensure the reliability of the inventory after the data collection, it was administered to 30 subjects randomly selected from among the ones who had participated in the study. The acquired internal reliability was 0.85 which indicates a high reliability.

3.2.4 Procedure
After obtaining the professors’ permission, the questionnaires were administered either at the beginning or at the end of the classes. Prior to the distribution of the questionnaires, the
students were provided with information about the study and a brief explanation was given about how to answer the items and about their contributions to answering all the items carefully and honestly. It roughly took them 35 minutes to fill out the questionnaire.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The participants were divided into three groups based on their overall socioeconomic points. This classification is demonstrated in Table 4.1.

Table 1
Classification of Participants based on SES Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SES Points</th>
<th>SES Groups</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19-</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-26</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26+</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to check the normal distribution assumption of scores for socioeconomic status and language learning strategies, Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test was used. The results of this analysis are represented in Table 4.2.

Table 2
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test of Normality for SES and Different Language Learning Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>SES</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Metacognitive</th>
<th>Compensation</th>
<th>Memory</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Affective</th>
<th>Total LLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parameters</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>21.97</td>
<td>45.58</td>
<td>33.41</td>
<td>19.32</td>
<td>26.28</td>
<td>20.24</td>
<td>18.02</td>
<td>162.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>7.118</td>
<td>7.681</td>
<td>5.975</td>
<td>4.013</td>
<td>5.381</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>3.818</td>
<td>74.553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.098</td>
<td>0.103</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.064</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.098</td>
<td>0.103</td>
<td>0.083</td>
<td>0.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.069</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z</td>
<td>1.096</td>
<td>0.897</td>
<td>1.158</td>
<td>1.364</td>
<td>1.436</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.963</td>
<td>0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.181</td>
<td>0.397</td>
<td>0.137</td>
<td>0.048</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.135</td>
<td>0.311</td>
<td>0.878</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Statistical Significance (Sig.) for socioeconomic status and all different language learning strategies showed indexes more than .05 ($P > \alpha$) based on which we may consider the scores are normally distributed. Figures 4.1 and 4.2 illustrate this normal distribution.
4.2 Inferential Statistics
Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to investigate socioeconomic status differences in language learning strategies.

As Mackey and Gass (2005, p. 277) state that “the MANOVA is part of the family of analyses of variance and differs from an ANOVA in that it has more than one dependent variable. To use a MANOVA, there has to be justification for believing that the dependent variables are related to one another.”

The dependent variables (cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, memory, social, and affective strategies) are related. MANOVA compares the groups of socioeconomic statuses (low, middle, and high) and tells us whether the mean differences between the groups on the combination of dependent variables are likely to have occurred by chance or not. It will tell us if there is a significant difference between our groups on this composite dependent
variable. It also provides the univariate results for each of the dependent variables separately. The independent variable is socioeconomic status.

First, in order to check the assumption of equality of language learning strategies variances between the three socioeconomic groups for performing MANOVA, Levene's Test was run. The results of this test in Table 4.3 notifies that the Sig. for all kinds of language learning strategies and the total is greater than .05 level of significance ($P > \alpha$). That’s why the assumption of equality of variances is proved and all strategies in all groups have equal variances.

**Table 3** Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances between Different Language Learning Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>0.971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>0.755</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>0.471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>1.428</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>0.242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>0.085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>0.679</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>0.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Language Learning</td>
<td>0.256</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>0.774</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of MANOVA in Table 4.4 provide us with enough criteria for rejection of the null hypothesis of this study which reads “There isn’t any relationship between socioeconomic status and language learning strategies” since there was a significant difference between low, middle, and high groups on all the six kinds of language learning strategies and the total of them, $F (12, 372) = 6.66, P = .000$; Wilks’ Lambda = .67; partial eta squared = .17. As a result, with high degree of freedom, it can be asserted that there is a relationship between socioeconomic status and language learning strategies of language learners.

**Table 4** MANOVA for Comparing Language Learning Strategies between three SES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Hypothesis df</th>
<th>Error df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Eta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pillai's Trace</td>
<td>0.342</td>
<td>6.422</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilks' Lambda</td>
<td>0.678</td>
<td>6.662</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotelling's Trace</td>
<td>0.448</td>
<td>6.901</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy's Largest Root</td>
<td>0.371</td>
<td>11.571</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to investigate whether low, middle, and high groups differ on all kinds of strategies, test of between-subject effects was carried out and its results are manifested in Table 4.5. In the Sig. column of tests of between-subject effects box, it can be seen that all six strategies
recorded a significance value less than .05. Thus, we can conclude that all six strategies were significantly different in three socioeconomic statuses.

Table 5
Test of Between-Subject Effects of Language Learning Strategies between three SES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>2603.21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1302.605</td>
<td>28.33</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>1366.179</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>683.089</td>
<td>23.615</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>500.794</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>250.397</td>
<td>18.342</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>478.408</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>239.204</td>
<td>8.94</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>490.005</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>245.002</td>
<td>14.367</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>283.357</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>146.179</td>
<td>11.073</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Strategy</td>
<td>28512.256</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>14256.128</td>
<td>30.998</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>8781.97</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>45.979</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>5524.832</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>28.926</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>2607.392</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>13.651</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>5110.561</td>
<td>191</td>
<td></td>
<td>26.757</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3257.088</td>
<td>191</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.053</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>2521.56</td>
<td>191</td>
<td></td>
<td>13.202</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Strategy</td>
<td>87842.409</td>
<td>191</td>
<td></td>
<td>459.908</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.3 clearly depicts the language learning strategies differences between the three socioeconomic groups. The mean total strategy was 151 for low, 163 for middle, and 182 for high groups that are far from each other.

![Figure 4.3 Language Learning Strategies differences between SES](image)

The relationship between participants’ socioeconomic statuses and language learning strategies was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The results of this correlation analysis are laid out in Table 4.6.
Table 6 Correlation between Participants’ SES and Language Learning Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Socioeconomic</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Metacognitive</th>
<th>Compensation</th>
<th>Memory</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Affective</th>
<th>Total LLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.565***</td>
<td>.474***</td>
<td>.437***</td>
<td>.422***</td>
<td>.393***</td>
<td>.384***</td>
<td>.589***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

A quick look at Table 4.6 indicates that a dramatic positive correlation coefficient (r = .58, \( P = .0 \)) can be observed between participants’ socioeconomic statuses and total language learning strategies score. This amount of correlation is significant since Sig. of .0 which is lower than that of the chosen significance level, .05 (\( P < \alpha \)). Besides, the correlation coefficient obtained in this study (.58) exceeds critical values of Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (.19) with the assigned 194 degrees of freedom. Consequently, it can be stated that there is positive linear relationship between the socioeconomic status and language learning strategies. This relationship is displayed in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4 obviously illustrates that as the scores of social economic status increase; the scores of language learning strategies ascend as well reflecting a positive relationship between the two variables.

Moreover, among the correlations between socioeconomic statuses and different language learning strategies, as depicted in Figure 4.5 the largest correlation was found in cognitive strategies with the index of .56, and the smallest one in affective strategies with the correlation of .38. The other correlations showed in order of size .47, .43, .42, and .39 for metacognitive, compensation, memory, and social strategies respectively.
5. Discussion and Conclusion

The overriding purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between socioeconomic status of Iranian EFL learners and their language learning strategies. The findings implied that those participants who scored high in socioeconomic status questionnaire had a high score on the language learning strategies questionnaire too. Willingham (2012) considers SES as consisting of three capitals; financial, human, and social. High SES families mostly possess higher financial, human, and social capital than middle and low SES families; and middle SES families are in a better position than low SES families.

Concerning the financial capital, high SES families have more access to resources than middle and low SES ones. In other words, people living in high SES families or children being brought up in these families can have access to books, electronic equipments, computers etc. or they can afford to attend extra-curricular activities. Using these facilities under parental observation, gradually results in mind development and maturation of brain system. Furthermore, knowing some foreign languages has over many years of human development been a prerogative of those that could afford learning it and as a result it was a defining element as to the social class of a person. Therefore they have always challenged to learn a new language, apart from their mother tongue, from the very young ages. This matter itself can be accounted as one reason of why high SES language learners employ more language learning strategies and also a reason of their earlier mind maturation.

Regarding the human capital, people in high SES families are more educated and experienced. Parents with high levels of education while spending some time with their children make them interested in education and acquiring knowledge. Children in these
families grow up in an atmosphere in which they can observe their parents reading books, magazines, poems, novels, newspapers, etc. or parents read books for them. Moreover, educated parents are more successful in conveying their experiences to their children. Thus they can make their children aware of the benefits of using some language learning strategies. On the other hand, they know the importance of being able to communicate effectively with other nations; therefore they try to arouse children’s curiosity either by having a trip to foreign countries or sending them to language institutes.

The educational facilities which are available for high SES families, for instance language institutes, have the best educational system with a more skillful and focused approach on teaching a new language. This can be a factor on making language learners interested in learning the new language as well.

It is true that more educated people have a lot of highly educated friends in their social networks. So, in family reunions children can be acquainted with highly educated individuals and gain a lot of information and knowledge. Likewise, attending in the social networks from childhood make high SES individuals more sociable ones. These helpful internships in LLS lead to knowing more social and affective strategies and examining more social and affective strategies.

Of course, these findings do not mean that people living in middle or low SES families cannot employ all LLS effectively but it implies that it takes time for them to learn strategies and language teachers should instruct language learning strategies consciously to them. This high positive correlation between these two variables definitely supports the advantage of socioeconomic factor in using language learning strategies.

References


Title

Application of Newmark's strategies to the translation of culture-specific items in *Boofe Koor* and *Dash Akol*

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Abstract

This paper aimed to examine the Persian short story *Dash Akol* (1941) by Hedayat and its translation into English by Danesh (1977) to find out the strategies that were applied to the translation of very items that exclusively belonged to the Iranian culture called Culture Specific Items (CSIs). Therefore, in this corpus-based study those parts of the source text containing CSIs were extracted, and the target text was also searched for the translation of parallel items. Afterwards, the coupled pairs were analyzed to investigate the strategies used by the translator. Hence, the most frequent strategy and the least frequent one were determined according to the proposed translation strategies of Newmark. These strategies were: Transference, Cultural equivalent, Neutralization, Literal translation, Label, Naturalization, Componential analysis, Deletion, Couplet, Accepted standard translation, Paraphrase, gloss, note, and classifier. It had to be mentioned that the findings of this research showed that, Transference was the most frequent strategy, while Literal translation was the least frequent one.

**Keywords:** Culture specific items (CSIs), Corpus based study, translation strategy
1. Introduction

Translation has played a significant role in human life. This role is so vital that without translation communication among people had never to be achieved. Yet history of translation dates back to more than two scores of years ago. At first, there were misunderstandings about the nature of translation as to considering it merely as a matter of linguistics. However, in recent decades there has been a tremendous shift in the nature of such studies (Monday, 2001). During this period translation was regarded something more than merely transcoding the linguistic elements from one language into another and it came to be understood as a cultural system to be treated with delicate observing of the cultural aspects. What would culture mean? Since culture could mean everything, it was considered as one of the most controversial and difficult concepts to explain. There are also different definitions for the concept of culture each looking at it from a different perspective. For example, Hofestede (1984) defined culture” as the mental programming of a large number of people in a specific environment” (p.5).Mooij (1943) believed that ” culture is the glue that binds groups together” (p.35). While in Larson’s view it was a collection of beliefs, attitudes, values, and rules that a group of people share. However, for Even-Zohar (2000) the concept of culture was two fold:” culture as goods” and” culture as tools”.

However, what was evident in all these definitions was that an element of language was present in all of them. Language reflected many aspects of culture and it was regarded as the base upon which the culture was constructed (Karmanian,2002).Therefore, translation from one language to another was not possible without knowledge of the two cultures and the language structures (Larson,1984). Since in a given culture the meaning from one patterned set of symbols was transferred into another set of symbols in another culture (Dostert,1955). Thus, it was necessary for the translator to know both the culture from which the message originally came and the culture into which it was being translated (Ivir,1975). This notion towards translation makes the task of the translator even more challenging. Since, Due to the differences of geography, customs, beliefs, and various other factors, the translator will not just look for an appropriate way to refer to something which is already part of the experience of the receptor language , but he will also be looking for a way to express a concept which is new to the speakers of that language (ibid). According to Karamanian (2002) translation, involving the transposition of thoughts expressed in one language by one social group into the appropriate expression of another group entails a process of cultural de-coding, re-coding and en-coding. However,” differences between cultures may cause more serious problems for
the translator than do differences in language structures” Nida (1964:130). Central to culture and communication is translation of CSIs that must be taken to consideration. In practice, translating the cultural aspects of any source language is not an easy job and often cause a translation problem. To cope with this problem different translators have proposed different strategies so that readers would be able to read the works of great authors in another language.

2. Review of literature

In this section an overview of the previous researches that were considered relevant to the present study would be given.

“Translation Studies” as a new academic discipline has developed rapidly and addresses the theory and practice of translation. It is an interdisciplinary domain which includes different fields such as linguistics, philosophy, cultural studies, and communication studies. Since these fields are various and indefinite, analyzing translation studies has become a really demanding and debatable task for the scholars trying to make the subject clear throughout the history.

Despite the discipline of translation studies, the history of translation is old and dates back to the first century BCE, so that a translation scholar like Aixela (1996) stated that if there is anything to be stated without any doubt about translation, it is it's historicity. The first traces of translation were discovered in 3000 B.C during the Egyption Old Kingdom in the area of the First Cataract called Elephantine. Inscriptions found in that area, in more than one language suggest the existence of the practice of translation at that time (Newmark, 1981).

The phenomenon of translation is not only found throughout history but also all over the world. For example, there is a monolith at the wall of Perspolis which dates back to 513 B.C. and includes inscriptions with three different languages: Persian, Akkadian and Elamite (Miremadi, 1993). Thus, translations had been crucial factors both within and across cultural boundaries (Schaffner, 1997) and they have played a very significant role in easing the communication between human beings so that without translation they are unable to transfer complex interwoven social structures in their life.

In addition to that, some believe that they are crucial factors to bring about any change in human character. For instance Miremadi (1993:3) quotes Bates as saying:

Nothing moves without translation. Human experience is covered by three terms: emotions, techniques, and thought. Emotions do not change in character: thought and
techniques do. No change in thought or techniques spreads without the help of translation, because if it is to spread from people to people and therefore from language to language.

Despite its significance and the vital role it has played in inter-human communications throughout history and the influence it has had on the evolution of human thought and character, translation has not been regarded as it has to be. Because at first it was considered as a second-hand art and was approached as one of language methodologies, for example grammar translation method. In this method, translation exercises were used as a means of learning a new language or reading a foreign language text until one acquired the linguistic ability to read the original text in the original language (Munday, 2001). Contrastive analysis (in 1960s and 1970s in the USA) was another area in which translation was regarded as a subject of research (ibid). This discipline compared and contrasted the languages in order to investigate the differences between them. All translated texts and the original ones served as the needed data and examples in this sphere. In this way, contrastive analysis compared two texts on the basis of linguistic principles and it did not account for the cultural and pragmatic factors which were really important in translation studies to deal with a translation problem.

However, Years 1950s and 1960s witnessed significant changes in the way the phenomenon of translation was approached. In these years a more systematic linguistic-oriented approach was taken towards translation, and translation studies’ was explained for the first time by Holmes and was later developed by scholars such as Toury in the form of ‘map’ (Munday,2001). According to Bassnett and Lefevere (1990) what happened in translation studies during this period was called’ cultural turn’. In the series of new approaches recently adopted to the translation, cultural transfer was dominant and they viewed translation as an act of communication (Snell-Hornby, 1988). This time scholars working in the field concentrated on culture-based approaches rather than previously linguistic-based ones which were usually known as 'scientific'. Despite the former approaches which were Literal V.S free dichotomy- focused, and in which source language, equivalence, words and sentences were really important the new approach gave extreme importance to the target audience, and culture.

3. Method

3.1 Definition of the CSIs

Any culture in the world has its own specific concepts which might not exist in any other culture. These concepts which are only expressed through certain linguistic codes are called
culture bound or culture specific items (CSIs). Thus, a source text may contain a concept which is totally unknown in the target culture; it may be abstract or concrete, about a religious belief, a social custom or even a type of food (Baker, 1992). These items which are the most arbitrary area of each linguistic system may also include: it’s local institution, streets, historical figures, place names, personal names, periodicals and works of art (Aixela, 1996). In a more conclusive definition the CSLs are described as items whose function and connotation in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text; this problem may be due to the nonexistence of the referred item or its different inter-textual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text (ibid). However, they cover a wide range of linguistic items in each language.

3.2 Categorization of CSIs

Different scholars such as Povlovic and Thriveni have categorized the CSIs. However Newmark’s categorization of the CSIs Which is according to the Nida’s work is more comprehensive than those of the others. This categorization includes:

- Ecology
  Winds, plants, plains, flora, and fauna, honeysuckles, downs, tundra, pampas, sirocco, tabuleiros, (low plateau), plateau, selva, (topical rain forest), savanna, paddy field
- Material culture
  1) Food:’zabaglione’, ’sake’, ’Keisers’
  2) Clothes: ‘anark’, kanga(Africa), sarong(south seas), dhoti(India)
  4) Transport:’ bike’, ‘rickshaw’, ‘Moulton’,cabriot,’tillbury’, caleche
- Social culture, work and leisure
  Ajah, amah, condottiere, biwa, sithar, raga, reggae,’ rock’
- Organizations, Customs, Activities, Procedures, Concepts
- Political and administrative
- Artistic
- Religious: dhrama, karma, temple
- Gestures and habits’ Cock a snook’, ‘spitting

3.3 Translation strategies of CSIs

Strategies of translation involve both choosing the foreign text which is to be translated and developing an approach to translate it, and both these are determined by various factors such as: cultural, economic and political. In what follows, leading scholars in the field of translation studies have proposed different translation strategies for dealing with the CSIs.
Vinay and Darbelnet’s views on translation strategies of the CSIs includes:
1) Borrowing 2) Calque (loan shift) 3) Literal translation 4) Transposition (shift) 5) Modulation 6) Equivalence 7) Adaptation

Baker’s views on translation strategies of CSIs includes:
1) Translation by a more general word (superordinate)  
2) Translation by a more neutral / less expressive word  
3) Translation by cultural substitution  
4) Translation using a loan word plus explanation  
5) Translation by paraphrase, using related word  
6) Translation by paraphrase using unrelated words  
7) Translation by omission  
8) Translation by illustration

While Newmark’s translation strategies includes:

However, it has to be mentioned that, the actual choice of a translation strategy depends on a lot of factors such as: the purpose of the text, the intended readers that a text is supposed to be translated for, generic and textual constraints of a text or publication and the importance of the cultural item itself.

4. Results and Discussions

This study adopts the methodology of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) as proposed by Toury (1995).

In order to identify the translation strategies, the CSIs were determined according to the categories suggested by Newmark. In order to do that, the CSIs and their renderings were analyzed in the corpus in the form of coupled pairs. Following that, the strategies applied to the translation of CSIs were identified according to the Newmark’s model and the frequency of each strategy was calculated as well as illustrated in a figure. Hence, the most frequent strategy and the least frequent one were determined as well as calculated by percentage.
This chapter contains some sentences from two short stories The Blind Owl and Dash Akol in the original language followed by their English Translations. These sentences embody the CSIs which form the data to be analyzed.

4.1. Examples of Dash Akol’s story:

1. همه اهل شیراز می دانستند که...

There was hardly anyone in Shiraz who was not aware of…..

( in footnote): Shiraz, Southwest of Iran, an ancient city famous for wine and song, is the birthplace of a great many famous poets such as Saadi and Hafez.

Translation Strategy: Transference & note

2. قفس کلکی که رویش شله ی سرخ کشیده بود...

He had set his finely wrought bird cage covered with a red cotton fabric to keep out the sun.

Translation strategy: Neutralization (descriptive equivalent)

3. دستش پرشانش بود.

His hand at his thick broad waist band.

Translation Strategy: Neutralization (descriptive equivalent)

4. استکان ها را از جام برنجی در می آورد...

Taking narrow-waisted glass tea cups out of a large brass bowl….

Translation strategy: Neutralization (descriptive equivalent)

5. یک بست فور بیشتر کشیدی

You’ve smoked one pipe over.

(in footnote): Opium pipe, ordinarily there is a brazier with red hot charcoal. The addict attaches a tiny stub of the solid opium next to the hole bored in the spherical head of the pipe and heats it over the hot ambers and as soon as it sizzles the smoke is inhaled.

Translation strategy: Accepted standard translation & note.

6. دراین بین مردی با پستک مخل میان، شوارگ گشاد، کلاه نمدی کوتاه، سراسیمه وارد قهوه خانه شد.

At this time a man wearing plush jerkin with loose breeches, short felt cap on his head apparently very much confused and absent minded hurled himself in the tea house.

Translation strategy: Accepted standard translation

7. هنگامی که داش آکل وارد بیرونی حاجی صمد شد...

When Dash Akol arrived at the men’s quarters.

(In footnote): Formerly in Persia the houses of the people of substance have two separate sections. The outer part was the men’s quarters and was exclusively used by them and their guests. The inner apartments were set aside for the women-folk. Tea, coffee, hubblebubble, sherbets, were prepared in the “Coffee House” of the outer chambers. The kitchen was mostly
in the inner chambers. All this was in times when women were excluded and segregated from the society of men.

Translation strategy: Accepted standard translation & note

8. چند نفر قاری و جزوئه کش سر پول کش مکش‌کش داشتند...

There were only a few reciters of Quran and distributors of prayerbooks...

Translation strategy: Neutralization (descriptive equivalent)

Translation strategy: Neutralization (descriptive equivalent)

9. او راوارد اطاق بزرگی کردند که ارسی‌های آن رو به بیرونی بروند.

He was conducted into a large room whose sliding windows opened into the men’s quarters courtyard.

Translation Strategy: Cultural equivalent

10. امام جمعه را سربالی‌نش آوردند...

They fetched IMAM DJOMEH.

(In footnote) Literally “The leader of Friday communal prayers”

The Molsem Sabbath falls on Friday and the leader of communal prayer is a minister of religion who stands to prayer and the faithful follow him. Normally every city of consequence has an” Imam Djomeh” In the olden days this personage performed the office of the presently”Notarypublic” in so far as wills, testaments, affidavits, loans, marriage, divorce, and sales of property were concerned.

Translation Strategy: Transference & note

11. ما پنج سالی پیش در سفر کازرون با هم آشنا شدیم...

“Five years ago travelling together to Kazeroun we were acquainted “

(In footnote): A small town in Fars, Iran.

Translation Strategy: Transference & note

12. شب سوم داش آکل خسته و کوهته از نزدیک چهار سوی سید حاجی غريب به طرف خانه اش می رفت در راه امام قلنگی به او برخورد و گفت...

On the third night out and completely exhausted he was passing in the vicinity of a locality called the cross market of SEIED HADJI GHARIB heading for home where IMAM QOLI CHALANGAR bumping to him.

Translation strategy: cultural equivalent

Translation strategy: Transference

Translation strategy: Transference

13. یک روز داش آکل روی سکوی قهوه خانه ی دومیل دو چندک زده بود...

One sunny day Dash Akol squatting on the dais of the Do-MEEL tea house….
(In footnote)- In the Shiraz dialect "meel" signifies a column or pillar "DO-MEEL" means "two pillars"
Translation strategy: Transference & note

At nights when he got his usual ration of that strong burning spirit which locally passed as "Isaacs’ special double distilled Arak". In Issac the Jews’ place and gulped the whole contents of the bottle down in one draft…. 
Translation strategy: Transference & deletion

No one dared to cross him at SARE-DOZAK (In footnote). Name of a quarter in Shiraz.
Translation Strategy: Transference & note

KAKA knew quite well that he was no match for DASH-AKOL.
Translation strategy: Transference

By the luck of POURYA THE VALI. I will cut you in two with this same cutlass. (In footnote) A historical "ELCID" epitome of all that is righteous and manly. Most of the gentlemen, rogues and tough characters would swear by this beard.
Translation Strategy: Transference & note

HadjSamad passed away
Translation Strategy: Transference

And also fell in love with Marjan
Translation Strategy: Transference

…. In this way they were prodded by the MULLAS who were peeved because they could not hope to extract a farthing out of the property.
Translation Strategy: Cultural equivalent

… He drank a double-distilled highly potent ARAK and would be seen shouting….. 
Translation Strategy: Transference
He was the talk of the parties and tea house circles. In Patchenar tea house was more pronounced.
(In footnote)Name of a locality in Shiraz.
Translation Strategy: Transference & note

23. با ار خلق راه یار، شب بند قاده، ملکی کار آباده وارد شد...
The had on a quilted cashmere tunic reaching down to below his knees, shoulder strap for cutlass scabbard and hand woven cotton shoes of ABADEH...
(In footnote) Abade a township north of Shiraz famous for summer shoes locally named "Maleki" these shoes are very light, cool and durable.
Translation Strategy: Neutralization (functional and descriptive equivalent)
Translation Strategy: Neutralization (descriptive equivalent)
Translation Strategy: Neutralization (descriptive equivalent) & note

24. گردش هایی که با دوستانش سر قعادی و باباکوهی کرده بود به فاقدارد...
He recalled the jaunts he and his friends used to make to SAADI’s and BABAKOUHI.
(In footnote), SAADI: one of the greatest of the Persian poets.
BABAKOUHI: A shrine of a holy Dervish built on a hill near Shiraz.
Translation strategy: Transference & note
Translation strategy: Transference & note

25. ولی خان پسر بزرگش به احوال پرسی او رفت.
VALIKKAN went to DASH AKOL’s house for the sick call.
Translation strategy: Transference

26. چون هوزوارشین ادبی به هنر می كند
I have no taste for literary huzuaresh.
(In footnote) A convention of Pahlavi writing by which the scribe substituted and Aramaic word for a Persian.
Translation strategy: Transference & note

27. جلو او جاده نماز گرفته بودند
They hung up a woman’s veil a screen in front of her
Translation strategy: Neutralization (Accepted standard translation)

28. بعد یک روز دوستی سفید بیتش پچیده.
They wrapped her up in a white cloak...
Translation strategy: cultural equivalent

29. اینا رو شلون بنات برات داده...
These are for you from Mumy…
Translation strategy: Cultural equivalent

30. درم از ویرئه محمودیه بودم.

I was in Mohammadiyye Square
Translation strategy: Transference

31. ... به میر غضب که لباس سرخ پوشیده بود نشان می داد....

... gesticulating to the red-clad hangman...
Translation strategy: Accepted standard translation

32. نعلینش را به زمین می کشید.

Shuffling her slippers
Translation strategy: Accepted standard translation

4.2 Examples of Boofe koor's short story:

1. زمستان ها کرسی می گذاشتند...

… in the wintertime they used to set up a Korsi...
(In footnote) A stool under which is placed a lighted brazier and over which blankets are spread. People recline with the lowered part of their bodies under the blankets
Translation strategy: transference & note

2. از پای منقل بلند شدم.

I stood up from beside my brazier
Translation strategy: Accepted standard translation

3. سبزی پاک می کرد...

Cleaning some vegetables.
Translation strategy: literal translation

4. همان جوشانه هایی که دکتر برای تجویز کرده بود.

The various concoctions prescribed by the doctor
Translation strategy: cultural equivalent

5. نه صدای آذان و نه وضو واخ و تو انداختن و دو لا راست شدن.

The muezzins call to prayer, the ceremonial washing of the body and rinsing of the mouth, not to mention the pious practice of bobbing up and down....
Translation strategy: Neutralization (descriptive equivalent)
Translation strategy: Neutralization (descriptive equivalent)

6. صدای لا اله الا ان له مرا متوجه کرد.

My ear caught the cry, "La elaha ell Allah"
"There is no god but God", part of the Moslem profession of faith. It is also used during the funeral of a recently dead person.

I was to work through the day, decorating the covers of pen-cases.

It was the thirteenth day of Nouruz (the national festival of Iran and the new year eve). It begins on 21 March and lasts for thirteen days. It is the custom to spend the last day of Nouruz in the country, to escape from the evil of the 13th day of the New year.

My uncle was a bent old man with an Indian turban on his head.

… a ragged yellow cloak on his back.

I take dead bodies every day to Shah Abdol-Azim and bury them. (A mosque and cemetery situated among the ruins of Ray, a few miles south of Tehran. Rey (The Rhages of the Greek) was an important center from at least the eighth century B.C and continued to be one of the great cities of Iran down to its destruction by Jengiz Khan in the thirteenth century A.D.

All that I had with me were two krans and one abbasi. (one Abbasi is 0.4 of a kran, the traditional currency of Iran.)

It’s a flower vase from Rhages comes from the ancient city of Rey.

Went and kindled the charcoal in my opium brazier.
There was a bed unrolled in the corner of the room.

(In footnote) In old Persia bedsteads were not used. The bed-roll (mattress, sheet, pillows and quilt) was stowed away in the daytime and unrolled on the floor night.

Translation strategy: Neutralization (descriptive equivalent) & note

Pour the juice the wine rather – drop by drop like water of Karbala down the parched throat of my shadow.

(In footnote) The burial place of the Shia martyr Hosein. Water in which a little earth from Karbala had been steeped was employed as medicine.

Translation strategy: Neutralization (descriptive equivalent) & note

These few spans of ground on which I am sitting belong to Nishapur or to Balkh or to Benares.

(In footnote) A reminiscene of a quatrain of Omar Khayyam:

"Since life passes whether sweet or bitter, "since the soul must pass the lips, whether in Nishapur or in Balkh, Drink wine, for after you and I are gone many a moon. Will pass from old to new, from new to old"."

Translation strategy: Transference

Translation strategy: Transference & note.

Translation strategy: Transference

A pair of gaunt, consumptive looking horses…

Translation strategy: accepted standard translation

But Nanny was her nurse too.

Translation strategy: cultural equivalent

Dancing with slow, measured movements to the music of the setar, the drum, the lute, the cymbal and…

(In footnote) a three- stringed instrument resembling a mandolin.

Translation strategy: Transference & note.
21. She said: "It’s the wrong time of the month"
Translation strategy: Neutralization (descriptive equivalent)

A tripe-peddler, an interpreter of the Law, a cooked-meat vendor, the police superintendent, a shady mufti, a philosopher-their names and titles varied but none of them was fit to be anything better than assistant to the man who sells boiled sheep’s heads.
Translation strategy: literal translation
Translation strategy: accepted standard translation
Translation strategy: literal translation

22. I wondered if it was the hand of Ezrail.
(In footnote) The Angle of Death, according to Islamic tradition.
Translation strategy: Transference & note.

23. I put my hand into my pocket and took out two dirhems and four peshiz.
(In footnote) Mediaeval coins, corresponding roughly to the modern Kran and abbasi respectively.
Translation strategy: Transference and note.

30. ارخلق سمبوسة طوسي پوشیده بود.
She had on a cloak of Tus material.
Translation strategy: Neutralization (functional equivalent)
Translation strategy: Transference

31. وقتی دیدم دایه ام یک کاسه آش جو و تری‌لو جوجه برام آورد.
My nurse come in with barley broth and a plate of greasy chicken pilaf.
Translation strategy: cultural equivalent

32. بسم اللہ می گفت و گوشتھا را می برد.
Uttered the sacred formula "besmellah" and proceed to cut up his meat.
(In footnote)" In the name of God". The formula pronounced by Moslems at the beginning of any important undertaking.
Translation strategy: Transference & note.

33. یک تکه از گوشت رانش را بعنوان نذری می دادم.
I myself should have given a piece of the flesh of her thigh….
Translation strategy: Deletion

34. عسل و نان تافتون برام آورد.
Brought me honey and bread
Translation strategy: Accepted standard translation

Table 4.3: Strategies Proposed by Newmark

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<td>Literal translation</td>
<td>Label</td>
<td>Naturalization</td>
<td>Componential analysis</td>
<td>Deletion (of redundant stretches of language in non-authoritative texts, especially metaphors and intensifiers)</td>
<td>Couplet</td>
<td>Accepted Standard Translation</td>
<td>Paraphrase, glass, notes, etc.</td>
<td>Classifier</td>
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Table 4.4 Danesh's translation of CSIs in Dash Akol's short story

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**Table 4.5 Costello’s translation of CSIs in the Blind owl’s short story**
Table 4.6 Frequency of strategies

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S. Danesh</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. P Costello</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
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table 4.7 the frequency of each strategy by percentage.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>s.Danesh</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.P Costello</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

From the above mentioned tables the following conclusions are reached:

- The strategy of Transference is found to be the most frequent strategy adopted by the translators concerning the translation of the CSIs and the translatorsexplained the meaning of most of the transferred words in the footnotes.
The strategy of Literal translation is found to be the least frequent strategy adopted by the translators in translating the CSIs.

The strategies of Label, Couplet, Componential analysis, Naturalization and classifier are not used at all by the translators.

In the writer's opinion he strategies of transference and footnoting are the most important strategies in the translation of CSIs, because the translator can both transfer the original word (to be faithful to the source culture) and explain it's meaning in the footnotes (to make the meaning understandable to the readers) rather than the strategies like literal translation that do not translate the cultural word completely, leaving most of its senses untranslated.

References


هدایت، صادق (1348). بوف کور تهران:انتشارات جاویدان،1315.
هدایت، صادق (1348). داش آكل. اسپهران:انتشارات صادق هدايت، 1384.
The Washback Effect of Quizzes on the Grammar Skill

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Zand Institute of Higher Education, Shiraz, Iran

Sarah Torabian has taught several translation and ESP courses in different universities such as ZIHE and Paramedical College of Shiraz. Her research interests include TEFL, second language acquisition, dual language acquisition, and infant language acquisition.

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the washback effect of frequent quizzes on EFL learners’ grammatical ability. In so doing, 32 female EFL students were randomly selected. To ensure the homogeneity of the subjects, they were pretested through a standardized language proficiency test. The participants were randomly divided into two groups of 16. Through the statistical procedure of t-test, it was demonstrated that no significant difference existed between the two groups prior to the treatment. The experimental group received 5 quizzes during the 10 sessions of instruction while the control group was not given any quizzes. The results of the data analysis showed that the use of frequent quizzes can significantly improve the learners’ grammatical ability.

Keywords: TEFL, the grammar skill, washback effect

1. Introduction

Testing is an important part of every teaching and learning experience (Madsen, 1983). The main objective of tests within a taught course is to provide feedback. Without tests neither the teacher nor the learner would be able to progress very far. Several attempts have been made to promote higher achievements on the part of the language learners. Heaton (1988) asserts that tests are normally constructed as devices to strengthen learning and to encourage the students, or as a means of assessing the students’ performance in language tasks.

Henning (1987) states that testing, which is one form of measurement, includes all forms of language testing. Measurement is generally considered to be an important issue in foreign
language teaching and learning. EFL teachers have always been concerned with assessing and evaluating their students’ progress during a course, as well as their language achievement and learning at the end of the course.

Bachman (1990) points out that measurement provides teachers with the necessary quantitative information about their students’ language ability and enables them to make sound professional judgments and decisions within the context of their classes. He further makes a distinction between measurement and evaluation and asserts that evaluation can be expressed as the gathering of information for making decisions. Measurement is being used when actual tests are used; it is essentially a quantitative process. While evaluation is being used when teachers make decisions about the adequacy of instructional procedures, the readiness of students, and the extent to which curriculum goals are being met; it is a more qualitative process.

More recently, Bachman and Palmer (1996) have discussed washback as not only the impact of tests on teaching and learning but also as impact on society and educational systems (pp. 29-35). They state that test impact operates at two levels: the micro level (i.e., the effect of the test on individual students and teachers) and the macro level (the impact on society and its educational systems). Bachman and Palmer note, however, that washback is a more complex phenomenon than simply the effect of a test on teaching and learning. Instead, they feel the impact of a test should be evaluated with reference to the contextual variables of society's goals and values, the educational system in which the test is used, and the potential outcomes of its use (p. 35).

Quizzes are the most common classroom tests which may be used by teachers to check short-term learning and encourage daily preparation. All educational centers put a great deal of emphasis on the ways in which they can increase the learners’ achievement. Regarding the role of testing in language teaching and learning, one of the most important issues which seems to require more investigation is the impact of testing on students’ language achievement in EFL classes. The objective of this study is one folded and is to investigate the possible washback effect of frequent quizzes on the grammatical ability of EFL learners.

Considering the importance of language learning, testing, the issue of frequent quizzes, and EFL learners’ grammar learning, the following research question is formulated:
Q: Is there any significant relationship between the use of frequent quizzes and the grammatical ability of EFL learners?
2. Review of related Literature

The language testing literature contains numerous references to the influences that tests may have on teaching and learning. Washback is one of a set of terms that have been used in general education, language education, and language testing to refer to the relationship between testing, teaching, and learning (Messick, 1996).

According to the effect of examinations on what we do in the classroom we may refer to ‘positive’ and ‘negative’ washback (Heaton, 1988). All educational centers put a great deal of emphasis on the ways in which they can increase the learners’ achievement.

Some research on frequency of testing support the idea of improved outcomes in students’ performance (Kika, 1992). One of the earliest studies (Kika, 1992) concluded that the frequency of testing affects students’ performance. Kika found a 23% gain in pre to post test results. He attributed the large gains to the motivating effects of frequent quizzing.

In another study, Kika 1992, examined the effects of weekly testing, and the results indicated a 10.07% higher mean in the weekly examination.

Richards et al. (1992) asserts that the purpose of a quiz is to check the initial comprehension of any segments of material, not the final mastery. Richards asserts that the purpose of a quiz is to check the initial comprehension of any segments of material, not the final mastery.

Bowen et al. (1985) hold that quizzes have even been known to help improve attendance, punctuality of arrival, and discipline at the outset of the class period. Usually in any school system, there are mid-term and end-term examinations. In addition to such examinations, some educators believe that it is very beneficial to give a quiz at the end of each major division of the book (e.g, the end of each chapter, lesson, or unit), or during every class session.

Álvarez (2010) determined the washback effect of an oral assessment system on some areas of the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Results showed positive washback in some of the areas examined. The implications for the classroom were that constant guidance and support over time are essential in order to help teachers use the system appropriately and therefore create positive washback.

Saif (2005) explored the possibility of creating positive washback by focusing on factors in the background of the test development process and anticipating the conditions most likely to lead to positive wash-back. The analysis of the data collected from different stakeholders through interviews, observations and test administration at different intervals before, during
and after the training program - suggested a positive relationship between the test and the immediate teaching and learning outcomes. There was, however, no evidence linking the test to the policy or educational changes at an institutional level.

According to Green (2006) learner perceptions of course outcomes are affected by the course focus reported by teachers, but that the relationship is not deterministic. Although test preparation courses, as predicted by washback theory, appear to cover a relatively narrow range of skills, he believes that there is evidence that narrow preparation strategies are not driven primarily by learner expectations.

Cited in Ms Faez thesis (1999) tests or quizzes encourage students to organize their knowledge, to assimilate larger chunks of material, and to learn for long-term retention.

Farhady et al. (1994) propose repeated measurement which will enable students to master the language.

The washback effect of tests on teaching has attracted considerable attention over recent years, but the critical question of how this translates into washback on learning remains under-explored. There is also no general consensus on the value of such periodic and daily quizzes. Regarding the role of testing in language teaching and learning, one of the most important issues which seems to require more investigation is the impact of testing on students’ language achievement in different language skills in EFL classes. To address this issue, this paper will try to cover the improvement of grammar through quizzes.

3. Method

3.1 Participants
To conduct this study, around 35 females that will enroll in the spring semester at an English institute located in Shiraz are to be randomly selected. They will participate in two separate classes. Around 16 students in each class. One class will serve as the experimental group and the other as the control group. The classes will be held twice a week. They are to be homogeneous with respect to their English language level. Their ages should range from 16 to 20. To nullify the potential effect of methodology, both groups will be taught by the same instructor.

3.2 Instrumentation
Three sets of measuring instruments were used in this study:
a) A standardized language proficiency test
b) Five short quizzes
c) A grammar test

The objective of the language proficiency test is to make sure that the participants are at the same level of proficiency. The quizzes are to be carefully prepared by the researcher. They will be based on the course objectives and 10 MC items. The grammar test was developed in order to fit the requirement of the study. It will be a multiple choice test and contain 10 items. To determine the reliability of this test, Test-Retest method will be applied. As to the validity, the subjects’ scores are to be correlated with their scores on the proficiency test. The Pearson Product Correlation is the type of correlation to be employed.

3.3 Procedure

The experimental group will receive five short quizzes during 10 sessions of instruction, i.e. one quiz for every unit they are to be taught. The control group will not be given any quizzes. In order to investigate the effect of the treatment and to determine the relationship between the independent variable (quizzes) and the dependent variable (students’ grammatical ability) the grammar test will be administered to both groups. After the data was collected they were analyzed using SPSS version 16.

3.4 Data Analysis

Two independent t-tests will be performed on the mean scores of the pretest and posttest. The probability level to reject the null hypothesis will be 0.50 level of significance for the two-tailed hypothesis.

4. Results and Discussion

Initially, to ascertain the homogeneity of the experimental and control groups, a t-test was performed on the mean scores obtained by the two groups, the result of which are presented in Table 1.

| Table 1. The t-test results for pretest |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|                | N | X  | SD | SE | t-observerd | df |
| Experimental Group | 16 | 11.0 | 3.16 | .53 | .51 | 68 |
| Control Group     | 16 | 11.40 | 3.33 | .56 |     |    |

P < .05, t-critical = 2.00

As indicated in the table, the observed value for t is .51 which is much less than the critical t-value. Hence, the groups were homogeneous in language proficiency prior to the
treatment. After the treatment, the posttest was administered and the results were submitted to a t-test to assess the effect of the particular treatment in this study. (i.e. the frequent use of quizzes). The statistical results are outlined in table 2.

Table 2. The t-test results for posttest

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<th>SD</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t-observer</th>
<th>df</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
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<td>13.68</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control Group</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11.94</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>68</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

P < .05 , t-critical = 2.00

As manifested in table 2, the experimental group outperformed the control group. The significant difference between two groups provides supporting evidence for the positive effect of frequent quizzes on the grammatical ability of the students. As mentioned above, the probability level reject the null hypothesis is 0.50 level of significance for the two-tailed hypothesis.

The results of the study, to some extent, support those of Kika (1992), since he claimed that practice with frequent quizzes helps learners improve their language proficiency. However, he mostly emphasized the improvement in learners’ communicative competence as a whole, whereas in the present study the grammar skill was under investigation.

On the other hand, the meticulous observation of class attendance by the teacher, contradict those of Bowen et al. (1985) in that quizzes tend to help improve attendance, punctuality of arrival, and discipline at the beginning of the class period. Nevertheless, this effect, punctuality of arrival, of frequent quizzes may show its effects in the long run, after administering frequent quizzes in multiple semesters.

5. Discussion

This study examined the washback effect of frequent quizzes on the grammar ability. Results indicated that the session following the instruction of grammar, students in treatment conditions were able to recall a relatively high percentage of grammar and due to this their speaking ability improved. This means that only the students that were exposed to frequent quizzes were able to use the grammatical structures more frequently and speak with fewer grammatical errors. This supports those of Kika (1992), since he claimed that practice with
frequent quizzes helps learners improve their language proficiency. A question which comes up however is: do these analyses of test results indicate whether students have learnt more or learned better because they have studied for a particular test?

Taken with the results of the Andrews et al., (2002) investigations the sort of washback that was most apparent seems to represent a very superficial level of learning outcome: familiarization with the exam format, and the rote learning of exam specific strategies. The inappropriate use of these phrases by a number of students seems indicative of memorization rather than meaningful internalization. In these instances, the students appear to have learnt which language features to use, but not when and how to use them appropriately. Such problems come up when the learners’ goal is “cramming for a test" rather than "learning for a test”. The researcher has come up with some suggestions to solve these problems:

(1) The teaching principles stipulated in curriculum should be fully implemented by the teacher in grammar teaching and grammar teaching shall not be treated as an isolated part in English teaching; (2) more types of activities and exercises should be introduced into grammar teaching;

(3) students’ autonomous learning abilities should be developed in their grammar learning.

The washback effect of this exam also seems to be limited in the sense that it did not appear to have a fundamental impact on students motivation for learning. This means that students’ perceptions of their motivation to learn English and their learning strategies remain largely unchanged. This could be because of the age of the participants whom were mostly high school students and preoccupied in their school work which made the frequent use of quizzes inconvenient for them. This finding is relevant to Bachman and Palmer (1996) claim that tests should be in reference to the contextual variables of society's goals and values, the educational system in which the test is used, and the potential outcomes of its use. English being considered a foreign language contrary to second language in Iran is of little use in the macro level of the society. Hence EFL learners might not feel the need to take an extra step by taking more tests than the midterm and final exams and consider frequent quizzes an extra burden.

All in all, the main object of this study which was to determine the effect of frequent quizzes on the grammar ability was statistically significant. Findings of this study support most of the literature mentioned in this paper, confirming the importance of frequent quizzes on EFL learners’ grammar ability.
6. Conclusion

The main objective motivating this study was to examine the possible washback effect of frequent quizzes on the grammatical ability of EFL learners. As such, in the conclusion section of the study, the main research question presented in the first section will be answered.

Q: Is there any significant relationship between the use of frequent quizzes and the grammatical ability of EFL learners?

A: The independent sample t-test indicated that there is a significant difference among the EFL learners in terms of the washback effect of frequent quizzes on EFL learners’ grammatical ability

Hence, the findings support the view that the frequent use of quizzes improves the students’ grammatical ability to a statistically significant extent.

The identification of the value of quizzes deserves more attention in the field of EFL. It will lead material developers and course designers to consider the preparation of a series of properly written quizzes in textbooks and to design courses which allow sufficient amount of time for the frequent use of quizzes.

Teachers can also take advantage of the positive role of quizzes in providing feedback and improving motivation. Distinguishing the learners’ areas of difficulty and weaknesses can easily be achieved through the use of quizzes.

The findings can also be applicable in most language learning centers, universities, and schools. Besides other techniques which may exist to improve language learning, giving frequent quizzes is not only an effective activity to enhance students’ language achievement but also a step forward for better methodology.

6.1 Suggestions for Further Research

Conducting other studies would complete the results of this research and highlight the significant role of frequent quizzes in EFL learning. Further investigation can be done to replicate the same design with different age groups at different levels. In this study gender was not considered distinctively as a variable. A further area for more research is to include gender as a distinct variable. Another line of research open for more investigation is related to the impact of frequent quizzes on particular language skills, i.e. listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The optimal number of quizzes can also be investigated in another study.

References


Title

The Study of Learning and Retention of Vocabulary Through Keyword Method among Iranian EFL Learners

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Abstract

Vocabulary learning has been one of the most important concerns of Iranian college students, especially those who educate in majors other than English-based ones. They are reported to frustrate when they face with vocabulary items to be learned, since they have trouble retaining them. The present study was carried out to investigate the effect of keyword method, one type of linguistic mnemonic device, on learning and retention of vocabulary in Iranian non-English college students. For the purpose of this investigation, 40 male and female non-English college students were selected using Oxford Placement Test (Allan, 2004), and divided into two groups, one experimental and the other control group. A pre-test was designed and administered to both groups, and then a ten-session treatment was initiated, teaching the control group by word list memorization and the experimental group through keyword method. Immediately after the treatment phase, they received a post-test, called “immediate recall post-test”, to show to what extent they have learned those words. Two weeks later, another post-test, called “delayed recall post-test” was given to the participants to assess their
1. Introduction

Vocabulary is an indispensable element in language learning affecting the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Joe (1995) claimed that the quality of learning depends on the quality of use of vocabulary in a communicative context. Evans (1981) believed that lack of a sufficient amount of vocabulary is one of the important reasons why students fail to understand. Nowadays, there is a general agreement among vocabulary specialists that it is at the heart of communicative competence (Coady and Huckin, 1997). Vocabulary is the key for comprehension (Chastain, 1988), and according to Wilkins (1972) "without grammar, very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed". Despite numerous studies done on vocabulary learning, the best way of learning vocabulary is still vague. There have been numerous investigations, for instance, to support the belief about the remarkable effects of reading and contextualization on vocabulary learning, including Saragi, Nation and Meister (1978), Jenkins, Stein and Wyoski (1984), and Nagy, Anderson and Herman (1987). Krashen (1989) believed that reading will result in vocabulary learning. Also, some teachers propose rote memorization of word lists as an effective way of attaining vocabulary. However, not all strategies have the same influence on all learners, and choice of strategies is related to factors like attitude (Naiman et al., 1986). When students should deal with a large number of new words especially in a short and limited period of time, they can use some memory strategies to boost their vocabulary learning and recall. According to Schmitt (1997) final taxonomy of vocabulary learning strategies, one of these memory strategies is Linguistic Mnemonics or keyword method. Keyword method according to Hulstijn (1997) requires three stages. At first an L1 or L2 word that has an acoustic similarity to the target word is given to the learner to act as the key word. In the second stage, the learner is asked to make an association between the target word and the keyword. Finally he is asked to make a mental image of the combination of the keyword and the target word. Mental imagery has long been used as a means of memorizing information; Roman orators, for instance, employed the technique when memorizing long speeches (Yates, 1972). Regarding the points mentioned above, this paper intended to
investigate the effectiveness of keyword method on vocabulary learning and retention among Iranian non-English college students.

2. Literature review
The word *mnemonic* is derived from the Greek word *Mnemosyne*, referring to the ancient Greek goddess of memory. The use of mnemonic dates back to 500B.C (Yates, 1972). The main way to transfer the vocabulary items from short term to long term memory and create a strong connection there is through finding some elements in the mental lexicon to attach the new lexical item to previously known pieces of information (Schmitt, 2000). Mnemonic is a memory enhancing instructional strategy that involves teaching students to link new information taught to information they already know. Thompson (1987) arranges mnemonic strategies into five classes; linguistics, spatial, visual, physical response and verbal methods, and accordingly keyword method is one of the subsets of linguistic mnemonics. Keyword method offers an effective means of memorizing certain kinds of information (Bower, 1972; Bugelski, 1969). Atkinson and Raugh (1975) carried out a study to investigate the application of keyword method to the acquisition of Russian vocabulary items, and concluded that keyword method could positively affect Russian participants’ vocabulary learning. Furthermore, Chen and Hsiao (2000) examined the effects of keyword method on the ESP vocabulary retention of Taiwanese EFL students. The study illustrated that mental imaginaries used in keyword method could develop vocabulary learning. In another research, Tabatabaei and Hossainzadeh Hejazi (2011) demonstrated the noticeable influence of keyword method instruction on vocabulary acquisition of Iranian intermediate EFL learners. Despite the mentioned studies proving the remarkable influence of keyword method instruction on vocabulary learning and retention, keyword method was claimed to be limited and not effective in some situations by some researchers. Campos, González, and Amor (2004), for instance, believed that keyword method is a limited strategy with severe shortcomings and that the rote method is significantly more effective than is the keyword method. On the other hand, the current study confirms the strong effect of keyword method on students’ abilities in vocabulary learning and retention.

3. Statement of the problem
Although L2 language learners show a great interest in learning the vocabulary of the second language, in a high degree, they are limited to do so regarding the vocabulary learning
strategies by which they intend to improve their knowledge of vocabulary as well as other facets of language skills. Moreover, there is not a complete and available method of learning L2 vocabulary to the language learners apart from discrepant strategies of learning and teaching vocabulary. Keyword method, known as one of the subcategories of mnemonic device, has shed a great deal of light on the fact that why L2 learners can use some acoustic commonalities of L1 and L2 in a more concrete and tangible context in order for a better understanding and learning of vocabulary. It is one of the memory vocabulary learning strategies which can play a pivotal role in retaining the vocabulary items to a great extent. As a matter of fact, Iranian English teachers and learners do not pursue a systematic plan to the teaching and learning of vocabulary. This study is an attempt to investigate the effects of keyword method instruction on vocabulary learning in order for Iranian EFL learners to develop and follow meaningful strategies of vocabulary learning.

4. Research Questions

The study seeks to find appropriate answers to the following questions:

1. Is there any remarkable effect of keyword method on Iranian EFL learners’ vocabulary learning?
2. Does Keyword method significantly affect vocabulary retention of Iranian EFL learners?
3. How differently do memory strategies such as keyword method affect L2 vocabulary retention in contrast to traditional vocabulary learning strategies like word list memorization?

5. Method

5.1. Participants

The selected participants for the present study were 40 Iranian undergraduate students (23 males, 17 females), who had majors other than English literature, English translation, and TEFL. Participants aged 18-25 years old and were selected based on Oxford Placement Test (OPT). They were randomly divided into two groups, one experimental and the other control group. Both groups were taught by the same instructor using the same classroom and schedule.

5.2. Instruments

5.2.1. Oxford Placement Test (OPT)

The participants’ proficiency level was assessed by means of the Oxford Placement Test (OPT). Allan (2004), the developer of the test, believed that the purpose of OPT is to measure the language
knowledge that the students have and to place them as accurately and reliably as possible into different levels. According to Allan (2004), OPT has been calibrated against the proficiency levels based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF), the Cambridge ESOL Examinations, and other major international examinations such as TOEFL. The test was divided into two sections (Listening and Grammar), each of 100 items. These sections were also integrated with reading skills and vocabulary in context.

5.2.2. 504 Absolutely Essential Words

504 Absolutely Essential Words has been believed to be one of the most important and useful English vocabulary books not only in Iran but also all over the world. Learning the vocabulary items of the book is considered as one of the most important concerns of Iranian non-English college students who seek to qualify for postgraduate studies. They are reported to frustrate when they face with vocabulary items of the book, since they have trouble retaining them. The words of the book were taught to both control and experimental groups respectively through word list memorization and keyword method in ten sessions, as the treatment phase. The vocabulary items used in the pre-test as well as the immediate and delayed recall post-tests were selected from 504 Absolutely Essential Words.

5.2.3. Vocabulary pre-test

The designed vocabulary pre-test consisted of 75 items, and represented a cross section of vocabulary items presented in 504 Absolutely Essential Words. The pre-test reliability was .68, calculated through KR-21 method.

5.2.4. Vocabulary immediate recall test

After a ten session vocabulary instruction to the control and experimental groups, a post test, which was the same version of the pre-test, was administered to both to assess the degree of their vocabulary learning through word list memorization and keyword method (respectively for control and experimental groups). Using KR-21 method, its reliability was .75.

5.2.5. Vocabulary delayed recall test

Two weeks after the first vocabulary post-test, which was administered to participants after the end of the treatment phase, another post-test was constructed and administered to them in order to examine to what extent the participants in both control and experimental groups could retain the vocabulary items taught to them.

6. Procedure

The study was carried out at a language institute in Yasouj, Iran. By means of purposive sampling strategy a certain type of members with predetermined characteristics were selected.
among those who referred to the institute for enrolling in English language courses. The
selected ones had to be college students having majors other than English Literature, English
translation as well as TEFL. Furthermore, it was necessary for them to age between 18 and
25. Finally 49 college students with above-mentioned characteristics were chosen. In order to
have homogeneous participants, an Oxford Placement Test was administered to them, and 9
out of them who gained extreme scores were omitted, and the rest (23 males and 17 females)
were divided into two groups randomly to serve as the control and experimental groups of the
study.

Then a vocabulary pre-test of 75 items was given to the test-takers based on the
vocabulary items of 504 Absolutely Essential Words a week before the initiation of the
instruction phase. A ten session instruction was devoted to both groups, in each of which
about 50 English words were taught to participants in control and experimental groups
respectively through word list memorization and keyword method. Meanwhile, instruction
to both groups was done in the same classroom by the same teacher devoting equal time for
each, about 90 minutes per session. And also, the experimental group was in line with the
control group in terms of the instructional materials and atmosphere as well as the series of
words; however, the pamphlets they received were different in that the control group’s had
two columns, first of which consisted of English words and the second one their Persian
equivalents. The experimental group, on the contrary, received a pamphlet with three
columns which was taught to the participants through keyword method, as the treatment.
The first column was composed of words in English, the second column consisted of their
equivalents in Persian and the last one included the blank rows to be filled by the
participants.

The three steps of learning vocabulary through key word method, as Hulstijn (1997)
believed, were followed during our treatment phase. In the first step, participants were asked
to set a word or a phrase in L1 which had an acoustic similarity with the target word as the
key for learning that. For instance, in order to learn the words [bachelor], [spouse],
[authority], [compel], and [debate], learners regarded respectively the phrases and words [بچه
پاس و آس], [اسارت], [پول کم], and [دوبيتي] as the key phrases/words in L1. In the next steps,
the learners were required to make associations between the target words and the key
words/phrases and also to make a mental image of the combination of the key words/phrases
and the target words in order for meaningful sentences which had to be written in the third
column by the language learners. The sentences could be either colloquial or formal. A good
illustration of this is the word [bachelor], assumed to be written in the first column, and its
Persian equivalents [مجرد، لیسانسه] in the second column. Participants could learn in the first step that [بچه نر] in Persian, the key phrase. Then, the language learners were required to make a mental imaginary connection between the key phrase [بچه نر] and its Persian equivalents [لیسانسه] to make a meaningful sentence in L1 like [بچه نر، لیسانسه، مجرد، مجرد نگیرند، لیسانس تا لرھا]. It was necessary for participants to write the colloquial meaningful sentence in the third column. Figure 1 illustrates the way students filled in third column for the above-mentioned words.

Figure 1. The way participants filled in the third column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English word</th>
<th>Persian Equivalent</th>
<th>Mental Meaningful Sentence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>لیسانسه مجرد مجرد نگیرند لیسانس تا لرھا</td>
<td>بچه لرها تا لیسانس نگرند مجرد مجرد نگیرند لیسانس تا لرھا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>همسر</td>
<td>همسر تا همسر نداشته باشه اس و یا به یکه</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authority</td>
<td>انتخاب کردن</td>
<td>وقتی توان انتخاب کردن و انتخاب از خودت نداری</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compel</td>
<td>کردن</td>
<td>کمیلی او را مجبور به نزدی کردن</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debate</td>
<td>بحث کردن</td>
<td>شاعرها با دویستی ها یا هم بحث می کنند</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On the other hand, participants in the control group were taught about 50 words in each instructional session through word list memorization. To sum up, the vocabulary items of 504 Absolutely Essential Words were taught to both groups in ten sessions using different methods. Immediately after the treatment phase, a recall post test of 75 items was designed and given to the participants in both groups, which aimed at assessing the amount of vocabulary learning on behalf of the participants and comparing the short period influence of keyword method and word list memorization on vocabulary learning. Two weeks later, a delayed post test was administered to the same participants in order to measure their abilities in retaining the vocabulary items previously learned, and also to compare the long-term effects of key word method and word list memorization on vocabulary learning.

7. Results and Discussion

Using the paired samples procedure, the result of the vocabulary immediate post-test in the two groups were compared, then the result showed that the mean score of experimental group was statistically more significant than that of the control group. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of vocabulary pretest and post-test scores for experimental and control group.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics on vocabulary pre and post tests scores for experimental and control groups
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>SEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest, C-group</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>.526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest, E-group</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2.146</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate post-test C-group</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>4.478</td>
<td>1.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immediate post-test E-group</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3.576</td>
<td>1.823</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N= Number of participants; C-group= Control group; E-group = Experimental group.

To put it another way, at the beginning of the study there was not a remarkable difference between the two groups in the light of knowledge of the lexical items, whereas the experimental group outperformed the control group at the end of the study. This purports to be the exertion of the treatment effect, keyword method, on the experimental group showing the inferiority of the control group using word list memorization to the experimental one. Table 2 is the summary of the results of the paired sample t-test of vocabulary pre-tests and immediate post-test of both groups.

Table 2 shows that t (19) =-25.641, according to the first pair, and that t-value is significant at 0.05, because the significant level is lower than 0.05, $P<0.05$. Regarding pair (2), t (19) =-61.091, $P<0.05$, suggesting that t-value is significant at the point 0.05; therefore, a noticeable difference is found in the students’ immediate post-test scores. Moreover, owing to the fact that there was not a remarkable difference in the performance of both control and experimental groups before the initiation of treatment, based on their pretests’ means, and that the difference of measured means in pair 2 was more significant than those of pair 1, it can be concluded that although participants in control group
benefited from word list memorization to learn vocabulary items, key word method as the independent variable manipulating the vocabulary learning of the participants in experimental group was much more effective. Thus, application of keyword method noticeably led to improvement of Iranian non-English college students. This study corresponded with the findings of Chen and Hsiao (2000) who demonstrated that mental imaginaries used in keyword method could develop vocabulary learning significantly. In order to shed a great deal of light on the third research question, descriptive data of the immediate and delayed post-tests in both groups were collected and presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics on vocabulary immediate and delayed posttests’ scores for control and experimental groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Immediate posttest, C-group</th>
<th>46.5</th>
<th>20</th>
<th>75</th>
<th>4.478</th>
<th>1.001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delayed posttest, C-group</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3.128</td>
<td>.699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>Immediate posttest, E-group</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3.576</td>
<td>1.823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delayed posttest, E-group</td>
<td>60.15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2.323</td>
<td>.519</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering the two pairs (1) and (2) in Table 3, i.e. the immediate and delayed post-tests of control and experimental groups, it can be claimed that there was a decline in mean scores of both control and experimental groups after a two week delay between these two tests (IPC mean=46.5 and DPC mean=33, hence 46.5>33), and (IPE mean= 67.5 and DPE mean=60.15, hence 67.5>60.15). Thus, a paired sample t-test was also conducted to determine the differences between mean scores of both the immediate and delayed post-test scores obtained by the participants in the control and experimental groups. The following table indicates whether the difference between the two means is significant or not. The results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of the Paired Sample t-test in vocabulary immediate and delayed posttest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>95% confidence interval of the differences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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According to Table 4, t-test results indicated that mean score of delayed post-test taken by participants in control group declined more significantly than that of experimental group (13.5 > 7.35). The results assert that experimental group’s achievement has not changed that much from immediate to delayed posttest. Therefore, it can be claimed that during these two weeks as time interval, the keyword method instruction has kept its effectiveness in delayed retention, and forgetting did not happen so noticeably. 'Depth-of-information-processing theory' could be one possible reason for this in which the more information is handled at deeper levels, the more retention is obtained. As one arrives at deeper levels, memory traces become steadier. Under the present circumstances, concerning depth-of-information-theory, one can claim that because in the keyword method participants make use of the combination of images in the mind and an acoustically familiar word in their first language, more information is managed in deeper levels compared to the word list memorization in which participants are only provided with a list of new words and their meanings.

8. Conclusion
This study was an attempt to investigate the effect of key word method tenets and techniques introduced as an instructional program on L2 learners’ vocabulary learning and retention. A better grasp of the application of the keyword method was gained after being exposed to this method in addition to the immediate and recall post-tests which showed that there exists a remarkable progress in the learning of new words achieved by the participants in their group activities. To sum up, according to the results of the dependent sample t-test, at the beginning of the study, although there was not any significant difference between proficiency level and also lexical knowledge of the control and experimental groups, the experimental group outperformed the control group at the end of the study. These results were true and significant in terms of both immediate and recall retention. Furthermore, the results demonstrated that
keyword method had greater influence on not only learning but also retention of vocabulary in comparison to traditional ways like word list memorization.

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We would like to appreciate Mr. Ravaee, the head of the institute in which the study was carried out, who had a great proportion in successful completion of this study.

References


Title

The Suppliance of Definite and Indefinite Articles: The Role of Test Method and Proficiency

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Abstract

This study investigates Persian-speaking EFL learners’ article use when provided with three different types of test methods: Multiple Choice, Cloze, and Fill-in-the-article. A hundred Iranian learners of English at the intermediate and advanced levels of proficiency participated in the study. A one-way repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) compared the correct application of a, an, the in these test types, showing the effect of test method on the use of article. Mixed between-within analysis of variance indicated that article use is influenced by proficiency and test method. The findings may be of interest to those seeking to relate article use to eliciting method they apply to reach a conclusion on the basis of data collection procedure.

Keywords: Definite article, Indefinite article, Test method, Proficiency

1. Introduction
Articles are the most frequently used words in English (Master, 2002; Celce-Murcia & Larsen-freeman, 1999) and the most common (Butler, 2002), but at the same time the most difficult ones to acquire (Ekiert, 2004; Ionin& Wexler, 2003). Much of the difficulty can be due to the complexity of English article system because of lack of one-to-one form to meaning relationship (Butler, 2002), absence of article system in L1 (Ekiert, 2007; Faghih, 1997; Master, 1987), the effectiveness of instructional intervention (Hasbun, 2009; Master, 1995), and invisible or unstressed nature of articles in the input (Master, 1990).

There have been many studies on how to classify the use of articles in English. Hawkins’ (1978) location theory, Celce-Murcia’s and Larsen-Freeman (1999) count/non-count classification of common nouns, Master’s (1990) classification-identification, Bickerton’s (1981) noun classification system, Huebner’s (1983, 1985) adoption of semantic wheel model, Ionin’s, Ko, and Wexler’s (2004) definiteness/specificity, Master’s (2002) information structure view, Amuzie and Spinner’s (2012) countability of abstract nouns are among many studies on article use. Although these investigations opened new paths to understand the use of articles in [-ART] and [+ART] languages, there still remains questions on their use in different discourse environments. This paper investigates article use in an article-less Persian language within Butler’s (2002) framework of countability taking into account (a) proficiency of the learners and (b) test method used to elicit article use that is, production vs. recognition mode.

2. Review of the Related Literature
The English article system, including the definite the, the indefinite a/an, and zero or null article, belongs, in fact, to the most challenging function words acquired or learned by second or foreign language learners. The ups and downs of acquiring English articles stems from different reasons.

First, according to Master (2002), there are three reasons for this difficulty:

The articles, which include the words a, an, the, and Ø, the invisible zero/null article, are among the most frequently occurring function words in the language (Master, 1997), making continuous conscious rule application difficult over an extended stretch of discourse; (2) function words are normally unstressed and consequently very difficult if not impossible for a NNS to discern, thus affecting the availability of input in the spoken mode; and (3) the article system stacks multiple functions onto a single morpheme, a considerable burden for the learner, who generally looks for a one-
form-one-function correspondence in navigating the labyrinth of any human language until the advanced stages of acquisition. (p. 332)

Perhaps, another logical reason for this problem lies in cross-linguistic differences between learners’ mother tongue and the target language (TL) they are learning. Many languages such as Russian, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, or even Persian (Faghih, 1997; Haiyan & Lianrui, 2010; Ionin et al. 2008; Lu, 2001; Master, 1987, 1997; Robertson, 2000; Thomas, 1989; White, 2009; Wong & Quek, 2007 among others) do not have articles as used in English, therefore, learners whose L1 is considered [-ART] cannot use correct and appropriate articles either definite, indefinite or zero in different contextual environments.

In 2008, Ionin, Zubizarreta, and Bautista-Maldonado reported that three factors have a role to play in acquisition of English articles: L1 transfer, L2 input, and Universal Grammar (UG). In the absence of L1 transfer, they state that UG access and input processing contribute to learning process. In fact, we can attribute learners’ difficulty not only to their article-less L1, but to meager input they are exposed to in foreign language context of learning.

Complexity of article use is compounded when different views on their acquisition are put forward. Hawkins (1978) suggested his location theory; he presents eight different categories for the non-generic meaning of definite article in English language; Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) summed up Hawkins’s theory saying: “when a speaker/writer uses the, he instructs the hearer/reader to locate the referent in the same shared mental set of objects” (p. 279). Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman themselves believed in the significance of noun classification for article choice; as White (2009) reiterates, these two scholars believe that “appropriate article decisions are dependent on classification of common versus proper, count versus noncount, and singular versus plural. Ekiert (2007) also deems the issue of countability as significant corroborating what Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) already cited: “the count-noncount classification of common nouns is an important preliminary to the correct use of articles” (p. 7). Butler (2002) and Master (1987) already considered countability as the most problematic area of article use, especially by learners whose L1 lack article system.

Later, Master (1990) generated a system for article use based on either classification based on a or zero article or identification signaled by the. Master (1994) offered a hierarchy of article usage which can target pedagogy: countable/uncountable, definite/indefinite, premodified/postmodified, specific/generic, common/proper, idiomatic/non-idiomatic.

It was Bickerton (1981) who suggested two features to classify English NPs: referentiality that is specific reference [±SR] and hearer’s knowledge that is an NP assumed or not
assumed to be known by the hearer \([\pm \text{HK}].\) Based on his model, Heubner adopted Bickerton’s semantic wheel model which in fact classifies NPs’ environments to four types: Type 1 \([-\text{SR}] [+\text{HK}], \) generics: \(a, \text{the}, \) or \(\emptyset\), Type 2 \([+\text{SR}] [+\text{HK}], \) referential definites: \text{the}, Type 3 \([+\text{SR}] [-\text{HK}], \) referential indefinites: \(a\) or \(\emptyset\), and Type 4 \([-\text{SR}] [-\text{HK}], \) nonreferentials: \(a\) or \(\emptyset\). As was mentioned in the literature, Thomas (1989) and Butler (2002) added a fifth category to this model titled idiomaticity (e.g., \textit{all of a sudden}, \textit{living hand to mouth}) which, like generics, can include \(a, \text{the}, \) and zero.

Ionin, Ko, and Wexler (2004) divide article use into two systems: definiteness and specificity. To them, definiteness happens when “the speaker and the hearer presuppose the existence of a unique individual in the set denoted by the NP” (p. 5); specificity occurs when “the speaker intends to refer to a unique individual in the set denoted by the NP, and considers this individual to possess some noteworthy property”, they continue. They stress this point that specificity from their point of view is different from what exists in literature referring to \textit{existence in the actual world}; their view of specificity is more limited to \textit{speaker intent to refer to an individual who exists in the actual world}.

Article use can be examined from an information structure point of view, a framework which Master (2002) suggested. He offered that the issue of canonical information structure (that is, given information first, new information last) can be presented to learners by teachers in the hope that L2 learners can find appropriate articles for different nouns in texts.

Working on abstract nouns in Korean language, Amuzie and Spinner (2012) suggested that nouns either concrete or abstract have a property in common, which is “they fall on a continuum of boundness, and therefore countability” (p. 1). \textit{Boundness} is signified as what differentiates countable and uncountable nouns (Frawley, 1992; Jackendoff, 1991; Langacker, 1999). Considering the issue of boundness and four different categories of abstract nouns, Amuzie and Spinner (2012) concluded that learners’ use of articles “reflects their perceptions of concreteness” (p. 13). Concreteness can be depicted as something imaginable, observable, and available. Another point they bring to limelight is the overgeneralization of article use to different types of nouns with distinct countability variation which depends to some extent on their L1. Along the same line, Heubner (1983, 1985) considered this issue as \textit{flooding} when subjects overuse and overgeneralize the definite article to almost all nouns. They also cite that there are some reasons why learners associate the issue of boundness to some words and not others which yet remains unclear.

In order for research to be done on article use either by native or non-native speakers, there are different tasks to collect data; data can be gathered through oral interviews (Parrish,
1987; Tarone, 1985), grammaticality judgment test (Tarone, 1985), essay writing (Ionin, Ko, & Wexler, 2004; Parrish, 1987), oral narration (Tarone, 1985), fill-in-the article test (Butler, 2002; Dagdeviren, 2010), forced-choice elicitation tasks either with blanks or without blanks provided (Amuzie & Spinner, 2012; Ekiert, 2004; Ionin, Ko, & Wexler, 2003; Ionin, Ko, & Wexler, 2004; White, 2009), written translation (Ionin & Wexler, 2003), acceptability judgment task (Yang & Quek, 2007), and paired story-telling task (Thomas, 1989), and finally a cloze test (Haiyan & Lianrui, 2010; Lu, 2001; Parrish, 1988; Yamada & Matsuura, 1982). Different elicitation tasks exist, there is no certainty over which can lead to the best results though. Production tasks such as essay writing or oral interviews perhaps generate lower error rates than objective tasks like cloze tests, Parrish (1987) contends. However, there has been less consideration of the roles different methods can play in eliciting data from learners. In this study, three types of methods were used to elicit data: Multiple choice test as a recognition test, an objective cloze test with blanks which should be filled out with *a*, *an*, *the*, and Ø, and a production task (i.e., fill-in-the-article test) which required learners to provide articles if necessary in a number of sentences. Besides, proficiency was considered as a variable for this study since previous studies (Chaudron & Parker, 1990; Master, 1987; Thomas, 1989) showed that proficiency can be regarded as a factor influencing the article use by learners. The current study investigates the effect of test method as well as proficiency on article use of L1-Persian learners of English. In light of these two factors and their standing in the literature, the following questions are addressed in this paper:

1. Does test method have an effect on the use of articles by L1-Persian learners of English?
2. Does the level of proficiency of L1-Persian learners of English affect the use of articles by applying different test methods?

3. Method

3.1 Participants
One hundred Iranian college and university students participated in this study. Their age ranged between 15 and 28. In order to divide them into two proficiency groups of intermediate and advanced, structure and written portion of TOEFL test of L2 proficiency, including 40 questions, was administered to all students; according to the mean score and standard deviation (*M* = 18.72, *Std* = 8.76), those over one standard deviation above the mean (i.e., scores of over 26) were regarded as advanced and the rest were regarded as intermediate learners.
3.2 Instrument and Procedure

The instrument consisted of 16 multiple choice questions appearing in discrete sentences; a cloze test with 16 blanks which the learners provide either a, an, the, or Ø, and a 16-item fill-in-the-article test. There were a total of 64 deleted obligatory uses of a/an, the, and zero articles across four semantic types taken from Butler (2002). They were four generics and unspecifiable [-SR, +HK], four referential definites [+SR, +HK], four referential indefinites/first mention [+SR, -HK], and four idioms or other conventional uses (see Appendix A for these article types used in the tests). The 16 sentences appearing in multiple choice questions were taken from Swan’s book (2004); the text of cloze test was chosen from texts appearing in Strauch’s book (2009); and the fill-in-the-article test includes sentences gathered from Anorson’s book (2002). All these books from which the instrument of the study was made have syntactic orientation and they have been written with great accuracy for especially non-native speakers who are not familiar with grammatical nuances which exist in English as a foreign language. The participants were asked to choose the appropriate article for both multiple choice items and the cloze test and provide the right choice for the fill-in-the-article items. The forced-choice elicitation task was used for the study since a number of scholars (e.g., Butler, 2002; Kharma, 1981; Mizuno, 1985; White, 2009) believe that learners are controlled to some extent in order not to make mistakes due to problems non-native speakers have when they have to produce articles in the target language.

The participants first completed the multiple choice items, then they went through the cloze test and finally they provide answers for the fill-in-the-article test. These tasks were administered separately and each session was allocated for one task. It took about 15-20 minutes to complete each test and in order to increase their accuracy of responses, they were told to obtain a higher score in their final exam on condition that they had a good performance on these tests.

4. Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: Does test method have an effect on the use of articles by L1-Persian learners of English?

To answer this question, we entered the data into SPSS 18 and used one-way repeated measures analysis of variance. Test method is taken as the independent variable with three levels/types: multiple choice, cloze, and fill-in-the-article. Our dependent variable is the score obtained through using correct type of articles in three types of tests administered to the same
participants of the study. The principal assumptions to run one-way repeated measures analysis of variance were met. First, normality of the distribution was met. To assure that our two proficiency groups form a normal distribution, we obtained histograms of each group that is, the intermediate and the advanced. As Figure 1 illustrates, the assumption of normal distribution is not violated thus we can run parametric one way ANOVA to get our results.

Figure 1. Histograms of intermediate and advanced level students

To further ascertain the normality of our distribution, the skewness and kurtosis of our scores were checked. Descriptive statistics illustrate these two issues. Table 1 shows these pieces of information.

Table 1 *Descriptive Statistics of the scores on article use by high school and university students*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>13.80</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30.20</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>-1.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Usually the skewness and kurtosis of a normal distribution ranges between -2 and +2, in our case the groups form a normal distribution, although the advanced make a negative kurtosis which signifies that most of the scores cluster at the high end. Another analysis is to check the normality through the test of Kolmogrov-Smirnov which is a strong evidence for normality of the distribution. A non-significant result, that is Sig value of more than 0.05, shows normality. The groups involved in this study can be considered normal.

Table 2 *Normality of Distribution Test for the Groups*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic df Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.094 70 0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.145 30 0.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction
Table 3 indicates the result of descriptive statistics enabling us to compare the mean of different test methods.

**Table 3 Descriptive statistics of MC, Cloze, and Fill-in-the-article tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>13.16</td>
<td>5.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloze</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>11.98</td>
<td>6.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill-in-the-article</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10.41</td>
<td>6.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of one-way repeated measures analysis of variance, as is shown in Table 4, showed that there is statistically significant difference between three types of test method attempted by L1-Persian learners of English.

**Table 4 Repeated Measures of ANOVA between MC, Cloze, and Fill-in-the-article tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Hypothesis df</th>
<th>Error df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pilai’s Trace</td>
<td>.243</td>
<td>15.68</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>98.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>.757</td>
<td>15.68</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>98.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotelling’s Trace</td>
<td>.320</td>
<td>15.68</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>98.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roy’s largest Root</td>
<td>.320</td>
<td>15.68</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>98.000</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>.243</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen, the value for Wilks’ Lambda is .757 with a probability value of 0.0005 which is less than 0.05; therefore, we can conclude that there is a statistically significant effect for test type. This, in fact, indicates that there was a change in test scores when different test types were used.

Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the difference is significant just between MC and fill-in-the-article tests and not between MC and cloze or cloze and fill-in-the-article tests. We also obtained effect size to see how large the difference is between these three types of test. According to Cohen (1988), the eta squared value or effect size equal to 0.01 is small, 0.06 as medium, and 0.14 as large effect. In our study, the effect size is large (partial eta squared = 0.2).

**Table 5 Multiple comparisons Tukey HSD**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Type</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloze</td>
<td>1.1800</td>
<td>0.8860</td>
<td>0.379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill-in-the-article</td>
<td>2.7500*</td>
<td>0.8860</td>
<td>0.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloze</td>
<td>-1.1800</td>
<td>0.8860</td>
<td>0.379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill-in-the-article</td>
<td>1.5700</td>
<td>0.8860</td>
<td>0.181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill-in-the-article</td>
<td>MC</td>
<td>-2.7500*</td>
<td>0.8860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloze</td>
<td>-1.5700</td>
<td>0.8860</td>
<td>0.181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Question 2:** Does the level of proficiency of L1-Persian learners of English affect the use of articles by applying different test methods?

To answer it, we need to run mixed between-within analysis of variance (ANOVA) using SPSS. Mixed between-within ANOVA is used since we have two independent variables, that is proficiency with two levels as a between-group variable and test method with three types
as a within-group variable; besides, we have one dependent variable which is total score on article use. Table 6 illustrates descriptive statistics.

Table 6 Descriptive statistics for three test method types and two proficiency groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test type</th>
<th>Proficiency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>10.02</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>20.46</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13.16</td>
<td>5.90</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloze</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>8.47</td>
<td>20.16</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>20.16</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11.98</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fill-in-the-article</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>6.74</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>18.96</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10.41</td>
<td>6.74</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>8.41</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Advanced</td>
<td>19.86</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11.85</td>
<td>6.34</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, we should check for the interaction effect, that is if the effect on one independent variable (that is, proficiency level) on the dependent variable (that is scores on article use) depends on the level of another independent variable which is test method types including multiple choice, cloze and fill-in-the-article. Table 7 shows the main effect which also includes interaction between proficiency and test types. Now, we look at Table 7 which statistically shows that there is no interaction effect.

Table 7 Multivariate Tests for testing interaction effect between variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Hypothesis df</th>
<th>Error df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial eta squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test method</td>
<td>Pillai’s Trace</td>
<td>.170</td>
<td>9.905*</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>97.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>.830</td>
<td>9.905*</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>97.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hotelling’s Trace</td>
<td>.204</td>
<td>9.905*</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>97.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roy’s Largest Root</td>
<td>.204</td>
<td>9.905*</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>97.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test method *</td>
<td>Pillai’s Trace</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>2.088*</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>97.000</td>
<td>.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>.959</td>
<td>2.088*</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>97.000</td>
<td>.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency</td>
<td>Hotelling’s Trace</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>2.088*</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>97.000</td>
<td>.130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roy’s Largest Root</td>
<td>.043</td>
<td>2.088*</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td>97.000</td>
<td>.130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now that we know each variable separately affect article use, it is necessary to check the main effect for within subjects variable, that is test method. The value for Wilks’ Lambda for test method is .830 with a probability value of .000. Since the Sig. value is less than 0.05, there is a significant main effect for test method as our within subjects variable. Also we checked for the effect size. If we look at the column in Table 8 called Partial Eta Squared, we see that our value is .17 which according to Cohen (1988) is a large effect size. Now it is time to check Table 8 which shows the main effect for between-subjects variable that is, proficiency level.

Table 8 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects
Table 8 illustrates that Sig. value is .000 which is less than our alpha level of .05, therefore, we can conclude that the main effect for our two proficiency group is significant. Moreover, the effect size presented in the last column of Table 8 as Partial Eta Squared is .84 which in fact underscores the difference between these groups on their use of articles in three test method types.

5. Discussion, Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The first research question asked whether test method has an effect on the use of articles by L1-Persian learners of English. The result of one-way repeated measures ANOVA showed that test method affects the use of articles by EFL learners. The comparison of the means of learners’ scores in these three types of test methods shows that the mean of the multiple choice questions was higher than cloze and cloze test had a higher mean than that of the fill-in-the-article test. Although previous studies used different sort of tasks to investigate the article usage, there has been not enough concern for the reason why we prefer objective tests like cloze test to production tasks like essay writing or interviews. Parrish (1987) said that production tasks of which essay writing is a type produce lower error rates than objective tasks like cloze test; the reason can be due to avoidance strategy learners resort to respond to the task. Cai and Wu (2006) cited that not only specificity, referentiality, and countability, but the influence of mother tongue as well as task types should be considered as influential in the usage of English articles by Chinese learners of English.

The second research question asked whether the level of proficiency of L1-Persian learners of English affects the use of articles by applying different test methods. The result showed that proficiency level and test method respectively affect the use of article by EFL learners. This result is quite consistent with those studies which found that the use of articles somehow is related to proficiency level (Butler, 2002; Ekiert, 2004; Haiyan & Lianrui, 2010; Master, 1997; Thomas, 1989 among others). The current study, in fact, stresses the importance of considering the type of test format used to elicit data from EFL learners as well as the level of proficiency as a factor mediating the result of studies. This study just concerns the proficiency and test method as factors playing a role in article use by EFL learners. Other scholars pointed out several reasons for the results of article use studies; Lu (2001) counts
three reasons for the inconsistency of article usage studies: the longitudinal or cross-sectional collection of data, the non-existence of a standard for participants’ English proficiency levels, and the mother tongue of the participants were not kept the same across studies. Therefore, it sounds reasonable to try future studies considering these issues.

There are some limitations to this study which can be dealt with in future research. The forced choice elicitation task contained three different test methods including multiple choice, cloze and fill-in-the-article test; future research can use multitask elicitation instrument to provide a crosscheck for other methods of elicitation. The mother tongue of language learners of the current study was Persian; thus no generalization can be made to other languages based on the results of the study. The issue of proficiency still remains a problem since there is no standard way of treating the issue. We used TOEFL test as a standardized test of proficiency, however, dividing learners to intermediate and advanced students based on the structure and written section of TOEFL does not show proficiency as the term by itself induces. Another point is that we made a comparison between just two levels, that is the intermediate and advanced. We can define other levels like lower and upper intermediate to closely examine their performance on article usage in English. The next point addresses the issue of different type of NP environments where articles are used. This study just focused on four types of NP environment based on Butler (2002) classification. The missing one in this study is non-referentials [-SR, -HK]. It is worth including this category in future studies as well to see how the result would be modified. And finally, we used discrete sentences for both multiple choice and fill-in-the-article items; future research can use dialogues as perhaps more appropriate context to test the article usage by EFL learners.

6. Conclusion

It should be said that so far few studies have been undertaken to address the article use by L1-Persian learners of English as a foreign language except for Faghih (1997) who did a contrastive analysis between Persian and English definite articles. He cited that Persian articles do not bear any resemblance to English articles system. Searching previous studies, we came across Tarone and Parrish’s study (1988) which suggested that L2 learners’ accuracy rates for article use changed when different tasks were used. We found that test method presented to learners in different formats can play a significant role in using articles in both production and recognition test that is, fill-in-the-article and multiple choice questions. Moreover, these tasks should be presented to learners with different proficiency
levels so that we can compare the stages they go through until their article usage reach a level which is quite similar to that of English native speakers. The result of this study can be used by several parties in the field: linguists who are after finding the differences between Persian article-less and English article-bound systems; teachers who very much like to know which problems their students with different proficiency levels face in learning article system of English as a foreign language, for example their deficiency in using articles either orally or in written form; and methodologists who need to closely examine the methods and designs used by researchers to obtain as accurate data as possible; the trio would help to lessen the difficulty many language learners meet when using articles in English.

References


Appendix A

Instruments

Multiple choice test

Type 1: [-SR, +HK], generics and unspecifiable: \[[a(n)], [the], [Ø]\]

1. Alice is studying to be ……………………doctor.
   a. a       b. the       c. a/b       d. Ø

2. It is …………………nice weather, isn’t it?
   a. the      b. a        c. a/b       d. Ø

3. God created ……………….man and ……………….woman for each other.
   a. Ø-Ø      b. the-the    c. a-a       d. a-Ø

4. He was elected …………………President for the third time.
   a. a       b. the       c. Ø        d. b/c

Type 2: [+SR, +HK], referential definites: \[[the]\]

1. I have just lost …………………only true friend of mine.
Type 3: [+SR, -HK], referential indefinites, first mention: [a(n)], [Ø]

1. I think there is .................letter for you.
   a. the  b. a  c. Ø  d. Ø/a

2. I met ............friend of yours yesterday.
   a. the  b. a  c. Ø  d. a/b

3. I talked to ...............police officer standing at the corner.
   a. the  b. Ø  c. a  d. a/b

4. John started sending ..............to his family.
   a. letter  b. letters  c. the letters  d. a letter

Type 5: Idioms and other conventional uses (including uses with pronouns): [a(n)], [the], [Ø]

1. I have not seen my friend for ...............last few days.
   a. a  b. the  c. a/the  d. Ø

2. You have made ...............very good progress.
   a. the  b. a  c. Ø  d. b/c

3. I have ..............headache and my friend has ...............terrible toothache.
   a. a-a  b. the-a  c. a-Ø  d. the-the

4. He works as an anchorman on ..............television.
   a. a  b. Ø  c. the  d. a/c

In “Hyperhigh Tech” in Bridges to Academic Writing (1998), by Ann Strauch, the author describes her husband’s enthusiasm for computerized devices and her own doubts about the value of high tech electronics. She gives three examples. In the first example, she describes her husband’s excitement over a computerized showerhead. The author argues that using your hands and the faucets will do the same job just as well or better. In the next example, the author argues that an old fashioned coffee pot makes the same coffee that an automatic coffee maker makes. In the last example, her husband wants to get a new DVD player, one with all the up-to-date technology, but the author argues that a fancy one has unnecessarily features and makes day-to-day tasks too complicated. Ms. Strauch and her husband are examples of how people love or hate technology. I am somewhere in between the two. I agree with the author that sometimes an electronic item becomes so complicated that it is annoying to use. For example, every time I need to program...
my video player to record a TV program at a certain time, I have to read the complicated directions. I believe that part of the problem is that modern electronics just have too many buttons and features. However, there are some computerized devices that do save time and make life more enjoyable. Ms. Strauch may not like complicated electronics, but in my opinion, there is nothing better than waking up to the smell of fresh coffee, prepared just minutes before my alarm goes off, thanks to my high tech coffeemaker.

Fill-in-the-blank test

1. They told me that they had respect for their employer.
2. For many people, childhood was not a happy time.
3. This is the first time that the child has seen an elephant.
4. It takes courage to begin a new life in a strange country.
1. He mentioned that the information he had been given was useful.
2. Her teacher was born in the town of Williamson.
3. She is wearing the beautiful red dress her mother bought her.
4. She said the stories he told her were about the years he had worked in the country of Australia.
1. He purchased a new pair of reading glasses.
2. A drawing on the opposite wall attracted my attention.
3. I saw a thief stealing a car opposite our house.
4. My sister kept asking questions from my friend.
1. She was so tired that she took a two-hour nap.
2. Jack climbs the stairs very fast; he takes two at a time.
3. I chose the wrong road by mistake.
4. The lawyer asked the witness to take the stand.
Title

The Relationship between Self-assessment and Speaking Skill of Junior High School EFL Learners

Authors

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating the relationship between self-assessment and speaking skill. For this purpose, based on an OPT test 18 students were selected among students studying in Alghadir institution. By using Birjandi, Jafarpur and Farhady's scale (1995), measuring the five subskills of vocabulary, structure, pronunciation, fluency and comprehensibility two raters evaluated the speaking ability of the participants. Oxford (1990) and Oskarson's (1987) questionnaire for measuring self-assessment containing 37 items were also administered to the participants. The results showed considerable relationship between speaking skill and self-assessment. It also presented that there is no relationship between pronunciation, structure, and comprehensibility of speaking skill and self-assessment. The study could have implications for English language teachers, learners and text book writers.

Keywords: Self-assessment, Speaking skill, Self-evaluation
1. Introduction

Contrary to the traditional evaluation tasks in which learners take a test, alternative assessments are designed to make learners autonomous and equip them to act in the real world. Among these methods is the self-assessment. A considerable amount of researches indicate that learners have the ability to make precise and valid judgments about their own performance. When self-assessment is correctly implemented, it can promote intrinsic motivation, internally controlled effort, a mastery of goal orientation, and more meaningful learning. Moreover, through self-assessment procedures the teacher can figure out and observe what the student actually understands while at the same time a “dialog” occurs between them.

Lynch (2005) points to the importance of self-assessment for improving speaking performance. He notes that most of the researches show that learners make relatively inefficient use of negative feedback on their ongoing L2 speech, whether feedback is implicit, as with teacher recasts, or explicit, as corrections from teachers or peers. The main goal of the speaking course is to develop those skills necessary for participating effectively in an academic setting.

This study aims to investigate whether learners can take the responsibility of their learning and make decisions about it. Meanwhile, it was hoped that the study could help the students improve their oral performance through self-assessment and promote life-long learning. According to Cooper (2006), by learning to self-assess, students become more skilled at improving the quality of the process of their learning. Also self-assessment increases the responsibility of students for more self-reflection. According to Tudor (1996) self-assessment is one stage in the learning-teaching process. The process is continuous and cyclical. After self-assessment, in which students have identified their weaknesses, they set goals to improve these weaknesses. A concrete plan to address those weaknesses is necessary. According to Richards and Renandya (2002), without this planning, the students may be left with a real sense of failure. This study wants to know whether self-evaluation has any effects on promoting students' speaking skills or not. It is beneficial for learners too because by doing self-assessment in the classroom, teachers can use the results of students' evaluation and can make informal decisions and make the class more dynamic and interesting encouraging learners more motivated and more confident in setting their goals. If a student can identify his/her learning progress, this may motivate further learning. Self-evaluation encourages reflection on one's own learning. It can promote learner responsibility and
independence. Based on what was mentioned above, this study makes an attempt to investigate the following questions:
1. Is there any relationship between self-assessment and speaking skill of junior students?
2. Which components of oral production are related to self-assessment?

The following hypothesis will be answered in this study:

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no relationship between self-assessment and speaking skill of junior students.

**Hypothesis 2:** None of the components of oral production are related to self-assessment.

### 2. Review of related literature

Alternative assessment is a continuous process involving students and teachers in making judgments about the students’ progress. Puhl (1997) believes that alternative assessment emphasizes the process by which learners produce an outcome rather than the product. It enables students to become aware of the gaps that exist between their current knowledge and their desired goals. Self-assessment is the ability by which students can judge their performance and make decision about themselves and their abilities. McAlpine (2000) suggests that self-assessment involves learners to reflect on their past achievements, evaluate their present performance and plan their future goals. By relating learners’ performance in different stages, they can control their learning. The main purpose of self-assessment is to make students focus on the process of learning rather than to focus on the production. It helps learners to pay attention to their actual proficiency in relation to the level they want to achieve. It enables learners feel great responsibility to the evaluation of their proficiency and progress. Furthermore, Dickinson (1987) argues that the use of self-assessment helps learners to develop a criterion for monitoring their own performance and to lead them to 'self-directed' learning. Despite the long existence of self-assessment, the use of self-assessment is rare. Some researchers believe that emphasizing the accountability of procedures of self-assessment does not represent the benefits of this evaluation method and reduces its use. Boud's (1988) believes that inexperienced learners may be resistant to the method of self-assessment in the early stage of its implementation. Studies have identified different problems that are associated with evaluation purposes of self-assessment. These problems include: lack of correlation between learner and teachers' ratings, cultural factors, and students' experiences with evaluation.

#### 2.1. Self-assessment and speaking skills
According to Brown (1994), speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information. Its form and meaning are dependent on the context in which it occurs, including the participants themselves, their experiences, the environment, and the purposes for speaking. McDonough and Shaw (1993) believe that speaking is a linguistic knowledge that creates an oral message for communication and self-expression. Underhill (1987) mentions that there is a high relationship between self-assessment and speaking skills. He believes that self-assessment is among the general types of oral tests. He points out that people continuously evaluate their communication by listening to themselves when they speak, by seeing the influence their speech has on the interlocutors, and paying attention to their replying. Since in real interaction there is not enough time to self-evaluation, this kind of evaluation is unconscious. According to Barns (1976), the concept of self-assessment is supported by theories of constructivism. Constructivism is defined as an approach which argues that the knowledge should be constructed and acquired by active involvement of learners themselves and can’t be learnt or transferred passively to the individuals. According to Black and William (1998), new knowledge can’t be stored in isolation and should be attached to the pre-existing ones, but maybe the new ideas are not consistent with the old ones, so this discrepancy should be resolved by the learners themselves. In order to engage learners in the process of self-assessment, some factors are discussed in the literature that we can categorize them into internal and external factors. Internal factors include: motivation, self-efficacy, awareness, critical thinking, self-direction, Diminishing intimidation, ability, self-confidence, and external factors include: criteria, training and feedback. Blanche (1988) argues that self-assessment techniques range from formal test to informal tools. There are different types of self-assessment techniques which include: checklists, students' progress cards, questionnaires, learners’ diaries, self-assessment tests, rating scales, videotapes, etc. Benson (2001) believes that these tools encourage formative self-monitoring and engage learners in the process of re-evaluation of goals and plans.

3. Methodology
Fifty participants were selected by assigning an OPT test. The students were asked to answer the questionnaire developed by Oskarson (1978) and Oxford (1990). This questionnaire consisted of 37 items. A pilot study was administered to 18 students a few weeks before administration of the survey to check the reliability of the questionnaire.
items. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability index was 0.71, which means that the questionnaire was reliable. Then an interview was run between participants, the researcher and the teacher. This interview was based on the TOIC test. The researcher and the teacher used speaking scale developed by Farhady, Birhandi and Jafarpoor (1995). For obtaining the inter-rater reliability, Pearson correlation Coefficient was used.

Then Pearson Correlation test was run to see whether there would be any relationship between self-assessment and speaking skill.

4. Results

Since the scores of speaking skills of participants were given by two raters (the teacher and the researcher), estimating the inter-rater reliability was necessary to determine whether or not their given scores are reliable. The results in table 4.1 represents that the raters were in agreement over the achievements of the participants.

Table 4.1 correlations between teacher and the researcher's evaluation on speaking skill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking skill. Teacher</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.934**</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researcher</td>
<td>.934</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This table shows the correlation between the scores of the raters and also shows that these scores are reliable.

Concerning the first question, Pearson correlation test was run. Table 4.2 shows the results. The findings show that it is safe to conclude that there is a significant relationship between self-assessment and speaking ability.

Table 4.2 correlations between self-assessment and speaking skill (tech.res)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>self-assessment</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.352**</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.012</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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As the table 4.2 shows, in two raters' evaluation, the significance level is below 0.05, so they believe that there is a relationship between self-assessment and speaking skill of participants.

With regard to the second hypothesis, there is no correlation between pronunciation, structure and comprehensibility of speaking skill and self-assessment. The results in table 4.3 show that the significance level in vocabulary and fluency is below 0.05. This correlation in fluency is a little more than the correlation in vocabulary, so we can conclude that self-assessment has an effect on fluency and vocabulary.

Table 4.3 relationship between the mean scores components of speaking skill and self-assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>self-assessment</th>
<th>pronunciation</th>
<th>structure</th>
<th>vocabulary</th>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>comprehensibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td>0.232</td>
<td>0.365</td>
<td>0.335</td>
<td>0.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.491</td>
<td>0.105</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.017</td>
<td>0.262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, both the teacher and students agreed that self-assessment brought some positive effects to them. The students generally had a clearer understanding of self-assessment and believed that it brought them multiple-benefits as they gained more experiences with it.

5. Conclusion

The students' overall reaction to the implementation of self-assessment in this study was favorable which does not support Boud's (1988) reservations that inexperienced learners may be resistant to the method of self-assessment in the early stage of its implementation. Most of the students in this study agreed that they had less stress during self-assessment than during traditional testing. According to Shaaban (2001), this can support the belief that self-assessment as an alternative assessment method can create an anxiety-free environment. As Underhill (1987) and Brindly (1990) believe there is a high relationship between self-assessment and speaking skill, the results of the following study reveals the same outcome and shows that self-evaluation can improve and have a positive effect on speaking skill. Teachers should provide methodological and psychological support to the
students before and after the self-assessment. According to Peterson (1993), teachers should help learners get rid of the learned helplessness condition and they can do it by encouraging learners to think about their positive attitudes. Learners need to be presented the new ways to improve their performance.

References


The Interface of Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement among Iranian EFL Students

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Abstract

The objective of the study is to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and academic achievement of Iranian EFL students and also the contribution of each subscale of emotional intelligence to Iranian EFL students’ academic achievement. To this end 92 BA students of English Language and Literature and English Translation in the university of Sistan and Baluchestan were studied. 40 of the students were male and 52 of them were female. Participants’ EI was measured by means of a self-report questionnaire, in addition, their academic achievement was determined by their GPA. The relationship between the two variables was computed using Pearson’s correlation, additionally, multiple regression was used to find the contribution of different subscales of EI to students’ academic achievement. Results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement.
among these students and emotionality was found to be the only subscale of EI significantly contributing to students’ academic achievement. By the way no difference was found between the EI of male and female participants.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Emotional Quotient, Academic Achievement, Iranian EFL Students

1. **Introduction**

Studies such as Wichstrom (1998); Woodward and Fergusson (2000); Yoshikawa (1995); Velez, Johnson, and Cohen (1989) have shown that students with less academic achievement are likely to be threatened by issues such as delinquent behavior, dropping out of school, future unemployment, substance abuse, etc. Additionally, education is closely linked to peoples’ life chance, income, and well-being (Battle & Lewis, 2002) so that academic achievement is of significant importance for students. Therefore, it is important to have a clear understanding of what benefits one’s educational attainment so this study aims to study if emotional intelligence has any effect on academic achievement.

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a typical social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions to discriminate among them and to use the information to guide one’s own thinking and actions (Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 2004). While Intelligence Quotient (IQ) has long been used as a predictor of a student’s success, as the world enters the 21st century, research shows that EI is a better predictor of success than the more traditional measures of cognitive intelligence (Goleman, 1995).

EI is one such factor which is instrumental in situations that call upon students to adjust successfully from one environment to another (Hettich, 2000). Parents and teachers always focus on academic performance through developing intelligence and they give little importance to their emotions. Emotions of a student can affect him in many ways. Intelligence may help students in acquiring subject knowledge but only emotional intelligence can enrich their learning proficiency and make them efficient (Shipley, Jackson & Segrest, 2010). Hence, the present study has been undertaken to study the relationship between academic achievement and emotional intelligence of Iranian EFL students and also the contribution of different subscales of emotional intelligence to Iranian EFL students’ academic achievement. In addition, the difference between EQ of male and female students has also been investigated.

The present study aims at answering the following questions:
1. Is there any significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement of Iranian EFL students?
2. To what extent each subscale of emotional intelligence can predict Iranian EFL students’ academic achievement?
3. Is there any significant difference between the EQ of male and female Iranian EFL students?

2. Review of Literature

Mayer and Salovey (1997) define EI as “the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion, and regulate emotion in the self and others” (p. 10). According to Goleman (1995) emotional intelligence consists of five components: Knowing our emotions (self-awareness), managing them, motivating ourselves, recognizing emotions in others (empathy), and handling relationships.

Studies exploring the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic performance have arrived at results. In a study conducted by Rode, Mooney, Arthaud-Day, Near, Baldwin, Rubin & Bommer (2007), it was predicted that emotional intelligence was related to academic performance for two reasons. First, academic performance involves a great deal of ambiguity (Astin, 1993), which has been shown to cause felt stress (Jex, 1998). Second, students are required to manage numerous assignments, adapt to the differing teaching styles and expectations of instructors, work independently toward objectives, and manage conflicting academic and non-academic schedules.

Some researchers such as Robert and Vella (2003), Nelson, Jin, and Wang (2002), and Stottlemyer (2002) also have found a relationship between the two variables, on the contrary, some other researchers such as Lawrence and Deepa (2013),Azimifar (2013), and Newsome, Day, and Catano (2000) studied the nexus of emotional intelligence, cognitive ability, and personality with academic achievement. Emotional intelligence was measured using the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i), including the total EQ-i score and five EQ-i composite factor scores. Neither of the EQ-i factor scores nor the total EQ-i score, were significantly related to academic achievement.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants
92 English Language and Literature and English Translation students studying in the third and fourth year in the University of Sistan and Baluchestan in Zahedan took part in this study. However the choice of participants was mainly based on availability, only third and fourth year students were surveyed since it was taught that a sample such as this may be more homogenous and their grade point average (GPA) could be a more valid indicator of their academic achievement.

3.2 Instruments and Data Collection

This study has used Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire Short Form (TEIQue-SF) (Petrides & Furnham, 2006) to measure learners’ Emotional Quotient (EQ). TEIQue-SF consists of 30 items, each item can be answered on a seven point likert scale ranging from 7 (completely agree) to 1 (completely disagree).

TEIQue-SF has been designed for the measurement of students’ emotional intelligence, however, in addition to the total Emotional Quotient (EQ), this instrument measures students’ scores on different subscales of Emotional Intelligence (Well-Being, Self-Control, Emotionality and Sociability). By the way, students’ grade point averages (GPA) was used as an index of their academic achievement.

TEIQue-SF was administered to the participants in one session, additionally, to measure participants’ academic achievement they were asked to mention their GPA at the bottom of the sheet after completing the questionnaire.

4. Results and Data Analysis

The data for the present study were submitted to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to be analysed. For analysis of data and interpretation of the results, Pearson’s correlation, multiple regression and independent samples t-test were used. Prior to the analysis, the alpha level was set at .05.

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics for GPA (as an index of learners’ academic achievement), subscales of EI and total EI, in addition, table 2 contains descriptive statistics for the total EI based on gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>15.94</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well Being</td>
<td>30.25</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Control</td>
<td>27.03</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question 1

Our first research question asked whether there is any significant relationship between total EI and academic achievement. The results of Pearson’s correlation shows that there is a significant relationship \((r=.39, N=92, p \leq 0.05)\) between students’ total EI scores and their academic achievement.

Additionally, three of the four subscales of EI, namely, well-being, self-control, and emotionality were significantly related to academic achievement. However, no significant correlation was found between academic achievement and the fourth subscale of EI, i.e. sociability. Table 3 shows the correlations between GPA (as an index of academic achievement), subscales of EI, and total EI.

Table 3. Correlations between GPA, subscales of EI and total EI (N=92)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Well-Being</th>
<th>Self-Control</th>
<th>Emotionality</th>
<th>Sociability</th>
<th>Total EI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>(0.30)</td>
<td>(0.22)</td>
<td>(0.40)</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>(0.39)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Boldfaced correlations are significant at \(p \leq 0.05\)

Research Question 2

Concerning the second research question which asked about the contribution of different subscales of EI to students’ academic achievement standard multiple regression was used to determine the unique contribution of each subscale of TEIQue-SF to students’ academic achievement. Emotionality was found to make the highest contribution (36%), after that comes well-being which accounts for 11% of variations in students’ GPA. After them come sociability and self-control with 8% and 5% contributions to students’ GPA respectively. However, among all of these contributions, the contribution made by emotionality is significant \((t=2.83)\).

Table 4 shows the results of multiple regression between subscales of EI and students GPA.

Table 4. Results of a multiple regression between subscales of EI and academic achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscales of EI</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Research Question 3

Finally, to answer the third research question concerning the difference between total EI of male and female Iranian EFL students, an independent-samples t-test was run to compare the means of male and female students. 40 male students were compared to their female counterparts, the result of the t-test indicates no significant differences between male and female students concerning their total EI when the alpha level is set at 0.05. The results of the independent-samples t-test have been provided in table 5.

Table 5. Result of independent-samples t-test comparing total EI of male and female students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-0.88</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0.376</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Discussion

Results of the study showed that EI has a significant correlation with academic achievement. The findings of the current study are in line with the findings of researchers such as Nelson, Jin, and Wang (2002), and Stottlemyer (2002) who have found significant relationships between EI and academic achievement. These results explain that emotional intelligence competencies like ability to regulate one’s feelings, problem solving, intrapersonal and interpersonal skills are highly germane to academic success, for example a student with high EQ may be able to use skills to avoid stress and anxiety which is associated with test-taking and exams. Besides ability to display interpersonal skills may assist students to seek academic help from teachers, peers, and resource persons. However it’s in contrast with the research findings of Arul Lawrence and Deepa (2013) and Azimifar (2013) who didn’t find any significant relationships between EI and academic achievement.

5.1 Implications of the study and suggestions for further research

The results of this study can be helpful for the teachers, counselling and educational psychologists, and researchers as well as curriculum planners. It is necessary to develop a greater awareness of the various interactions involving variables that predict the academic performance of the students.
The significant relationship between EQ and academic achievement may tell us that it may be possible to foster academic achievement among students through paying closer attention to their feelings and emotions, additionally, the fact that emotionality has made a significant contribution to learners’ academic achievement stresses the importance of taking into consideration the emotionality of the students, a variable which traditional teacher-fronted classrooms may fail to pay attention to.

However, all of this requires a greater understanding and awareness of the multiplicity of variables that affect learners’ feelings and emotions. Further studies should also be conducted to explore other variables that directly or indirectly contribute to academic achievement. Variables may include socioeconomic status, family structure, IQ, cultural differences, and other related variables.

Concerning the other finding of the study indicating that there is no significant difference between the total EI of the male and female learners it may mean that at least to some extent men and women need similar treatments regarding EI related issues, however, further research is necessary to shed more light on this issue.

References


Title

The Effect of Synthetic and Analytic Phonics Instruction on Young EFL Learners

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Abstract

Learning to read is one of the greatest accomplishments in early stages of learning another language especially in an EFL context. The purpose of the present study was to examine the instructional effectiveness of two reading approaches for teaching young EFL learners. The approaches under study were analytic phonics and synthetic phonics. In the synthetic phonics program, the children learned the sounds of the letters and then blended them to read the words, while in the analytic phonics they initially learned the whole words by sight and then broke them into their comprising sounds. The participants of this study consisted of 70 fourth and fifth grade students from two elementary schools in the same district in Neyshabour, Iran. They received ninety-minute instructions per week for a total of nine sessions. At the end of the program, learners were tested on word reading. A number of fifty words were presented to them and the cumulative number of words they read correctly formed their scores. The results of the study indicated similar outcome for both approaches. However, the class environment during analytic phonics teaching was more cheerful and challenging than the synthetic
phonics group. On the other hands, the overall pace of teaching in synthetic phonics was somehow faster. Therefore, it is recommended that a combination of these two approaches would be more fruitful.

**Key words:** Literacy, Word recognition, Synthetic phonics, Analytic phonics

1. Introduction

The world is moving from the age of labor and industry to the age of technology and knowledge where bulk of information is transmitted in written form. Therefore, knowing how to read has become an imperative part of everyone's life. It is the ability to read which predicts and defines one's future academic success, the ability to fully participate in the society as an adult and success in all the events that correlate with it (Adams& Osborn, 1990; Masters& Forster, 1997; Callander & Nahmad-Williams, 2010). In the same way, reading difficulties will eventually result in failure in different areas and dropping out of schools.

The importance of children learning to read is not of debate, but the method of teaching reading. Three approaches of reading instruction attract teachers' attention, whole language approach, whole word approach, and phonics-based approaches which include synthetic and analytic phonics. These approaches can be drawn along a continuum on one end of which lies the whole language approach, along the middle is the whole word approach, and on the other end, phonics based approaches can be seen.

Whole language approach was the movement towards child-centered education, which emphasized the meaning and put effort in having children to have full and active participation in the process of learning and construct knowledge for themselves. Stahl and Miller (1989) reported that, for a better part of this century, "there have been voices advocating that reading instruction begin in a natural manner, using the child's own language as a bridge to beginning reading instruction" (p. 87). Since it is a natural process, it is believed that reading does not need explicit instruction, about the same way that speech is perceived and produced. This approach is based on the premise that learning to read and leaning to speak are comparable examples of language development. It encourages children to get from print just enough information to provide a basis for guessing at the gist (Liberman and Liberman, 1992).

Besides, Grabe and Stoller (as cited in Purewal, 2008), assert that without possessing enough automatic word recognition and decoding ability, one cannot successfully derive meaning from the text. In addition, Stahl et al. (1998) states that even the advocates of whole language such as Church, Routman and Goodman confess that good reading instruction includes some
attention to decoding. Stahl et al. (1998) add that these advocates of whole language argued in their recent works that "teachers should be teaching phonics and that decoding instruction had always been part of whole language teaching" (p. 338).

As a response to whole language approach, one way to improve automatic word recognition is whole-word or look-and-say approach, which focuses on sight word reading. In this method, children learn by rote how to recognize a small set of words by just looking at them. Then, they gradually acquire other words that are used repeatedly in the context of stories (Rayner et al., 2002). However, Oakhill and Granham argue about the inefficiency of this approach, in that it requires learners to memorize large number of words without having the ability to decode unfamiliar and unknown words (as cited in Purewal, 2008). Therefore, it is suggested that this method be used in teaching some of English words, such as irregularly spelled words, but not as a sole reading method (Rashtchi, 2003).

In the terms of House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (2005) psychologists such as Gough and Hillinger, and Hoover and Gough believe that reading skill consists of two essential dimensions: recognition of printed words, and text comprehension. The first one is what is referred to as bottom-up processes and the second one is called top-down processes. Thus, teachers should notice that in order for students to reach the top-down processes they, first, need to gain the knowledge of bottom-up processes which is the knowledge of phonemes and word decoding. McCormick (as cited in Schmidgall, 2005), claims that in early years of learning to read, confronting many new words is inevitable; therefore, learning word identification strategies is crucial. He believes that if learners attain competency in word identification, later, they can read unfamiliar words without teacher's assistance. So, word identification which requires lower level processes will lead to higher level processes, which is comprehension of the full text. In support of this idea Ur (1996) points out that teaching through phonics is only a threshold, an entry stage to the aim of becoming fluent readers. In other words, "if a child can decode a text effortlessly, it means then that all their resources, all their energies go into making sense of the text"(House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2005, p.13).

The phonics-based approaches mainly focus on the decoding skill and the relationship between the letters (graphemes) of the alphabet and the individual sounds (phonemes) of spoken language. There is an old saying:" give a man a fish, and he eats once, teach a man to fish, and he eats forever". Teaching children phonics has exactly the same effect. If reading is taught through phonics, this will provide children with invaluable skill that can be used for a lifetime. As children learn how letters are put together to represent sounds of the language,
they will be provided with necessary means to turn them into independent readers (Apple, Eisele, Hsieh& Sun, 1997). Adams and Osborn (1990) define phonics as "instruction intended to help children to understand the fundamentally alphabetic nature of our writing system, and through that understanding, to internalize the correspondences between frequent spelling patterns and the speech patterns ...that those spellings represent" (p. 2).

The critics of phonics approach argue that English spelling has many irregularities that make it difficult for children to read through phonics. In this regard, Hadley (as cited in Yuk Kiu& Hang Fan, 2003), utters that these words need to be learned by the look of the words. Many of these are high frequency words which students will naturally meet when they read. The proponents of phonics assert that the only way for a child to read effectively is having a basis of phonics. They believe that phonics teaches children a system to remember how to read words, and that even the irregular words have some regular letter-sound relationships that can help them remember how to read words (Armbruster et al, 2003). Therefore, it is believed that teaching reading through phonics is beneficial and has great effects on the development of reading (Lloyd, 1998; Lyon and Moore, 2003; House of Commons Education and Skills Committee, 2005; Johnston & Watson, 2005; Rose, 2006; DfES, 2007). Smith (2000) reports that the research done at the University of Oregon found the deficit in phonics as the major source of reading difficulties in young readers especially difficulty in comprehension.

Therefore, the debate is not about whether to teach phonics or not, it is about how best to teach them. Phonics instructional approaches vary according to the unit of analysis or how letter-sound combinations are represented to the student. The two most commonly used methods of phonics are synthetic phonics and analytic phonics.

According to the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee (2005) "synthetic phonics involves segmenting words into the smallest unit of sound, then teaching children to blend these sounds together to form words. So the word ‘street’ is broken down into five components: 's-t-r-e-e-t'. This is sometimes referred to as ‘all-through-the-word’ teaching (p. 13). Johnston and Watson (2007) describe synthetic phonics as an approach that teaches children a few letter sounds to enable them to start blending straight away and continues to teach new sounds at a rapid rate.

According to National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (as sited in Wyse and Jones, 2006), analytic phonics tends to introduce children to the whole word before teaching them how to analyze those words into their component parts. It emphasizes larger subparts of the words like onsets and rimes as well as their phonemes. In other words, it is not
always necessary to break a word into its comprising sounds. Words can be taught based on their onset and rimes. For example, bed, bad and bat has the same beginning, or cat, hat and mat has the same rime. Callander and Nahmad-Williams (2010) aver that "Analytic phonics is based on sounds being identified within whole words to provide analogies with new words" (p. 56). This means that if a child can distinguish and realize the sound /ʃ/ in "dish", then he is able to make reference to that word and read the new word "ship".

Different research has been conducted so far to compare the effectiveness of synthetic and analytic phonics. Ehri et al. (2001) introduce Chall as one of the pioneers in evaluating the effectiveness of systematic phonics instruction and inform that her comprehensive review of beginning reading instruction covered studies up to the mid-1960s, Learning to Read: The Great Debate. Chall's basic finding was that early and systematic phonics instruction in phonics led to better achievement in reading than later and less systematic phonics instruction (Ehri et al., 2001). In the 1967 edition of her review, Chall did not recommend any particular type of phonics instruction. However, Ehri et al. (2001) continues, in the 1983 edition of her review, Chall did suggest that synthetic phonics instruction held a slight edge over analytic phonics instruction. Even in this, her recommendation was temperate. Recently, most of the studies on the effectiveness of synthetic and analytic phonics are held by Johnston and Watson. According to Wrench (2002), in 1999, Johnston and Watson conducted a 16-week study with three groups of first grade students: one group of students was instructed using analytic phonics, a second group was instructed using the synthetic phonics approach and the third group was instructed using analytic phonics and phonemic awareness, the ability to hear and manipulate individual sounds within words (Shanahan, 2006, p. 6). Each group received instruction for twenty minutes a day and was introduced to reading scheme books after six weeks in the program. By the end of the program, children in synthetic phonics group also outperformed their counterparts in the analytic group and the analytic and phonemic awareness group by over seven months in reading and eight month in spelling.

In another study, Johnston and Watson (2004) examined the effectiveness of analytic phonics if it is solely taught or if it is taught along with synthetic phonics. They examined 84 beginning readers (42 boys and 42 girls) who had just started school at an average age of 5. The children were assigned into three experimental groups. One group was told how these words were pronounced, but the children were not taught letter sounds in the training program, and their attention was not drawn to letter sounds within the words (sight word + analytic phonics control group). A second group learnt letter sounds at the rate of 2 a week, and the children’s attention was drawn to letter sounds in the initial position of words
(accelerated analytic phonics control group). The third group learnt letter sounds at the rate of 2 a week, and the children had their attention drawn to letter sounds in all positions of words (analytic + synthetic phonics group). At the first posttest, at the end of the program, the analytic + synthetic phonics group performed better than the sight word + analytic phonics and the accelerated analytic phonics control groups, the other two groups did not differ from each other on these measures. It was concluded that children additionally taught by a synthetic phonics approach made better progress in reading and spelling than children taught solely by analytic phonics approach.

Iranian students live in an EFL context, where they have limited exposure to oral input, the need to be competent readers is more apparent. Especially in early years of learning English where they need to be able to read the questions to be able to answer them. The researcher has come across many students who received good credits in their oral exams, but in the written ones they performed poorly, mainly because they could not read the items. Many teachers claim that their pre-service or in-service training have never equipped them with different and appropriate approaches in literacy instruction, and that early literacy has never been the focus of attention as much as other parts of English teaching such as vocabulary, grammar, reading comprehension and dialogues.

Besides, Most of the research conducted so far has examined the effectiveness of phonics programs on teaching children to read in their first language. The literature on teaching early reading lacks research in EFL contexts. As a result, in this study, the researcher is going to examine the effectiveness of synthetic and analytic phonics on learners' word reading.

The research questions regarding this article are:
1. Is synthetic phonics approach to reading development more effective than analytic phonics approach?
2. Does synthetic phonics bring with itself a shorter period of reading achievement than analytic phonics?
3. From the instructor's perspective, does synthetic phonics bring a more lively and challenging environment to the classroom?

2. Method

2.1. Participants

70 female students participated in this study. The participants were fourth and fifth graders of elementary school. They participated in this study on their own will from two elementary
schools in the same district in Neyshabour, Iran. The students in each group were true beginners. That is, they have not received any formal instruction in English. Therefore, all of them were in the same level. 35 students were assigned to synthetic group and 35 to analytic group. During the study, there was one case of subject mortality in the analytic group and three cases in the synthetic group.

2.2. Materials

English language has 26 letters which are used to represent the 44 phonemes. As mentioned before, phonics program only teaches the sound of a language not the letters. Therefore, in order to teach phonemes, for the synthetic group, 53 flashcards were prepared and copied. The succession of the flashcard was based on the one proposed by *Letters and Sounds* (DfES, 2007). Each card contains the new sound, which is going to be taught in the middle of the page, the sounds that have been taught so far at the top of the page, and at the bottom of the page; the words that they would be able to read using the new sound and previously taught sounds. There are, also, pictures of some of the objects that contain the new sound in the beginning, middle or end of the words. Although, all these 53 flashcards were prepared, only 42 of them were taught and examined.

For the analytic group, 9 pages were prepared. Each page contained a chart. Each part of the chart contains a word with its picture. As it is mentioned before, the analytic phonics takes advantage of onset and rimes, so the pictures in each paper are categorized mostly based on the rimes.

For assessment, a list of fifty high frequency words based on the tables in *Letter and Sounds* (DfES, 2007) was used.

2.3. Design of the Study

The students in this experiment are divided into two groups. Group 1 received the synthetic phonics as the method of teaching reading, and group 2 was taught using the analytic phonics. The subjects were true beginners, and according to Ary et al. (2009) this is the case where pretest is not appropriate since "the learning is not yet manifest" (p, 332). Thus, no pretest was assigned, and the learners were only tested on the post-test. The subjects of both groups are measured on the dependent variable which was the word recognition ability. Scores are then compared to determine the effect of independent variables which were the methods of teaching reading i.e. synthetic and analytic phonics. The design of this study is "one of the simplest and still one of the most powerful of all experimental designs" (Ary et al., p, 332).
2.4. Procedure

2.4.1. Synthetic Phonics Program

Each session begins with the review of the previous sessions. Then, the copy of the flashcard of the sound which is going to be taught is distributed among students. As mentioned before, each paper contains the new sound, the picture of some objects that contain that sound, as well as some words to be read afterwards. For starter, teacher shows students her own flashcard and pronounces the sound out aloud several times, and then asks the students to repeat it chorally and individually. After that, she turns to the pictures and teaches their names. In the beginning sessions the students would only learn the pictures by heart and would not be faced with the written forms, but as they proceed and learn more phonemes, they would read names of the objects, which are included in the reading section at the bottom of the page. After teaching the new sound and the pictures, teacher shows them how to write the new sound, first with her fingertip and then on the board. Students do the same in the air and on their notebooks. The flashcards prepared for students are not colored, so that they can color them themselves, just for the fun of it.

2.4.2. Analytic Phonics Program

Five to six words are decided for each session. They are mostly the words that have the same rimes. The teacher draws the pictures of the words on the board one after another, and says their names aloud, having students repeat after her. After making sure that all students have learnt all the pictures, the teacher writes their names under each picture. The names along with the written forms are practiced and read by all students, until all of them memorize the written forms. Then, the teacher cleans the picture off the board, and read the written forms once or twice, and after that have students to read them based on what they have memorized. After this, the teacher reads each word and asks the students to say the comprising sounds of each word and say if a sound is in the beginning, middle or the end of those words. Each phoneme is written in the air and then on the board with students writing them in the air and on their notebooks.

2.4.3. General Activities

Because of the importance of the reinforcement of the letter sounds, each session of either of the programs started with the review of the previous sessions. It was either by reading the words on the flashcards by different students or by the teacher writing different words on the board and having them read those words chorally or individually. Sometimes it was done as a game. The number of the words the students could read was counted, and the winner was the one who read the most number of words.
Multi-sensory activities were the basic characteristics of both phonics programs. These activities encompassed simultaneous visual, auditory and kinesthetic activities involving, for example physical movement to copy letter shapes, and to draw the sketch using the newly taught sound; for example, drawing a snake which would resemble the sound 's'. These were used as mnemonics to help children memorize letters. During both programs' class periods, the song of the alphabet was played as a source of auditory input. The multi-sensory work revealed that children generally bring to the learning task as many of their senses as they can, rather than limiting themselves to only one sensory pathway (Rose, 2006).

Rose (2006) proposes that it is sensible to teach both names and sounds of letters (para. 81); however, Lloyd (1998) believes that at the early stages all the letter sounds should be taught not their names. So, 'fffffff' is not 'eff' for the letter 'f'. She asserts that after teaching the 18 first-group of sounds, the students can be informed that the letters have names as well as sounds. This can be done through alphabet song or recitation. Accordingly, in this study, the names of the letters were not introduced officially until the sounds of 26 letters of alphabet were taught. Because it was believed that learning both letter names and sounds together might be confusing for students. In both programs, the concentration was only on the lower case letters. And the capital letters were only incidentally, if asked by any student, referred to.

3. Results

The performance of students on word reading was tested with a 50-word reading test after the treatment. The learners were all beginners with no formal instruction in English. Therefore a pretest on their word reading seemed unnecessary. According to National Reading Panel (2000) "standardized tests are designed to assess reading and spelling across a wide range of ability levels and hence are less sensitive to differences at any one level in the range. Also, experimenter tests may be more sensitive because often they are tailored to detect the phonemes and graphemes that were taught" (p.20). Therefore, the researcher found it more helpful to conduct and administer the posttest herself using the table of high frequency words presented in Letters and Sounds (DfES, 2007). The learners individually took the reading test. They were given any time they needed to read the words and the number of words they could read fully was counted. Since the focus of this study was on word recognition, the students were required to read the words in isolation and only the correct pronunciation was in focus of attention, not the stress.
In order to estimate the reliability of the post test, KR-21 formula was used. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1 Reliability Indices for Post-Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>KR-21</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23.43</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>106.49</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table 1, the reliability of the teacher made test is 0.9 which is acceptable. Therefore, the 50-words reading test used in this research enjoyed acceptable indices for reliability.

After administering the post test, the mean scores of the synthetic phonics and the analytic phonics groups were calculated, the result of which are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of the Post-test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>24.40</td>
<td>8.66</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytic</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22.52</td>
<td>11.72</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 2, the mean score of the analytic group was 22.52 with the standard deviation of 11.72, and the mean score of the synthetic group was calculated as 24.40, with the standard deviation of 8.66.

In order to check the normality of the data two measures were used. One was the measure of skewness which needs to be smaller than one to guarantee the normality of the data. The second one was the standard error of skewness. In order to assure normality, the standard error of skewness should be smaller than two. The results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3 Checking the Assumption of Normality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Std. Error of Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic</td>
<td>-0.705</td>
<td>0.414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytic</td>
<td>-0.381</td>
<td>0.403</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 3 the measure of skewness for synthetic group was -0.705 and for analytic group was -0.381, which are both smaller than 1 (skewness= -0.705, -0.381<1). And the standard error of skewness for synthetic group was 0.414 and for the analytic group was 0.403, which are both smaller than 2 (Std. error of skewness= 0.414, 0.403<2).

Since the scores were distributed normally, which met the assumption of normality a t-test, was used to check whether there was any significant difference between the means of the analytic group and the synthetic group. The result of the t-test is presented in Table 4.
Table 4 Comparing Means of the Post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances</td>
<td>2.918</td>
<td>0.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the P-value equals to 0.465 and this is bigger than the level of significance which is set at 0.05 (P-value= 0.465> 0.05), the null hypothesis will be accepted. This leads to the conclusion that there was no significant difference between teaching beginning reading through synthetic phonics approach or analytic phonics approach. The results of the statistical analysis led the researcher to conclude that synthetic phonics instruction is not more effective than analytic phonics in EFL beginners' word recognition ability. So, both methods will result in the similar reading attainment.

4. Discussion

Although most of the research done on teaching beginning reading confirms the superiority of synthetic phonics over analytic phonics, such as those conducted by Johnston and Watson, no such superiority was observed in the present population. When the students were examined on the basis of the number of words they read correctly, according to the result of the t-test, no significant difference was observed in teaching beginning reading to EFL learners through analytic or synthetic phonics; that is, both methods have similar effect on EFL learners reading achievement. This entails further that there would be no difference in going from parts to the whole, as it is in the synthetic approach, or moving from whole to parts as is taught in the analytic phonics approach.

Even though the results of both approaches are similar, during taking the exam, the researcher observed that the synthetic phonics group read the words much more readily, and rapidly than the analytic phonics group. The reason of this difference might be because the synthetic approach entails direct instruction in teaching isolated sounds, and provides reading strategies for identifying unknown words. Thus, the students articulate the sounds one by one as they proceed which would improve their confidence because they are blending the sounds that they already know. While, in analytic phonics learners need to refer back to already
known words to recollect the sounds in the word by analogy, which takes longer time and needs more complex cognitive processes than simply retrieving the sounds from memory.

An additional reason for faster reading of words might be associated with the amount of time spent on practicing the reading of new words. During the synthetic phonics sessions, since students first learned the sounds explicitly and in isolation, the rest of the session was devoted to reading new words using the newly taught and already familiar sounds. This might have helped them to become more automatic in retrieving the sounds from memory. On the other hand, during the analytic phonics session, most of the time was spent teaching them to read the new words by heart without knowing the grapheme-phoneme correspondences. Only after learning the words by sight they would move to analyzing the words into their corresponding sounds, and making them familiar with the written form of the phonemes. Therefore, this difference in the amount of time spent in the synthetic phonics condition allowed students to have a greater amount of exposure to reading and working with the new words, thereby potentially increasing the likelihood of increasing the pace and speed of reading.

Regarding the pace of teaching in synthetic and analytic phonics, the researcher observed that the pace of teaching phonemes during the beginning sessions of analytic phonics seemed faster, since students learn to read complete CVC words which had the same rhyming, instead of learning one sound at a time, as was taught in synthetic phonics. But, as the teaching moved to the long vowels, Final /e/ patterns (cvce), and vowel combinations the need to move in a slower pace was sensed more in an analytic phonics program and students were more successful in the explicit and isolated instruction of these sounds.

And finally, on the subject of the class environment, it should be noted that during both class periods the song of alphabet was played, students were engaged in different games (at the end of each session), and in both classes pictures and drawings were used as a source of multi sensory input in order to "capture their interest, sustain motivation, and reinforce learning in imaginative and exciting ways" (Rose, 2006, p. 70). However, the researcher found the analytic phonics class more lively and challenging. Since students were supposed to memorize the names of the words, match their spellings with the pictures, and then without the pictures more competition was observed by the researcher among students in memorizing and volunteering in reading the words. However, in the synthetic phonics group this lively competition was not observed and students were more passive during the teaching of the sounds.
5. Conclusion

Reading is an important element of learning a language especially in an EFL context. Since the EFL learners' exposure to spoken language is very limited reading can be the very source of comprehensible input. Besides, when they get to intermediate and advanced levels they need to read newspapers, articles and books. In order to get to this point, they need a solid and robust foundation in reading. Although the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension, difficulty in word-level reading becomes increasingly worse as students move to upper grades which would result in poor comprehension and low motivation. The primary grades are of crucial importance in students' educational life, and teachers are in a position to ensure that their students become proficient lifelong readers.

Most of the previous studies evaluate the effectiveness of different reading approaches on first language learners. Thus, the researcher in this study tried to assess the effect of two most known method of teaching beginning reading, synthetic phonics and analytic phonics on EFL Iranian students. The goal in all phonics programs is equipping learners with sufficient knowledge and use of alphabetic code (the grapheme phoneme correspondences) so that they can use this knowledge to read words, make normal progress in learning to read and comprehend a text.

The result of this study demonstrated similar outcomes from synthetic and analytic phonics in reading attainment of EFL beginners. Therefore, as National Reading Panel (2000) argues, as students come to the class with different abilities and skills, teachers should not fixate on only one method of teaching reading. It would be more productive for teachers to use a mixture of methods in their teaching process. Therefore, if the ministry of education provides to-be English teachers with the vast research in linguistics and psychology about reading, and if they include pre-service and in-service programs with modern, high-quality course on phonics, the learners as graduate would be more proficient in reading than what is expected.

References


Title
The Effect of Task Repetition and Task Structure on Iranian Intermediate EFL Learners' Oral Production

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Abstract

This study investigated the effect of task repetition and task structure on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' accuracy and fluency of oral production. 80 learners of an English language institute participated in this study. Having being homogenized by a proficiency test (Oxford Placement Test), 40 learners (n=40) were randomly selected and assigned into two group, control and experimental group. Both groups sat for the pre-test of oral production. The purpose of this pre-test was to test the initial subject knowledge of the learners in oral performance. Then the experimental group received treatment based on task repetition and task structure. However the control group received no treatment and approached the same way as it was before. Finally, both groups sat for post-test of oral production. The results obtained from Independent t-test revealed that task repetition and task structure significantly affected learners’ oral production. It was found that giving EFL learners the opportunity to repeat a structured narrative task brings about gains in fluency, as well as accuracy.
1. Introduction

Speaking is an important part of learning any language. Many people who learn English as a foreign language (EFL) are especially interested in learning English for conversation while traveling or for use in business, as it is considered an international standard language for communication. When L2 learners speak, the speed of their production, the variety and precision of their words, and the accuracy of their speech is influenced by a number of factors, such as the anxiety learners may feel as they speak, their proficiency, or the degree of cognitive complexity of the task that learners are trying to perform. Over the past 30 years, tasks become a unit of design in communicative curriculum. They are designed in a way to engage learners in real world communication and lead to implicit learning (Crabbe, 2007). According to Long (1985), the most important role of a language task is to confront learners with language problems in completing the task. Interlanguage development can be achieved through the meaningful use of language and the engagement of more naturalistic acquisitional processes (Skehan & Foster, 1997).

Many researchers have tried to shed light on the process of speech production and perception by firstly focusing on L1 and then advancing to L2 production. In order to understand the way that L2 production works we should first know about L1 production. In this study Levelt's (1989, 1993) L1 speech production model will be used. This model is the most widely accepted and influential model in L2 production research, and therefore its use in this study will permit comparisons to explanations and findings in other studies. According to this model the mechanisms that underlie speech production include: the conceptualizer, a component that is responsible for generating and monitoring messages and during which intentions and relevant information to be conveyed are selected and prepared in the form of preverbal message; the formulator, in charge of giving grammatical and phonological shape to messages and which feeds on the lexicon; and finally articulator in which the linguistic structures are transformed into actual speech. This mechanism enables the speaker to monitor his or her production prior to articulation and to reformulate his or her speech when necessary. These three stages are parallel in L1, i.e. native speakers plan the content, organize language and make utterances, simultaneously, because the necessary grammatical and phonological encoding draws on automatized linguistic knowledge, which can be accessed and executed very fast (Pawley & Syder, 1983). However, it’s a step-by-step process in L2
speakers, because such automatized knowledge and lexical processing shortcuts are beyond the scope of a language learner, resulting in slow speech or even silence as her/his conceptualizer, formulator, and articulator compete for limited attentional resources. Whereas it appears that in any competition for attentional resources the conceptualizer will win (VanPatten, 1990). Some of the researchers (Bygate, 2001; Foster & Skehan, 1996; Lynch & Maclean, 2001) have suggested that it is possible to increase attentional resources for the formulator and articulator through planning time and task repetition, presumably because an initial performance of the task, or planning time before the task, takes care of the conceptualizer’s attentional needs and there is now more capacity for linguistic encoding and articulation. In turn, this should provide the speaker with greater capacity for attention to L2 forms.

In pedagogy, tasks have been mainly investigated from two different perspectives to language teaching: an interactional perspective and a cognitive information processing perspective. Within the interactional perspective to task-based research, some researchers have focused on the role of interaction in the development of L2 particularly with respect to the negotiation of meaning (Long, 1989; Pica & Doughty, 1985) and others, also adopting the interactional perspective, have attempted to explore how learners co-construct meaning while they are engaged in interaction (Duff, 1993; Van Lier & Matsu, 2000). The main interest of this group has been to allow participants to shape the task to meet their own needs and to build meanings collaboratively. The second perspective to task-based research, i.e. cognitive approach to language learning focuses on the psychological processes that are involved in task performance. In the cognitive perspective, the effect of cognitive demands of tasks on learners’attentional resources and language performance has been investigated (Robinson, 2001; Skehan, 1998). Skehan (1998) argued that performing in an imperfectly learned L2 imposes a large burden on the learner’s attention and causes the learner to make choices: to prioritize one aspect of performance, such as being accurate, over another, such as being fluent. This model of L2 performance has, however, been challenged by Robinson (2001, 2003, 2005). He drew on Givon's work (1985), for whom the functional complexity of a task is matched by the structural complexity of the language needed to express it. This means that the more demanding a task is deemed to be in terms of its content, the more complex the language a learner will attempt when transacting it: Form and content are not in competition, but in league with one another. Robinson (2001) rejected limited capacity processing, and proposed a model of attention in which language learners can access multiple attentional
pools that do not compete. As depletion of attention in one pool has no effect on the amount remaining in another, language learners can prioritize both form and meaning.

Many researchers studied the effect of tasks in SLA, but exploring those tasks which can improve EFL learners' oral production appropriately is still a problem. In spite of lots of studies on task repetition and task structure, which lend support to their effectiveness on oral proficiency, we still don't know which one has more pedagogical and educational influence on Iranian EFL learners' oral production and whether simultaneous use of these two variables leads to an improvement. So, it's important to get an insight into the effect of task repetition and task structure on learners' ability to understand and speak English inside and outside the classroom and the way through which learners' oral production can be improved. Therefore, the effect of task repetition and task structure on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' oral production will be studied in this research.

2. Review of literature

As tasks help SLA, many researchers believe that tasks should not be constantly changed, because classroom has a complex and varying context and if we constantly change the situation and tasks, we might impede learners from learning. Most of the studies have been concerned with one time language use and performance, rather than improving performance skills over time. As Ellis (2009) contends, “task performance at one time can be seen as providing planning for performance of the same task at a second or a later time”. It's clear that good performance at one time and continued and consistent development of performance in the long run are completely different.

Task repetition has been the subject of a series of studies. In an early study, Bygate (1996) compared one learner’s retelling of a cartoon on two separate occasions, three days apart. Bygate found that task repetition resulted in significant improvement in fluency and accuracy. In the case of accuracy, gains were found in terms of vocabulary, idiomaticity, grammatical markers, and structure. Gass et al. (1999) examined the impact of task repetition on learners’ use of L2 Spanish. They sought to see whether repeating (both same and slightly modified) narrative tasks induces L2 learners to produce more sophisticated language use and whether or not more accurate and/or sophisticated language use carries over to a new context. Results showed that task repetition had an effect on overall proficiency and partial accuracy. By drawing upon the results of his previous study (Bygate, 1996), Bygate (2001) conducted a larger study that attempted to explore the effects of practicing a narrative and an
interview on two occasions with a 10-week interval in between. He found that task repetition had a significant effect on fluency of learners’ performances. The same results were reported by Bygate and Samuda (2005). More recently, Ahmadian and Tavakoli (2010) demonstrated that performing an oral narrative task on the second occasion advantaged fluency of Iranian EFL learners’ production. They illustrated that task repetition in tandem with careful online planning (i.e. giving L2 learners ample time to carry out the task) resulted in gains in oral performance. This condition also brought about an exponential increase in complexity.

Inherent storyline structure of narrative tasks also attracted researchers’ attention. Generally speaking, inherent narrative structure pertains to the order of events in a narrative which is dependent on certain factors. As pointed out by Tavakoli and Skehan (2005), this design feature of narratives is a function of ‘a clear timeline; a script; a story with a conventional beginning, middle, and end; a problem solution structure; and an appeal to what is familiar and organized in the speaker’s mind.

Investigating narrative task structure as a strand of research was prompted by post-hoc analyses of findings reported by Foster and Skehan (1996) and Skehan and Foster (1997). In effect, these studies primarily sought to examine the degree to which task familiarity would influence L2 oral discourse. On the whole, the outcomes confirmed that talking in an L2 about a well-known topic elicited a more fluent and accurate performance and that where task participants were required to talk about unfamiliar information, less fluent and accurate output was produced. Nevertheless, in their post-hoc interpretation of these findings, they noticed that the most fluent task performance was generated by two tasks that had a tightly structured story line. Skehan and Foster’s (1999) subsequent study confirmed this post-hoc interpretation. These researchers found that the tightly structured narrative retold by the participants was significantly more fluent and more accurate than the loosely structured narrative. Elsewhere, Tavakoli and Skehan (2005) examined the way the degree of narrative task structure affected oral L2 production in assessment context. On balance, the results suggested that language performance in the more structured tasks was more accurate and fluent than that in the less structured tasks. In a more recent investigative attempt, Tavakoli and Foster (2011) tried to replicate the impacts for task structure reported in the previous studies. In order to obtain more comparable results, they used the same structured and unstructured tasks employed by Tavakoli and Skehan (2005). Findings of their study replicated the results found by Skehan and Foster (1997, 1999) and Tavakoli and Skehan (2005) that task structure is associated with accuracy and fluency in L2 oral production.
3. Method

3.1. Participants
After taking a placement test from 80 learners of an English language institute in Rasht city, all of whom had Persian language backgrounds, 40 learners (n=40) whose scores placed them at intermediate level were randomly selected. Participants were between 19-30 years old and they were all female. None of the participants had ever been to an English-speaking country and they had no opportunity to use English language for communicative purposes outside the classroom context. In the institute they had four hours of English per week. All participants signed written informed consent forms. Random assignment was used to form the two groups. These two groups were:

- Experimental group: Repeating a structured narrative task twice with a one-week interval;
- Control group: No treatment

3.2. Instrumentation
First of all, to make sure of the homogeneity of the groups in terms of level of proficiency, 80 intermediate EFL learners of a language institute in Rasht took the Oxford Placement Test (OPT). For the main study a highly structured narrative task was used as the main task. Narrative tasks as stated by Tavakoli and Skehan (2005) “refer to short stories based on a sequenced set of picture prompts which, with the purpose of eliciting oral language production, are shown to the participants while they are asked to narrate the story”. The picture story (See Appendix A) was useful for data collection because it was wordless comic strip. The task (Football task (Heaton, 1966)) was a story of a group of kids who are playing football. One of them shoots the ball and it falls into a pit. They try to take the ball out of the pit; however, their efforts are in vain. Finally, they decide to fill the pit with water to get their ball back.

The oral production test that was given to participants as the post-test required them to talk about their personal experiences of language learning and advantages of learning a second language. This topic was chosen because according to Skehan and Foster (1997) such kinds of topics in which participants are required to use the information which they knew well and talk about what they probably already rehearsed in English are the least cognitively taxing topics.

3.3. Procedure
After a pilot study on a small number of learners in an English language institute in Rasht, 40 intermediate level learners were randomly assigned to two groups. These two groups are as following:

- **Experimental Group: Task repetition with the highly structured narrative**

  As in the literature there is no established standard regarding the intervals between repetitions as well as the number of repetitions, following Bygate (1996) and Ahmadian and Tavakoli (2010), it was decided to ask learners to look at the pictures and recount the narrative twice with a one-week interval in between. However, the participants were not told that they were about to repeat the same task a week later. One week later they were required to recount the same narrative. After retelling the structured narrative for the second time, they participated in the oral production post-test. It should be noted that the pre and post-test were taken into consideration and analyzed.

- **Control Group: No treatment**

  In this condition, learners participated in a pre-test which was the same as the experimental group. As no treatment was built into this condition, participants were not required to repeat the task. A week later, they participated in the same oral production post-test that was taken from the experimental group.

The participants of each group met individually with the researcher in a quiet room. They were told that the tasks and tests are for purposes of research and that the results of the study won’t affect their grades. However, they were not told what the purpose of the study was. Both groups once entered the room where the researcher was waiting for, were instructed to describe the picture and not interacting with the researcher. They were told that they could not use notes to talk about the picture. To avoid the participants from engaging in pre-task, strategic planning and, as a result, control for its impact on task performance (Yuan & Ellis 2003; Ellis & Yuan 2005), they were told that they had just 30 seconds to look at the picture before retelling it. In addition, learners were reminded that they would eventually have three to four minutes to carry out the task, so that not to engage in careful online planning. All data were audio recorded and transcribed by the researcher.

4. **Measurement of the variables**

Currently, the majority of SLA researchers believe that L2 proficiency and L2 performance are multi-componential constructs (Skehan & Foster, 2001; Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Skehan, 2009). It is also advisable to use the same measures as was used in previous studies (Ellis...
&Barkhuizen, 2005). Ellis (2005, 2008) also points out that using multiple measures to assess each dimension of language performance may result in a more valid assessment but that using different measures by different researchers may decrease the comparability of the results obtained. Thus, building on this argument and following previous studies (Ahmadian & Tavakoli, 2010), the following complementary but distinct measures were chosen and employed to assess oral performance. These measures are as follows:

**Accuracy measures:**

*Error-free clauses:* First clauses in each transcription were counted and then the number of grammatical errors were calculated. All errors relating to syntax, morphology and lexical choice were considered. Therefore, accuracy was measured by finding the percentage of error-free clauses to the whole number of clauses (Foster & Skehan, 1996). The following is the formula for the calculation of error-free clauses.

\[
\frac{\text{Number of error-free clauses}}{\text{Number of clauses}} \times 100
\]

*Correct verb forms:* Correct verb forms can be defined as the percentage of all verbs that were used correctly in terms of tense, aspect, modality, and subject-verb agreement (Wiggleworth, 1997).

**Fluency measures:**

*Rate A (number of syllables produced per minute of speech):* The number of syllables within each narrative divided by the total number of seconds to complete the task and multiplied by 60.

*Rate B (number of meaningful syllables per minute of speech):* Rate A’s procedure was followed again but all syllables, words, and phrases that were repeated, reformulated, or replaced were excluded. The formula used for the calculation of Rate A and Rate B was:

\[
\frac{\text{Number of syllables}}{\text{Total number of seconds}} \times 60
\]

The main advantage of this kind of measure is that it in fact includes both the amount of speech and the length of pauses, since it takes into account the number of syllables and the total number of seconds in the narrative.

All narrations were recorded and transcribed by the researcher. The transcribed narrations were then segmented and scored based on the measures which were chosen for assessing accuracy and fluency of oral production. To ensure that the segmentation of the transcripts was conducted reliably, 50% of the data was checked for intercoder / inter-rater reliability.
Cronbach’s alpha magnitude was .98 for accuracy and .99 for fluency (table 3.3, 3.4). Thus, we can be sure that the segmentation and measurement procedures were almost reliable. The results were then entered into SPSS version 16.0. In doing so, descriptive statistics were first used and the scores were checked in terms of normality of the distribution. The nonsignificant results obtained for Kolmogorov-Smirnov scores confirmed the normality of the distribution of the measures. Then to see whether there were statistically significant differences between the two groups in terms of the measures of accuracy and fluency, independent-sample t-tests was performed.

5. Results

To show the similarity of the experimental and control group prior to the treatment, the mean scores for all measures obtained on the pre-test were compared across the two groups. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics for experimental and control group on the pre-test. As is shown in table 1, the experimental and control group were fairly homogeneous in terms of their oral production prior to the treatment. Results of the independent-sample t-test (table 2) confirm that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Error-free clauses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38.3450</td>
<td>5.31537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38.3350</td>
<td>5.15336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Correct Verbs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37.0000</td>
<td>3.82581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37.7700</td>
<td>4.03786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RateA</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>74.7590</td>
<td>5.03038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>74.8075</td>
<td>5.63720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RateB</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>69.8020</td>
<td>5.52412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>69.8685</td>
<td>6.59893</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To test the validity of the tasks, they were evaluated by some experts in the field to validate the suitability of the task to students' level (i.e. intermediate level), the suitability of the time, and test organization.

The first research question pertained to the effect of task repetition and task structure on intermediate EFL learners' accuracy of oral production. For this purpose results obtained from the two groups were compared in terms of accuracy. With respect to the measures of accuracy, descriptive statistics of the two groups were obtained (as shown in table 3).

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of Accuracy for Post-test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Error-free Clauses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>47.23</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>52.12</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Correct Verbs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>42.50</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>46.67</td>
<td>4.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to test the first hypothesis, Independent sample t-test was run to examine the possible differences among the two groups. Table 4 shows that there isn't a statistically significant difference in the test of equality of variances of the two groups (p > 0.05). However, it shows that there is a significant difference in the means of the two groups in terms of accuracy (p < 0.05).

Concerning accuracy, participants’ performance in experimental group was more accurate than their counterparts in control group (M=52.12, M=47.23 for error-free clauses and M=46.67, M=42.50 for correct verbs, respectively for experimental and control group). In other words, task repetition and task structure significantly assisted learners’ accurate L2 production.
Concerning second research question which was to explore the influence of task repetition and task structure on fluency of L2 production, to provide a plausible answer, performances of the two groups were compared in terms of fluency. With respect to the measures of fluency, descriptive statistics of the groups were obtained (as is shown in table 5).

In order to test the second hypothesis, Independent sample t-test was run to examine the possible differences among the groups. Table 6 shows that there isn't a statistically significant difference in the test of homogeneity of variances of the two groups in terms of fluency (p > 0.05). It also shows that there is a significant difference in the means of the two groups in terms of fluency (p < 0.05).

The findings showed that the mean score of experimental group is higher than the control group (M= 91.37, M=82.14 for Rate A and M=85.25, M=77.29 for Rate B, respectively for experimental and control group). Therefore, task repetition and task structure significantly
assisted learners' fluent L2 production. Hence, it is safe to argue that task repetition and task structure enhance fluency of oral L2 production.

6. Discussion and conclusion

This study confirmed the generally beneficial effects of task repetition on fluency of oral production. In addition, and more importantly, it was found that task repetition interacts with task structure to exert differential effects on the nature of L2 performance. In particular, it was shown that rehearsing a highly structured oral narrative task can enhance accuracy and fluency of L2 production. The results showed that participants in experimental group exceeded those in control group, both in accuracy and fluency. This result led to the rejection of the first and second hypothesis of the study.

The gain in accuracy in the experimental group can be attributed to the attentional resources of human beings. As L2 speaker understands the theme of the story in the first performance, there isn't any need to allocate the attentional resources to understand the theme of the story (Tavakoli, 2009) and by having more attentional resources available, the L2 speaker can focus on other aspects of performance, i.e. making sure their performance is accurate. This result lends support to Skehan's (2009) suggestion that attending to one area of oral performance might result in the reduction of other, unless the learner is assisted through manipulating performance conditions (e.g. the planning time available) or design features of the tasks (e.g. task structure).

In Levelt’s (1989) terms, this (task structure), results in a lighter processing load for the conceptualizer and more “space” for the formulator to work within. The formulator can give more attention to grammatical accuracy, and performance is subsequently more accurate.

The gain in fluency can be attributed to the fact that since learners do not know what the task is about, when they do it for the first time they go through a degree of dysfluency. According to Ellis (2003), repeating the same task enhances fluency because learners already know what the task is about and, thus, perform it with a preconceived notion about the content to be communicated.

This result can also be explained from a cognitive, information-processing perspective according to which human beings poses limited capacity which does not allow the speaker to attend to all aspects of the language at the time of task performance. Therefore during the initial task performance learners are primarily concerned with the planning of content, i.e. processing the preverbal message (Bygate, 1996). They scan their memory for the language
that best suits dealing with the task and this is how familiarity with the message content is established. However, on the second opportunity to perform the task, since learners are already familiar with the message content, they have attentional resources to shift their attention from content to the selection and monitoring of appropriate language, which results in more fluency (Bygate, 1999). To put it simply when a learner performs a new task the limited capacity requires more processing and attentional resources than when he or she is performing the same task for the second time.

To summarize, task repetition coupled with task structure assists L2 learners in both conceptualizing and articulating the message they want to communicate. Findings of this study imply that design features of tasks (i.e. task structure) contribute to the influence of task repetition on the oral performance of learners.

From a pedagogical point of view, the findings reported here can assist teachers in making empirically informed decisions in classroom. Given that L2 learners’ task performance is affected by its design features and performance options in predictable ways, EFL teachers and syllabus designers can manipulate task design and implementation factors in such a way as to achieve certain pedagogical objectives.

Theoretically, the results presented in the current study could help SLA researchers test hypotheses as to the nature of interlanguages as well as the validity, usefulness, and relevance of Levelt’s (1989) speech production model which is essential in discussing the role and psycholinguistic function of planning in L2 performance and L2 acquisition (Ellis, 2005, 2009). Besides, since the significant impact of different types of planning on oral production has been extensively investigated from different perspectives and in various contexts, this line of work could help enrich task-based language pedagogy in English language teaching contexts (Ahmadian, 2012).

In this study narrative tasks were used for collecting data from the participants. The issue of interaction between task design features, procedural options, and task repetition is certainly worth further exploration using other task types, performance options, and individual variables. This, according to Ellis (2009), is essential to providing a full theoretical account of the role of planning. Thus, there is need for further research to take into consideration how other variables interact with planning conditions to influence L2 production and SLA.

As was mentioned before, since this study was conducted in a laboratory condition, there remains a question as to whether the same results will be obtained from real classroom settings. Therefore, performing the research in a real classroom might worth studying. It will be also very useful to add longitudinal research studies to the abundant cross-sectional
studies, as these would be able to illuminate the relationship between L2 performance and long-term L2 progress.

References


Appendix A

Picture Story Task

Football task, Heaton, 1966
Form-focused Communicative Tasks in the Pedagogical Context of EFL Classes: A Recommended Practical Pedagogical Model

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Abstract

Research tradition abounds with, on both theoretical and empirical levels, studies on focus on form and the suggestion that some kind of form-focused activity needs to be incorporated into second language (L2) communicative contexts. However, much less work has been published on how this aim can be pedagogically practiced in the framework of the classroom. The present paper, inspired by three dimensions of form-communication tasks of Loschky and Bley-Vroman (1993), and Ellis's (1991) notion of grammar problem tasks tries to demonstrate how it is possible to manage focus-on-form classrooms where the classroom structure is group-work oriented.

Keywords: Focus on Form/ Tasks/ EFL Classes/ Communicative Context

1. Introduction

The field of language pedagogy is witnessing an increasing approach in the idea of focus on form and the suggestion that focus on form should be encouraged in second language classrooms (Doughty & William, 1998, cited in Nassaji, 2000). This is a reaction to communicative approaches to language teaching which exclusively focus on use of communicative tasks and negotiation of meaning in the form of experiential/implicit classroom devices to develop second language proficiency, on one hand, and to the traditional focus-on-forms models of language teaching which mainly focus on analytic/explicit teaching of language. The introduction of communicative approaches in its radical form, as a reaction to focus on linguistic forms in traditional classes, in fact, created
the idea that language classroom interaction must be in form of communication in the target language without any conscious focus on linguistic forms, thereby leading to controversy and dissatisfaction among researchers and language teachers.

Over the past decade, however, the attention has been directed toward communicative approaches which focus on form during the classroom communicative tasks. The broadness of the communicative approaches to language teaching and mere negotiation of meaning did not seem to gain favor among language teachers and this caused theoreticians to think of introducing focus on form strategies during the communicative acts. A number of empirical studies on the role of form-focused instruction have revealed that a focus on form can successfully promote second language development far beyond that achieved by unfocused approaches (Doughty, 1991; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Harley, 1998; Lightbown, 1991).

Further, new perspectives advocated a principled, form-focused approach to L2 learning inspired by Long (1991) which argues that a totally message-based approach is inadequate for the development of an accurate knowledge of language. However, despite this theoretical shift, much less is being written about how to foster this objective in classroom contexts.

In the present article, the focus will be on including form-focused activities (grammatical) in the integrative approach (Nassaji, 2000) to communicative activities in the classrooms dominated by group work activities. However, although it is useful to include some kind of integrated form-focused activity in communicative contexts, this suggestion may be of little use if teachers do not know how to do so. Therefore, the question that arises in this context—how to integrate focus on form with meaningful communication in classroom contexts—is the main issue to be dealt with in this paper.

2. Classroom Interaction and Group Work
According to the interactive perspective, learning a new language is a function of social and meaningful interaction (Long, 1983); and the degree of language learning success depends on the quality and type of interactions between learners and teacher (Long, 1983; Pica, Kanagy, & Falodun, 1993). In this view, language learning is enhanced “particularly when the learners negotiate toward mutual comprehension of each other’s message meaning” (Pica et al., 1993, p. 11). When the interaction is between teachers and students, and students with each other in group, the result is more favorable than merely teacher-fronted classes. Psychologists have long shown that learners remember things with reference to the context in which they learn them. Therefore, focus on language forms in the context of communication may encourage learning, and the forms may be much easier to remember when students need...
them in future similar contexts (Lightbown, 1998). With this in mind, the question remains, for many teachers who wish to adopt this approach, how to design activities that can integrate attention to form into communication without turning back to the principle characteristics of traditional rule presentation strategies (Van Patten, 1994). To this end, the present research is going to address the issue of integrative focus on form in which both communicative and form-focused strategies are put beside each other in the classrooms where group-work is the dominant technique.

There are a variety of ways to incorporate a focus on form into communicative activities in classroom contexts. The focus in the present study, however, is on the design strategy: that is, communicative activities can be designed with an advanced, deliberate focus on form. Central to the design of form-focused communicative tasks is the relationship between the form selected and the completion of the task. Loschky and Bley-Vroman (1993) distinguish three types of relationship between form and task completion: naturalness, utility, and essentialness which will be combined with grammar problem tasks to teach grammatical structures of EFL classes with principled, strategic focus on form.

3. EFL Classrooms and Proper Utilization of Essentialness, Utility, and Naturalness relationship between form and communication in Grammar Problem Tasks
Grammar problem tasks provide the learner with what Lyster (2004) calls negotiation of form. Despite the tasks which focus on negotiation of meaning in the radical communicative tradition, tasks focusing on negotiation of form relate mainly to negotiation about how a language system works. Therefore, such tasks can provide a good vehicle for promoting meta-linguistic knowledge about the form-meaning relationship, grammatical structures, and pattern generalization, all of which must develop for language success (Nassaji, 2000). The advantage of grammar problem tasks is that they create a situation in which meta-linguistic knowledge is generated by communicative interaction and meaningful negotiation among students, rather than by rule presentation by the teacher. In the present study, it is suggested that grammar problem tasks be used as a building block for Loschky and Bley-Vroman's model of relationship between form and task completion which have pedagogically proved to be a better alternative for traditional focus on forms teaching methods and meta-linguistic explanation of grammatical structures in EFL classes.
As mentioned earlier, Loschky and Bley-Vroman's model regards three conditions for a task: naturalness, utility, and essentialness.
In the task-naturalness condition, according to Loschky and Bley-Vroman, the formal structure is employed naturally; it is not an obligatory part of the task, and the task can be completed without it. For example, the students are given a picture of a house with household utilities and are asked to talk about the location of different things without making an obligation for them.

In the task-utility relationship, the use of the structure may help the task to be completed more easily, but is not necessary. In the example of the picture task, the task can be completed much more easily if the students know locative repositions such as near, next to, between, and so on. They are, therefore, given the propositions as aids.

In the task-essentialness relationship, the task can never be completed unless the learner uses some specific form. In the example of picture of a house, the learners are provided with guided help and some key words which essentially create an obligatory context for them to communicate.

Loschky and Bley-Vroman’s discussion (1993) of the different types of relationships between forms and tasks should be very useful to those who wish to design classroom form-focused tasks. It will particularly help them conceptualize and further manipulate the extent to which their tasks are form-focused. Tasks designed with an essentialness relationship are very strongly form-focused because the students cannot complete them without using the intended grammatical knowledge. Therefore, the most focused tasks are those that meet the essentialness requirement. In contrast, if a task is designed with a utility relationship, it is much weaker in that respect, as the task may be completed without the features on which the task is intended to focus, and when it comes to task naturalness the learners are given stimulations to perform the task but there is no contextual obligation to limit them using certain kinds of structures.

4. How to Use the Model as Grammar Problem Tasks in the EFL Contexts

Grammar problem tasks integrate focus on form with communication in which learners in pairs or in small groups are asked to discover, analyze, and learn about a particular linguistic problem through meaningful communication with one another. In Fotos and Ellis (1991), learners were presented with a list of grammatical sentences with a particular structural pattern and instructed to interact with each other to induce and formulate the grammatical rules underlying these sentences. They were then asked to discuss and negotiate their results in small groups.
The requirement for such model is a classroom context in which the students have become divided into several groups with each group having a leader who is proficiently better than the others. Each grammatical problem is presented and practiced in three subsequent sessions.

In the first session, the grammatical problem is presented to the students and they are wanted to work on it in group within the limits of task essentialness, that is, they perform tasks in guided obligatory contexts.

Take comparative adjectives as an example. Within the task essentialness session where the students are given pictures with scrambled sentences and are asked to match sentences with the pictures. In other words, they could be in Ellis's terms *interpretation tasks* (Ellis, 1995). In such tasks, the target structure is focused on as the learner tries to comprehend, interpret, and process the input. With regard to comparative adjectives, the teacher can use some other techniques based on his/her own creativity. In this stage, the students are not required to have any production on their own.

During the second session the teacher has to continue with the practice on comparative forms, but this time without a full obligatory context. There is still, however, some sort of obligation. The students are required to have production which is guided through the cues which are presented in the picture tasks by the teacher. In the example of comparative sentences, the teacher can give pictures to the students which contain figures with comparative qualities. The teacher gives the students the key words which can help the students with their tasks. S/he might for example give them the adjectives they are going to use in the comparative form either in speaking or writing, or s/he might give them some adjectives which circle around a picture of two people/things and want them either to talk to each other or in group or to write about them.

During the third session, the last stage of task performance, the naturalness condition, is conducted. During the performance of this stage, the teacher does not pose any obligation on the students. In other words, the task situation is natural as the name of the task suggests. Referring to the example of comparative sentences, the teacher can give a picture to the students and want them to speak/write about the differences between people/things without obliging them to use any certain set of comparative adjectives. As an another example, the teacher can ask students to speak/write about the real life instances of the class or real life instances so that s/he has added to the real life condition of the task.

After the performance of each task cycle, the students are given certain tasks congruent with the type of task performed in the classroom to do at home. During the performance of
tasks, both the teacher and the leader student of each group are present to provide the students with the required help. According to (Nobuyoshi & Ellis, 1993), one of the roles of the more skilled student (the teacher can also some-times play this role as a skilled partner as mentioned) is to be sensitive to the language produced by the other students in the group while they are communicating meaning. In this case, if an error is made by one of the students, the more skilled student can be advised to react to it as one would in natural communication, without breaking the flow of communication or distracting the learners from the meaning they are conveying. This can be achieved using certain communicative strategies, such as asking for repetition or asking for clarification, that have been found to attract learners' attention to problem areas and to cause them to notice an error and then remove it in subsequent trials.

5. Conclusion
As second language teachers, we need to think of ways to improve our language teaching practice; we also need to be familiar with strategies that can put theory into practice. The literature on communicative language teaching and meaning negotiation in the classroom context abounds in materials- theoretical and empirical- on what of communicative classes. However, mere description of either-or alternative can't be of much use for language teachers in the framework of the classroom. Besides, so much theorizations and empirical validations, focusing on the how of the communicative classes seem vital. In the present research, one recommended model of integrative focus on form, inspired by the task condition model of Loschky and Bley-Vroman's model combined with model devised by Ellis as grammar problem tasks has been suggested as a practical tool.

References


Title

Exploring Meta-discourse markers in the Speeches of Iranian leader based on Hyland (2005) model

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Abstract

This research tries to examine stance and engagement meta-discourse markers used in the speeches of Iranian leader. To do this, 20 of his recent speeches from 2004 to 2013 (10 presented for university professors and 10 presented for ordinary people) were selected through purposeful sampling from a corpus of 48 speeches. To investigate and analyze meta-discourse markers, Ken Hyland (2005) model was used. By applying independent T-test, it was revealed that stance meta-discourse markers were used more in the speeches presented for university professors than the speeches for the ordinary people. Also, the results of independent t-test in terms of engagement meta-discourse markers used in the speeches presented for university professors and ordinary people showed no significant difference.

Keywords: Meta-discourse, Stance, Engagement

1. Introduction
According to Hyland (2004 & 2005) over the past decade, the shift of focus in many linguistic researches on meta-discourse has been from its traditional tag as being something more objective, faceless and impersonal form to being more as a persuasive endeavor involving interaction between writer and reader and, hence, between speaker and listener. In this view, texts (written or spoken) are not just transmitting external realities to the readers and listeners, but using language to acknowledge, construct and negotiate social relations.

Although meta-discourse has received considerable attention (Vande Kopple, 1985; Crismore, Markkanen & Steffensen, 1993; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Hyland, 2002, 2005, 2012; Martin & White, 2005; Adel, 2006 et al.) most of such researches have been focusing more on written rather than spoken meta-discourse and if done (Wilson & Sperber, 1998; Mauranen, 2001; Swales, 2001; Thompson, 2003; Perez-Llantada, 2006), very few of them appear at the extensive bibliographies of books and papers on meta-discourse (Aguilar, 2008).

The status of the Iranian researches on meta-discourse is not so much different from the other countries and as such most of them revolve around academic writing (Abdi, 2000; Marandi, 2002; Abdollahzade, 2003, 2007, 2011; Simin & Tavangar, 2009; Rahimpour, 2006; Pahlevannezhad & Alinezhad, 2010; Hashemi & Golparvar, 2012) to the negligence of spoken meta-discourse. Lack of enough research on the spoken meta-discourse especially the political one in the Iranian context where most researchers sidestep analyzing speeches of Iranian politicians, let alone the Iranian Leader, because of its probable social and political problems was persuasive enough to shift the present researcher’s view from written discourse to spoken one.

2. Literature Review

Meta-discourse has been dealt with and referred to by many researchers (Halliday, 1994; Vande Kopple, 1985; Crismore, 1984; Hyland, 2004, 2005, 2010; Marin & White; Adel, 2006), just to name a few.

Halliday (1994) mentioned three functions for written and spoken language: ideational, textual, and interpersonal. Ideational refers to the information that writers or speakers transmit via language, textual aims at making written and spoken texts coherent, and the interpersonal stresses on the social relation between writer or speaker and reader and listener. VandeKopple (1985) in his meta-discourse model refers to seven meta-discourse markers that the first four are called textual meta-discourse (text connectives, code glosses, illocation
markers, and narrative markers) and interpersonal one (validity markers, attitude markers and commentary).

Crismore (1984) considers meta-discourse as “discourse about discourse” and believes that meta-discourse gives readers and listeners more direction rather than information. She furthers that meta-discourse has two levels: primary and secondary. The first one deals with information and the latter provides a discourse about the primary one.

Marin & White (2005) proposed an “Appraisal framework” which is a theory of language evaluation developed within systemic functional linguistics. This framework describes a taxonomy of the type of language used to convey evaluating and positioning oneself with respect to the evaluation of other people.

Adel (2006) distinguishes between two types of meta-discourse: meta-text and writer-reader interactions. Meta-text deals with the writer’s or reader’s speech acts and the text organization, wording. The writer-reader interaction considers those linguistic expressions which are used by the writer to engage reader.

Hyland (2004) considers two main categories for meta-discourse: interactive and interactional. The first one embodies (transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidential, code glosses) and the latter includes (hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self mention, and engagement markers).

Hyland (2005) model is somehow an improvement of his (2004) model in which he considers two levels for meta-discourse: stance and engagement. Stance deals with (hedges, boosters, attitude markers) and engagement covers (reader pronoun, directives, questions reference, personal asides and appeal to shared knowledge).


Hyland (2005) offered nine types of meta-discourse markers. The first four ones referred to as stance markers and the last five ones referred to as engagement markers.

**Hedges:** They imply that a claim is based on plausible reasoning rather than certain knowledge and allows writers to open a discursive space for readers to dispute interpretations (e.g. it is possible, maybe, it can influence if…).

**Boosters markers:** They let writers to express certainty in what they say and also emphasize shared information and group membership (e.g. of course, definitely, completely).

**Attitude markers:** They show the writers’ affective attitude to propositions transmitting surprise, agreement, importance, frustration, and so on (e.g. I believe that, fortunately, surprisingly, an incredible influence).
Self-mention: These markers refer to the use of first person pronouns and possessive adjectives (e.g. I, we, my, our).

Reader pronouns: They are the markers that bring readers into a discourse in the most explicit way (e.g. you, your).

Directives: They are mainly expressed via imperatives and obligation modals (e.g. check new websites, decrease the number of pages).

Questions: A good strategy to invite engagement, encouraging curiosity and bringing interlocutors into an area (e.g. is it needed to spend so much money on cars? Who cares?).

Appeal to shared knowledge: They are markers that explicitly ask readers to recognize something as familiar or accepted (e.g. obviously, it goes without saying, it is clear).

Personal asides: They allow writers to address readers directly by briefly interrupting the argument to offer a comment on what has been said (e.g. And- as I believe many university professors will clearly support it- university students are not as hardworking as before.).

3. Research questions

Meta-discourse markers show that the writer or the speaker is aware of the expectations of the reader or listener and what they are probably to find interesting, trusted and easily understood, so they play a great role in mutual understanding. The major issue to be addressed in the present study is the following questions:

1. Is there any significant difference between the type and amount of stance markers employed by the Iranian leader in his speeches presented for two different types of audience (university professors & ordinary people)?

   a) Is there any significant difference between the type and amount of hedges employed by the Iranian leader in his speeches presented for two different types of audience (university professors & ordinary people)?

   b) Is there any significant difference between the type and amount of boosters employed by the Iranian leader in his speeches presented for two different types of audience (university professors & ordinary people)?

   c) Is there any significant difference between the type and amount of attitude markers employed by the Iranian leader in his speeches presented for two different types of audience (university professors & ordinary people)?
d) Is there any significant difference between the type and amount of *self* employed by the Iranian leader in his speeches presented for two different types of audience (university professors & ordinary people)?

2. Is there any significant difference between the type and amount of **engagement markers** employed by the Iranian leader in his speeches presented for two different types of audience (university professors & ordinary people)?
   
a) Is there any significant difference between the type and amount of **reader markers** employed by the Iranian leader in his speeches presented for two different types of audience (university professors & ordinary people)?

   b) Is there any significant difference between the type and amount of **directives** employed by the Iranian leader in his speeches presented for two different types of audience (university professors & ordinary people)?

   c) Is there any significant difference between the type and amount of **questions reference** employed by the Iranian leader in his speeches presented for two different types of audience (university professors & ordinary people)?

   d) Is there any significant difference between the type and amount of **shared knowledge markers** employed by the Iranian leader in his speeches presented for two different types of audience (university professors & ordinary people)?

   e) Is there any significant difference between the type and amount of **asides** employed by the Iranian leader in his speeches presented for two different types of audience (university professors & ordinary people)?

3. **Methodology**

3.1. **Corpus**

The corpus used in the present study involved 20 speeches presented by the Iranian leader for two different groups of audiences, that is, university professors and ordinary people. Twenty recent speeches from 2004 to 2013 were selected (10 presented for university professors from among 24 and 10 presented for ordinary people from among 24) through purposeful sampling because most of the other speeches presented for these two groups were of 4 pages or less than that. And as Crimsoned et al. (1993) pointed out that 1000 words is a usual method and it can be taken from the beginning, middle or the end of any text, the first six pages (more than 1200 words) of all speeches were selected and where one or two speeches were less than...
six pages, random pages from other speeches that were more than Six pages were added to them.

Table 1: Corpus used in this research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speeches presented for........</th>
<th>Number of presented speeches 2004-2013</th>
<th>Number of taken speeches for the present research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parliament members</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet members</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurses</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University professors</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10 recent ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Army members</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University students</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary people</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10 recent ones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. Instrumentation

In order to compare and analyze the probable differences in terms of type and amount of meta-discourse markers in the speeches of Iranian leader, Hyland (2005) model which divides meta-discourse markers into two groups as stance and engagement was utilized.

3.3. Procedure

To investigate meta-discourse markers in the speeches of the Iranian leader Hyland (2005) meta-discourse model was used. First the written forms of those speeches were prepared and then the Persian equivalents of Hyland (2005) meta-discourse markers were developed via checking previously developed check-lists by Pahlevannezhad & Alinezhad (2010) and personal discussions with some Persian linguists. Then each speech was carefully analyzed based on those markers at least three times and at different times. Finally, from among attitude markers (attitudinal adverbs, verbs, and adjectives), just attitudinal adverbs and attitudinal verbs were taken into consideration and attitudinal adjectives because of having much overlap with other meta-discourse markers was out of the patience of the present research and was not dealt with.

Table 2: Samples of Persian Equivalents for Meta-discourse Markers: Stance
Table 3: Samples of Persian Equivalents for Meta-discourse Markers: Engagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stance markers</th>
<th>Persian instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hedges</td>
<td>شاید - ممکن است - چگونه؟ - چه تصوراتی دارد؟ - به نظر من - یکی - چک - گاهی - تقریبا</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boosters</td>
<td>خیلی - بسیار - کاملا - فقط - همه - حقیقی - بدون شک - باید - باید</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>مناسفانه - عوضوی - عوضوی - من معنی - موافق - مناسفانه</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>من - ما - بنه - خودم - خودمان</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Kolmogrov & Smirnov Test of Normality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engagement markers</th>
<th>Persian instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reader-pronoun</td>
<td>شما - یک کی (نی)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directives</td>
<td>تلاش کنید - بپنید</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions reference</td>
<td>چیست؟ - چه باید؟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared knowledge</td>
<td>نگاهی به است - همان طور که می‌دانید</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asides</td>
<td>ممکن است بعضی از روزی‌ها مورد قبول نباشد - یکی از موارد اینجوری</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To ensure about the reliability of the analysis (Connor & Mau ranen (1999)) inter-rater and intra-rater reliability were run. For inter-rater reliability three speeches from each type were selected from the corpus and were analyzed by an MA holder of linguistics and the results were correlated with those of the researcher (r= 0.76). Moreover three speeches from each type were selected and analyzed ten days after the first rating and the results were correlated with those of the first rating (r= 0.78).

Also to be sure about normal distribution of the data, Kolmogrov & Smirnov test of normality was run and as the significance level of variables was more than 0.05, the results approved normal distribution of the data.

Table 4: Kolmogrov & Smirnov Test of Normality
3.4. Data Analysis

Then descriptive statistics was used to measure the frequency of meta-discourse markers in the speeches of the Iranian leader. Finally, as data was normally distributed and the means of those meta-discourse markers was the concern of the present study, a parametric test was needed to analyze the data, so an independent student t-test with the confidence level of 95% was run to see if there was any significant difference in meta-discourse amount and type across speeches for different audience.

4. Results and Discussions

After collecting and analysing the speeches of Iranian leader based on Hyland (2005) meta-discourse model, stance and engagement meta-discourse markers were found and then their frequencies were extracted.

Table 5: Groups of Audience speeches presented for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Kolmogrov-Smirnov z</th>
<th>Significance level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hedges</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.588</td>
<td>0.880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boosters</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.598</td>
<td>0.867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude markers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>0.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.569</td>
<td>0.902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.655</td>
<td>0.785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directives</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1.325</td>
<td>0.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions reference</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.189</td>
<td>0.118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared knowledge</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.966</td>
<td>0.308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asides</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.882</td>
<td>0.418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stance markers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.641</td>
<td>0.806</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement markers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.587</td>
<td>0.881</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Groups of Audience speeches presented for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University professors</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6: Frequency of meta-discourse markers in the speeches of Iranian leader based Hyland (2005) model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stance</strong></td>
<td>1560</td>
<td>816</td>
<td><strong>Engagement</strong></td>
<td>309</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hedges</strong></td>
<td>172</td>
<td>79</td>
<td><strong>Reader pronoun</strong></td>
<td>127</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Boosters</strong></td>
<td>553</td>
<td>410</td>
<td><strong>Directives</strong></td>
<td>43</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude</strong></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>Questions</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self</strong></td>
<td>808</td>
<td>312</td>
<td><strong>Shared knowledge</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asides</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Asides</strong></td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table shows, stance meta-discourse markers have been used more in the speeches presented for university professors and ordinary people than the engagement markers. Also regarding stance markers, it can be said that such markers have been utilized much more in the speeches presented for university professors, almost double. Moreover, from among stance markers, self and boosters are the ones used more in the speeches presented for the two groups of audience. Finally, it should be pointed out that engagement markers have been almost used at the same rate in the speeches presented for the two groups of audience and among engagement markers, asides and readers markers have been more used in the two groups of speeches.

Table 7: Descriptive statistics of the meta-discourse markers used in the speeches of Iranian leader presented for (university professors & ordinary people)
The above table shows that all stance markers have been used in the 20 speeches presented for the two groups of audience, but with different rate; while engagement markers have been used in 18 speeches. Also the table shows that the average number of stance markers used in 20 speeches is almost five times of engagement markers. In addition, in terms of the minimum markers used, the average number for stance markers is almost 6 times of the engagement ones and regarding the maximum markers used, the average number for the stance markers is almost 5 times of the engagement ones. Finally, from among stance markers, **self** with the maximum number (116) in one speech takes over other stance markers and from among engagement markers, **reader pronoun** with the maximum number (23) in one speech holds the first rank.
Then to compare type and frequencies of the meta-discourse markers used in the speeches of the Iranian leader presented for two different groups (university professors & ordinary people) independent t-test was run to see if there was any significant difference.

4.1. Null hypothesis 1

In order to compare the speeches of the Iranian leader in their use of stance meta-discourse markers, first Leven’s test of equality of variance was run to see if the variances are the same or different, then t-test was run to see if there was any significant difference.

Table 8: Comparing variances between the two types of speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stance markers</td>
<td>0.027</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: Comparing means of two types of speeches in terms of stance meta-discourse markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stance</td>
<td>5.854</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>49.60</td>
<td>8.47296</td>
<td>31.79896-67.40104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table comparing the variances show, the amount of (p) at the level of 95% is more than (0.05), so variances are the same and the t-test formula which is used while the variances are the same should be employed. And by analyzing the amount of (p) in the t-test table, we see that it is less than (0.05) at the level of 95% confidence, so the null hypothesis is rejected, that is, there is no significant difference between the two types of speeches in terms of using stance meta-discourse markers. And because the confidence interval of the difference is positive, it shows that stance meta-discourse markers have been used more in the speeches presented for the university professors.

Table 10: Comparing variances between the two types of speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the table comparing the variances show, the amount of (p) at the level of 95% is less than (0.05), so variances are different and the t-test formula which is used while the variances are different should be employed. And by analyzing the amount of (p) in the t-test table, we see that it is less than (0.05) at the level of 95% confidence, so the null hypothesis is rejected, that is, there is no significant difference between the two types of speeches in terms of using hedges meta-discourse marker. And because the confidence interval of the difference is positive, it shows that hedges meta-discourse markers have been used more in the speeches presented for the university professors.

Table 12: Comparing variances between the two types of speeches

Table 13: Comparing means of two types of speeches in terms of booster's meta-discourse marker
As the table comparing the variances show, the amount of (p) at the level of 95% is less than (0.05), so variances are different and the t-test formula which is used while the variances are different should be employed. And by analyzing the amount of (p) in the t-test table, we see that it is less than (0.05) at the level of 95% confidence, so the null hypothesis is rejected, that is, there is no significant difference between the two types of speeches in terms of using booster's meta-discourse marker. And because the confidence interval of the difference is positive, it shows that boosters meta-discourse markers have been used more in the speeches presented for the university professors.

Table 14: Comparing variances between the two types of speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boosters</td>
<td>3.510</td>
<td>0.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.30000</td>
<td>4.07445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.61937</td>
<td>22.98063</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15: Comparing means of two types of speeches in terms of attitude meta-discourse marker

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>6.545</td>
<td>0.020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table comparing the variances show, the amount of (p) at the level of 95% is less than (0.05), so variances are different and the t-test formula which is used while the variances are different should be employed. And by analyzing the amount of (p) in the t-test table, we see that it is less than (0.05) at the level of 95% confidence, so the null hypothesis is rejected, that is, there is no significant difference between the two types of speeches in terms of using booster's meta-discourse marker. And because the confidence interval of the difference is positive, it shows that boosters meta-discourse markers have been used more in the speeches presented for the university professors.
different should be employed. And by analyzing the amount of (p) in the t-test table, we see that it is more than (0.05) at the level of 95% confidence, so the null hypothesis is not rejected, that is, there is no significant difference between the two types of speeches in terms of using attitude meta-discourse markers. And because the confidence interval of the difference includes zero, it shows that attitude meta-discourse markers have been used almost at the same rate in the speeches presented for the university professors and ordinary people.

Table 16: Comparing variances between the two types of speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>0.119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17: Comparing means of two types of speeches in terms of self meta-discourse markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>5.854</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>49.60</td>
<td>8.47296</td>
<td>31.79896</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table comparing the variances show, the amount of (p) at the level of 95% is more than (0.05), so variances are the same and the t-test formula which is used while the variances are the same should be employed. And by analyzing the amount of (p) in the t-test table, we see that it is less than (0.05) at the level of 95% confidence, so the null hypothesis is rejected, that is, there is no significant difference between the two types of speeches in terms of using self meta-discourse markers. And because the confidence interval of the difference is positive, it shows that self meta-discourse markers have been used more in the speeches presented for the university professors.
4.2. Null hypothesis 2

In order to compare the speeches of the Iranian leader in their use of engagement meta-discourse markers, first Leven’s test of equality of variance was run to see if the variances are the same or different, then t-test was run to see if there was any significant difference.

Table 18: Comparing variances between the two types of speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement markers</td>
<td>0.544</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19: Comparing means of two types of speeches in terms of engagement meta-discourse markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement</td>
<td>-1.124</td>
<td>0.290</td>
<td>-1.45333</td>
<td>1.29339</td>
<td>-4.37919</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table comparing the variances show, the amount of (p) at the level of 95% is more than (0.05), so variances are the same and the t-test formula which is used while the variances are the same should be employed. And by analyzing the amount of (p) in the t-test table, we see that it is more than (0.05) at the level of 95% confidence, so the null hypothesis is not rejected, that is, there is no significant difference between the two types of speeches in terms of using engagement meta-discourse markers. And because the confidence interval of the difference includes zero, it shows that engagement meta-discourse markers have been used almost at the same rate in the speeches presented for the university professors and ordinary people.

Table 20: Comparing variances between the two types of speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 21: Comparing means of two types of speeches in terms of reader's meta-discourse markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reader</td>
<td>-0.380</td>
<td>0.709</td>
<td>-1.10000</td>
<td>2.89386</td>
<td>-7.29828 - 5.09828</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table comparing the variances show, the amount of (p) at the level of 95% is less than (0.05), so variances are different and the t-test formula which is used while the variances are different should be employed. And by analyzing the amount of (p) in the t-test table, we see that it is more than (0.05) at the level of 95% confidence, so the null hypothesis is not rejected, that is, there is no significant difference between the two types of speeches in terms of using reader's meta-discourse markers. And because the confidence interval of the difference includes zero, it shows that readers meta-discourse markers have been used almost at the same rate in the speeches presented for the university professors and ordinary people.

Table 22: Comparing variances between the two types of speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directives</td>
<td>0.144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 23: Comparing means of two types of speeches in terms of directives meta-discourse markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
As the table comparing the variances show, the amount of (p) at the level of 95% is more than (0.05), so variances are the same and the t-test formula which is used while the variances are the same should be employed. And by analyzing the amount of (p) in the t-test table, we see that it is more than (0.05) at the level of 95% confidence, so the null hypothesis is not rejected, that is, there is no significant difference between the two types of speeches in terms of using *directives* meta-discourse markers. And because the confidence interval of the difference includes zero, it shows that *directives* meta-discourse markers have been used almost at the same rate in the speeches presented for the university professors and ordinary people.

Table 24: Comparing variances between the two types of speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>0.895</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 25: Comparing means of two types of speeches in terms of questions reference meta-discourse markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directives</td>
<td>0.740</td>
<td>0.470</td>
<td>0.90278</td>
<td>1.21918</td>
<td>-1.69585</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the table comparing the variances show, the amount of (p) at the level of 95% is more than (0.05), so variances are the same and the t-test formula which is used while the variances are the same should be employed. And by analyzing the amount of (p) in the t-test table, we see that it is more than (0.05) at the level of 95% confidence, so the null hypothesis is not rejected, that is, there is no significant difference between the two types of speeches in terms of using questions reference meta-discourse markers. And because the confidence interval of the difference includes zero, it shows that questions reference meta-discourse markers have been used almost at the same rate in the speeches presented for the university professors and ordinary people.

Table 26: Comparing variances between the two types of speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared knowledge</td>
<td>2.565</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 27: Comparing means of two types of speeches in terms of questions reference meta-discourse markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shared knowledge</td>
<td>0.839</td>
<td>0.414</td>
<td>0.60000</td>
<td>0.71545</td>
<td>-0.91670 - 2.11670</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table comparing the variances show, the amount of (p) at the level of 95% is more than (0.05), so variances are the same and the t-test formula which is used while the variances are the same should be employed. And by analyzing the amount of (p) in the t-test table, we see that it is more than (0.05) at the level of 95% confidence, so the null hypothesis is not rejected, that is, there is no significant difference between the two types of speeches in terms of using questions reference meta-discourse markers.
of using shared knowledge meta-discourse markers. And because the confidence interval of the difference includes zero, it shows that shared knowledge meta-discourse markers have been used almost at the same rate in the speeches presented for the university professors and ordinary people.

Table 28: Comparing variances between the two types of speeches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asides</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 29: Comparing means of two types of speeches in terms of questions reference meta-discourse markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asides</td>
<td>-0.248</td>
<td>0.807</td>
<td>-0.30000</td>
<td>1.21152</td>
<td>-2.84531 - 2.24531</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table comparing the variances show, the amount of (p) at the level of 95% is more than (0.05), so variances are the same and the t-test formula which is used while the variances are the same should be employed. And by analyzing the amount of (p) in the t-test table, we see that it is more than (0.05) at the level of 95% confidence, so the null hypothesis is not rejected, that is, there is no significant difference between the two types of speeches in terms of using asides meta-discourse markers. And because the confidence interval of the difference includes zero, it shows that asides meta-discourse markers have been used almost at the same rate in the speeches presented for the university professors and ordinary people.
5. Conclusion

Stance and engagement meta-discourse analysis of the speeches of the Iranian leader presented for two groups of audience (university professors & ordinary people) showed that the Iranian leader used all those meta-discourse markers in his speech, but at different rates. The descriptive analysis revealed that from among stance and engagement meta-discourse markers, stance ones were more used in the two types of the speeches and from among stance markers, boosters and self ones were more used in both types of the speeches. As for the engagement markers it should be pointed out that from among those markers, asides and readers ones were more used in the two groups of speeches. Finding of the present study showed that there was a significant difference between the two types of speeches in their use of stance meta-discourse markers, that is, stance meta-discourse markers except attitude ones which were used almost at the same rate in the two groups of speeches have been used more in the speeches presented for the university professors than the speeches presented for the ordinary people. Also the results showed that there was no significant difference between the two groups of speeches in their use of engagement meta-discourse markers, that is, engagement meta-discourse markers have been used almost at the same rate in the two groups of speeches. So the Iranian leader when talking to university professors employed more stance meta-discourse markers than the engagement ones, but while talking to ordinary people he used both stance and engagement meta-discourse markers almost in the same way.

References


Union research. *English for Specific Purposes* 18, 47-62.


Title

The Role of Achievement Goals in Language Proficiency among EFL Learners in Iran

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Abstract

The present paper is an investigation of the role achievement goal orientations play in language proficiency among EFL learners in Iran. 152 university students were chosen by cluster sampling to answer Achievement goal and Michigan test questionnaires. Since the research is a descriptive correlational survey one, therefore Pearson Correlation Coefficient was applied to determine whether the two variables were correlated. When the results proved a positive correlation between the variables, the means of the two variables were compared by Anova. Final results indicate the higher the achievement goal levels, the more successful the students will perform in language proficiency.

Keywords: Achievement goal orientations, Language proficiency, EFL learners, Pearson Correlation Coefficient, Anova
1. Introduction

The term achievement goals (AG) is a challenging concept when it comes to learning another language. According to Elliot and Murayama 2008, Achievement goals are divided to three orientations which are mastery goal orientation, performance-approach and performance-avoidance orientations respectively. Learners immersed in mastery goal achievement only care about the last result which is mastering another language disregarding what might occur during that period of time. Conversely learners obsessed with performance-approach achievement orientation indulge in appearing as the best in the learning context and view difficulties as threats. The last orientation engages in avoiding making errors or mistakes. Such learners would rather be quiet during learning in the learning context in order for their weaknesses not to be revealed. In addition, language proficiency (LP) has various definitions. A brief account of LP is as follows: “a person's skill in using a language for a specific purpose whereas language achievement describes language ability as a result of learning. Proficiency refers to the degree of skill with which a person can use a language such as how well a person can read, write, speak or understand language. Proficiency must be measured by the use of a proficiency test” (Richards, et al 1992, p.204).

A large number of studies have focused on the role of achievement goals in learning different subject matters for instance a research done by Keys, et al (2011) revealed among the trichotomous framework of goal orientations only mastery goal was proved to be a predictor of learning mathematics and the other orientations seemed to be irrelevant. Also a survey carried out by Paulick, et all (2012) indicated that mastery goal was positively affecting school achievement whereas performance approach goal was negatively affecting school achievement. However little research, if any, has been devoted to investigating the role of achievement goals in predicting language proficiency of Iranian learners. Accordingly the researchers in the present study have put the potential role of achievement goals in learning English as a foreign language to the test. The results will shed light on the relationship between Iranian achievement goals and the degree to which they master English as a foreign language.

Achievement goal researchers mostly focus on two primary goal orientations, mastery and performance (Ames, 1992b). The aim of a student pursuing mastery goals is to develop competence through the acquisition of new skills, whereas students pursuing performance goals to outperform or demonstrate competence relative to others. Because mastery and performance goals represent different ways of thinking about competence, theorists argue that
these goals will create a framework for how individuals approach, experience, and react to achievement activities (e.g., Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Nicholls, 1984). In general, this argument has been supported by empirical research that has shown that mastery goal orientations are related to more adaptive patterns of learning. For example, in an influential review of the early achievement goal literature, Ames (1992b) noted considerable benefits of pursuing mastery goals over performance goals. Although the positive links between mastery goals and academic performance have not been consistently found, the generally positive learning patterns associated with mastery goals are also reported in a more recent review (Meece et al., 2006). In addition, while some researchers reported that performance goals were associated with maladaptive learning behaviors, such as anxiety, self-handicapping tactics, and help-seeking avoidance (Middleton & Midgley, 1997; Midgley, Kaplan, & Middleton, 2001; Ryan & Pintrich, 1997), other studies reported that performance goals could facilitate learning. For example, positive relations were found between performance goals and adaptive learning variables, such as task values (Bong, 2001; Church, Elliot, & Gable, 2001; Wolters, Yu, & Pintrich, 1996), academic self-concept (Pajares, Britner, & Valiante, 2000; Wolters et al., 1996), and graded performance (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Harackiewicz, Barron, Tauer, Carter, & Elliot, 2000).

In recent years, researchers have distinguished two types of performance goals (Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & Harackiewicz, 1996; Murayama, Elliot, & Yamagata, 2011), performance approach goals that focus on the attainment of favorable judgments of competence, and performance avoidance goals that focus on avoiding unfavorable judgments of ability. Performance avoidance goals have been found to be associated with low efficacy, high anxiety, self-handicapping strategies, low intrinsic motivation, and low grades (Elliot & Church, 1997; Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Luo, Paris, Hogan, & Luo, 2011; Urdan, Ryan, Anderman, & Gheen, 2002). Although pure performance approach goal orientations are mostly considered to be positive, they are likely to transform to performance avoidance goals in the face of difficulties or the likelihood of failure (Luo et al., 2011; Middleton, Kaplan, & Midgley, 2004; Van Yperen, 2006). Similarly, the approach and avoidance distinction has also been made for mastery goals (Elliot & McGregor, 2001; Elliot & Murayama, 2008; Pintrich, 2000). When approaching an activity with mastery approach goals individuals make efforts to improve and develop their skills, while when approaching an activity with mastery avoidance goals individuals are concerned about misunderstanding and failing to learn well. A few studies have been conducted to examine mastery avoidance goals, and found that this dimension was negatively associated with intrinsic motivation and perceived
competence (Cury, Elliot, Da Fonseca, & Moller, 2006; Van Yperen, 2006), positively related to anxiety (Elliot & McGregor, 2001) and help seeking threat (Karabenick, 2003), and not related to performance (Elliot & Murayama, 2008; Yeo, Loft, Xiao, & Kiewitz, 2009). Self-report questionnaires, especially the Achievement Goal Questionnaire (AGQ, Elliot & McGregor, 2001), are widely used to measure achievement goal.

Researchers mentioned above have all focused on the role of achievement goals in learning generally and they haven't concentrated on one special subject matter like language learning. Most researchers tend to evaluate the role of achievement goals in learning at schools or universities and their grades while they could separate subject matters and examine the role of achievement goals on every lesson separately. The researchers in the present research have limited their attempt to language proficiency and achievement goals to elicit a more clear result. The present study is considered to meet one main objective which is shedding light on the role of achievement goals in language proficiency among Iranian EFL learners.

2. Objectives
The researchers have aimed to devote their time to one main objective which satisfies the need to clarify the role achievement goals play in language proficiency in the present article. Accordingly the main objective requires three specific objectives to be emphasized which would be 1) the role of mastery goal in language proficiency 2) the role of performance-approach in language proficiency and 3) the role of performance-avoidance in language proficiency among Iranian EFL learners.

3. Methodology
The study being explained here addresses a descriptive correlational survey research since it attempts to find a relation between two variables and because it aims to discover whether there exists a relation and to what degree between the variables, it is counted as a correlational research. As to collect data, there was a need for two questionnaires and numerical data, it deserves the label survey research. The first questionnaire used in the present research belongs to the 18 item achievement goal questionnaire (AGQ; Elliot & McGregor, 2001) which is based on a 4 item likert-scale. The second one is Michigan English proficiency test whose short form consists of 35 items which are embedded in 4 sections; cloze, grammar, vocabulary & reading. The participants of this study were
selected using cluster sampling, a type of probability sampling (Mousavi, 1999). The sample were selected from the population of senior and junior university students majoring in EFL related fields (teaching & translation) from universities of Sirjan. Therefore 250 junior & senior male and female EFL students of Sirjan universities took both the achievement goal questionnaire and Michigan test among which 152 students returned their questionnaires. It matches standards of Morgan sample size table as well. Since the questionnaires used are standard ones, their validity and reliability is proved before. Each student was provided with an answer sheet and a test booklet. First, the subjects were asked to answer the 35 multiple choice items of the proficiency test in class in 35 minutes and take the other questionnaire home to answer. Before starting to answer, the students were asked to write their student numbers on both the answer sheet and the questionnaire so that the researchers would be able to match the scores of each student. After collecting the proficiency answer sheets, subjects were informed about how to fill the achievement goal questionnaire.

4. Results

This is the result of SPSS calculations carried out for this study.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Avoidance</th>
<th>Mastery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>levels</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>66.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 explains the frequency and percentage of the answers given to Approach, Avoidance and Mastery questionnaires. If skewness and kurtosis are between +2 & -2, the research data are normal. Table above proves among low percentages obtained for the three orientations, the mastery percentage is the lowest which means almost all subjects cared about mastery orientation. Moderate percentages indicate avoidance orientation has allocated the lowest percentage to itself among all. Eventually as it is demonstrated by high percentages, avoidance comes first, mastery second and approach the last. Therefore, almost all subjects possessed a high level of avoidance orientation.

Table 2- Descriptive Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Michigan Test</th>
<th>Achievement Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levels</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderate</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The relationship between Achievements Goals and Michigan Test was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality and linearity. Since there was (1) bivariate pairs, Bonferroni adjusted alpha of 0.01 (0.05/1) was used to test null hypothesis of the bivariate pairs. Percentages belonging to Michigan test results reveal more than 80% of subjects were on moderate and high levels of proficiency and a few of had a low level of proficiency. Also percentages devoted to achievement goals prove more than half of the students were on a moderate level in terms of achievement goals and among the rest of them the percentage of students who had a high level of achievement goal orientations was lower than those with a low level of achievement goals orientations.

Table 3: Pearson’s Correlation Coefficients of Achievement Goals and Michigan Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Y</th>
<th>X(1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Michigan Test (Y)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X(1)</td>
<td>Achievement Goals (1)</td>
<td>.199*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As depicted in Table 3 a linear relationship was found to exist between achievement goals and Michigan test. The positive correlation coefficient of 0.199* indicates that as the score for achievement goals increases so do the rating for Michigan test. A research carried out by David W. Putwain et al. 2013 proves achievement goals predict achievement emotions and academic performance. Also another research by Amanda M. Durik et al. 2009 on achievement goals for college in general shows performance approach goals positively predict overall college performance.

Table 4. Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Achievement goals</th>
<th>New Michigan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed )</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Michigan</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.199*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed )</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to table 4, Pearson table indicates the correlation between Michigan test and achievement goals is .199*. Since the significant is 0.015 and it is more than alpha which is 0.05, therefore there is a meaningful relationship between the two variables.

Table 5. Model summary (b)
In the table above, Adjusted R is interpreted which means how much the independent variable or the predictor (AG), predicts the dependent variable which is Michigan test. Besides, R which is 24% can also be interpreted and explain the correlation.

**Table 6. ANOVA (b)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>637.625</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>637.625</td>
<td>8.949</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>10545.315</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>71.252</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11182.94</td>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Anova table, the obtained significant P-value is .003 and because it is less than alpha which is .05, the obtained significant is not meaningful.

**Table 7. Coefficients (a)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant 1</td>
<td>5.500</td>
<td>4.903</td>
<td>1.122</td>
<td>.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement goal</td>
<td>.278</td>
<td>.093</td>
<td>0.239</td>
<td>2.991</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is suggested in the table above, B and the standard deviation are compared with each other. Totally, the coefficient table determines whether the statistical model used in this research is fit or not. If the standard deviation is close to 1, the model is fit otherwise it is not. So, because the standard deviation is 1, for sure the model used here is fit.

**5. Conclusion**

In this paper we studied the role of achievement goal orientations in language proficiency among Iranian EFL learners. First Pearson Correlation Coefficients was used to see whether the variables were correlated and the results obtained, proved there is a meaningful relationship between them and finally means of the variables were compared by Anova. Therefore as it is clear, achievement goal orientations can predict Iranian EFL learners success in language proficiency. A research by David W. Putwain et al 2013 asserts mastery approach and avoidance goals predict outcome and activity focused emotions whereas avoidance goals predict outcome focused emotions only and as it is already mentioned, Amanda M.Durik et al 2009 and Corwin Senko et al 2013 have considered achievement goal as a predictor for learning as well.
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Title

The Effects of Raising EFL Students’ Genre Consciousness on Their Writing Performance

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Abstract

Writing is a significant skill in language teaching and learning. Because of its undeniable significance, different approaches have been drawn on throughout the long history of teaching writing to meet the needs of language learners and teachers of writing. Due to its’ revolutionary features, genre-based instruction (GBI) have been the focus of attention in recent years. This study employed genre consciousness-raising through genre analysis as an indirect genre-based pedagogy to examine its effectiveness on students’ writing quantity, writing quality, and genre knowledge. For this purpose, 26 EFL students were randomly selected and divided into control and experimental groups. After administering treatment (for experimental group) and placebo (for control group), and doing statistical analysis on the data, it was indicated that the instruction had been significantly effective in improving students’ writing quality, and genre knowledge. However, it did not significantly improve their writing quantity. In general, however, results of this study support application of findings of genre-based instruction in improving students’ writing performance in EFL settings.
Keywords: Writing pedagogy, Genre-based instruction, Genre pedagogy, Genre analysis, Genre consciousness.

1. Introduction

Writing pedagogy throughout its history experienced different perspectives and approaches. In the classic approach to teaching writing, and especially from 1940s to 1960s, writing pedagogy was "emphasizing the structural well-formedness of students' writings" and "instruction typically involves grammar study, error analysis, and practice in reworking problematic sentences or combining short sentences into complex ones (Schiffrin 2000, p.181). During 1960s, and with the advent of the process approach, attention began to shift away from texts to writers and evidence indicated that grammar instruction did not directly improve students' writing ability (Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer 1963 quoted in Schiffrin 2000). Rooted in Cognitive psychology and constructivism, it looked at writing as a creative cognitive act. Writers are not put in the strait jacket to imitate a fixed model but to have their creativity activated.

While the product and the process approach concentrated on the final written product and processes involved in writing respectively, Genre-based instruction (GBI) stresses the social context of L2 writing. GBI approaches writing pedagogy not as a mechanical process, While the product and the process approach concentrated on the final written product and processes involved in writing respectively, Genre-based instruction (GBI) stresses the social context of L2 writing. GBI approaches writing pedagogy not as a mechanical process, but as a social representation of the communicative purposes of the writer. Emphasizing the point that writing is equal to doing something social, not just putting together linguistic elements in a grammatically appropriate order, Hyland (2004) asserts “Genre-based writing is concerned with what learners do when they write" (p.5).

Moreover, genre-based pedagogy familiarizes students with “the ways in which the ‘hows’ of text structure produce the whys of social effect” (Cope and Kalantzis, 1993, p. 8). Based on the model by Cope and Kalantzis (1993), there are four stages in GBI including modeling, guiding, practicing and finally independently writing the genre. However, studies of students’ genre-based learning are still underrepresented (Cheng, 2008; Cheng, 2006).

2. Review of Literature

2.1. The concept of Genre
To understand the genre-based instruction fully necessitates a thorough understanding of the term genre itself. Genre, according to Hammond & Derewianka (2001), can be traced back to "ancient Greeks and their study of rhetorical structure in different categories of the epic, lyric and dramatic" (p.69). In line with this current definition, Johns (2003) characterizes genre studies as being traditionally concentrated on determining and categorizing the features of literary works such as form, style and plot. Modern readings, however, assume new different functions for the term and relate it to every day forms of language use. Explaining the same view, Swales defines genre as referring to "a distinguishable category of discourse of any type, spoken or written, with or without literary aspirations"(1990, p.33).

Adhering to the same social-oriented perspective, Hyland (2003) defines genre as "abstract, socially recognized ways of using language" (p.21). Therefore, language use is not considered as arranging chunks of linguistic elements to convey a message, but rather as a social communication that posses its own unique features which are not necessarily linguistic. To emphasize social concept of the term, Bhatia’s (1993) considers genre as communicatively purposeful events. This very characteristic of genre differentiates it form its classic interpretations in a revolutionary way, and accordingly characterizes genre-based approaches to teaching writing. In fact, writing is seen as a social process and a response to recurring social situations. Based on this perspective, pedagogy gives priority to how learners write not what they write (Hyland, 2004, Martin, 1992).

2.2. Genre analysis
Before embarking on the concept of genre analysis, it comes inevitable to have an understanding of the term discourse analysis which seems to be the origin of genre analysis. Bhatia (1993, p.21) defines discourse analysis as "study of language use beyond the sentence boundaries" and divides it into four categories, believing that genre analysis is the fourth of them. Figure 1 shows discourse analysis and its subdivisions:

**Figure 1 Discourse Analysis and its subdivisions**
Bhatia (1993) claims that genre analysis appeared to be an analytical description of language use which combines socio-cultural and psycholinguistic aspects of text construction and interpretation with linguistic insights in order to shed light on the reasons behind specific uses of language (both spoken and written) by different communities.

As a branch of discourse analysis, genre analysis attempts to uncover specific uses of language and to give a clear picture of the communicative characteristics of discourse through meticulous analysis of the ways individuals employ language to engage in specific socially communicative events. The main objective of genre analysis is to determine moves and steps of a genre, order of appearance of those moves and steps as well as their frequency, and its linguistic features. For the sake of the pedagogy, genre analysis relies upon its findings as appropriate sources for language instruction.

Mirhassani and Reshadi (2001) look at genre analysis as an approach that explains how various communicative purposes are achieved through different genres. For them the main characteristic of genre analysis is its emphasis on the significance of communicative purposes and their "influence both on surface and deeper rhetorical structure” (p. 69).

2.3. Genre pedagogy

Genre-based approach to teaching writing can be thought of as a revolutionary movement in writing pedagogy. Prior to the advent of genre-based approaches, writing classrooms were mainly occupied by the orthodoxies of their times, i.e., product and process approaches to teaching writing respectively.

Writing pedagogy from 1940s through 1960s was giving priority to structural well-formedness of students' writings, emphasizing teaching of grammatical rules aiming at enabling students to produce grammatically well-formed sentences. Students were asked to focus on models and forms and were encouraged to do their best to master them. Pincas (1982a) claims that in the product approach, learning to write proceeds through four phases. At the first phase, familiarization, learners are familiarized with features of a text. The controlled and guided writing phases, which compose the second and third phases respectively, give the learners the chance to practice the skills. In the last phase, free writing, students "use the writing skill as part of a genuine activity" (p.22). Criticizing product approach, Escholz (1980) believes it encourages students to use the same plan in a number of different settings, thereby "stultifying and inhibiting writers rather than empowering them or liberating them" (p.24) leading to mechanical parroting of specific organizational style.
By 1960s, due to inadequacies and shortcomings of product-oriented approach as well as emerging new schools of thought, cognitive psychology and constructivism, priority had been given to writers rather than well-formed texts. Teachers began to shift their attention from product to process and from correct forms and accuracy of the sentences to fluency. Main objective of process approach was to enable students to find appropriate techniques for expressing themselves "by means of discussion, tasks, drafting, feedback and informed choices" (Jordan, 1997: 168). It consequently engender in learners feeling of responsibility for their writing through employing techniques of collaborative brainstorming, free writing, and peer editing. in the process-oriented approach, according to Kern (2000) focus is shifted from grammar, spelling and linguistic forms to students' ability in expressing themselves freely. Therefore, what to be modeled is no longer linguistic forms "but writers' processes" (p. 182).

Process-oriented approach, like its counterpart the product approach, proved to suffer from its own shortcomings. First, Hyland (2003) argues that process-oriented approach “lacks a well-formulated theory of how language works in human interaction” (p.18). Second, process approach is widely criticized on the ground that it does not take into account social aspects of writing. Last but not the least, it is argued that teachers in this model are to provide students with the how of writing not with the why. In other words, teachers teach learners how a writer writes in a specific way but students are never told that why those forms are used and preferred over other possible ones.

Genre-based pedagogy, as a revolutionary approach to writing pedagogy which aims at compensating for the shortcomings of the previous approaches, rests on the idea that ways of writing are community resources (tools provided by community) for creating social relationships, rather than merely expressing oneself. In this kind of pedagogy, good writers are those who recognize that what a reader finds in a text is influenced by what he or she has read before and what writers want to say is necessarily affected by what readers expect them to say. In Hyland terms, genre pedagogy with its unique features (being empowering, critical, consciousness-raising explicit, systematic, needs-based, supportive) can enable writing teachers "to see writing as an attempt to communicate with readers, to better understand the ways that language patterns are used, and to accomplish coherent, purposeful prose " (2004, p. 5).

3. Significance of the study
Most researchers in the field of genre studies focused on the effects of genre-based pedagogy of writing in classrooms compared to non-genre (product and process) approaches or simply carried out a genre analysis for the sake of analysis and description (e.g. Swales, 1981; Thompson, 1994; Swales, 1998; Bhatia, 1993; Henry & Roseberry, 1998; Samraj & Monk, 2007; Flowerdew, 1993; Samraj, 2005; Pinto dos Santos, 2002; and Henry & Roseberry, 2001). The researcher could not find any related research carried out specifically in this field which utilized genre analysis as a pedagogical tool. There feels a gap here to investigate the pedagogical effects of doing a genre analysis by students themselves and then assessment of its effects on their writings quantity, quality, and their generic gain. In other words, here students carry out a genre analysis for the sake of learning the genre. Therefore, this study aims at putting students in the actual process of acquiring generic knowledge in an implicit instruction. Instead of a formal genre-based instruction (GBI) which necessitates students to memorize generic information which they may deem irrelevant or not necessary, this study raise their consciousness in an implicit and at the same time practical manner. Such a study can be innovative in the sense that it can demonstrate a new function and define a new capacity for genre analysis through using it as a means of pedagogy. Moreover, studies of this kind can create new opportunities for further research in this field, and at the same time bridge between genre analysis and genre pedagogy.

4. Research questions
1. Is generic consciousness, gained by students through doing a genre analysis, pedagogically effective in improving EFL learners’ writing quantity as measured by word count?
2. Is generic consciousness pedagogically effective in improving EFL learners’ writing quality in writing a letter of job application?
3. Is genre analysis as an implicit genre-based pedagogy effective in increasing EFL learners’ generic knowledge and helping them gain knowledge of that genre?

5. Methodology
5.1. Participants
Participants for this study include 26 EFL students (9 males and 17 females) in B.A degree majoring Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) at University of Zabol. In this university, like many other universities in Iran, writing pedagogy is mainly product-oriented, where focus of instruction is on linguistic correctness. Students were selected through
stratified random selection from among 40 students studying in their 5th semester, including 65 percent females and 35 percent males. Then students were again divided through simple random selection into control and experimental groups, each consisting of 13 students. They posses no specific information about the concept of genre or genre analysis, nor did they receive any training on the genre analysis prior to this study.

5.2. Research Approach and Design

This is an experimental study in which there are both experimental and control groups. As the pretest, students both in experimental and control groups were asked to write a job application letter. They were required to write a letter to Mr Lotfi, head of Simin English teaching institution and apply for the job of teaching English to children between 7 to 10 years old. Students were not told how to start the letter or end it, what information to include, or what language (formal or informal) to use. They were asked to take seats in a classroom and given enough time to complete their letters with no limit on the number of words to use.

In the second week, the experimental group received treatment in the form of a genre analysis workshop held in a classroom. The workshop was held in 3 sessions during one week. In the first session of the workshop, the researcher explained to students the concept of genre analysis and move through presenting different texts whose various moves and steps were in different colors. Researcher put enough time and made sure that all students understood the concept of move and step in Swales’ (1990) CARS (Create A Research Space) model, and how to recognize different moves and steps in a job application letter. Since Upton and Connor (2001) believe the letter of application genre meets standards of a genre, as defined by Swales’ (1990), it was selected for this study. In the second session, a sample of job application letter, analyzed by the researcher, was presented to the students. They were all given copies from the sample and could check as the researcher explained in English. The sample was carefully analyzed and painted in different colors, each color representing a specific move or step so that students could recognize them without confusion. In the final session of the workshop, students were told that they were going to carry out a genre analysis, like what they saw the previous session, on one job application letter written by a student who did not participate in the study. Copies of the same job application letter were given to students and they were given enough time to complete their analysis. Students were asked to do a careful analysis and determine each and every move and step and make a table of all moves and steps. They were not told to memorize these moves and steps, nor did they know anything about the coming post-test in the coming week.
On the other hand, students in control group received a placebo in the form of a brainstorming workshop held for 3 sessions during one week. In these sessions, researcher explained to students the techniques of brainstorming in writing accompanied by doing enough exercises to master the techniques. To convince students of the importance of these techniques, they were asked to take notes of the key points. Moreover, in the final session the researcher required them to use these techniques to write a composition on air pollution.

In the third week, students in both groups gathered in one classroom and were asked to write another job application letter to Mr Lotfi as the post-test. Time lag between experiment and post-test was as less as possible so that any differences in students’ performance could be interpreted as the effect of treatment. They received no instruction on how to write or what to include in their applications. Again, they were given adequate time to complete their application letters with no limit on the number of words they could use.

5.3. Data analysis
For writing quantity to be determined, researcher calculated the total time spent for writing each job application letter, the total number of words used in writing each letter, and the number of words written by every student per minute. The number of words including salutation, closing, prepositions, articles, contractions and postscripts, was counted manually.

For determining writing quality, Jacobs et. al (1981) EFL Composition Profile was employed to score each letter from a maximum of 200, including 50 points for content, 50 points for language use, 40 points for organization, 40 points for vocabulary, and 20 points for mechanics. To reduce subjectivity in the study, a second rater was asked to analyze the samples. All samples were scored independently by each rater and the average mark given by raters to each sample was considered as the final index for writing quality. Pearson Correlation proved a 0.91 inter-rater reliability between scores given by the two raters.

To carry out the genre analysis on writings of students both in pretest and post-test, researcher used Songcuan’s (2012) *table of obligatory and optional moves in an application letter* as the generic framework to judge all sample. Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to obtain and analyze the data since, as Swales (1981) believes quantitative analysis can be relied upon as a source to speculate on the qualitative aspects. For the quantitative method, descriptive statistics in the form of frequency counts was employed to analyze the data, while for the qualitative method, genre analysis was used.

6. Results and discussion
Table 1 summarizes results of analysis on the data, including mean and standard deviation for students’ scores in all groups and in all different variables both in pretest and posttest.

**Table 1**

*Group Statistics for the writing quality, quantity, and genre analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Quality</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>113.46</td>
<td>33.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>145.38</td>
<td>33.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>36.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>38.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Quantity</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>6.53</td>
<td>1.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Words per minute)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>6.38</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Moves</td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>6.30</td>
<td>1.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>6.76</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>6.92</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to computing mean and standard deviation, different T-tests were employed to make sure of any significant difference between these means. First, a paired sample T-test was employed to determine any difference between performance of students in pretest and posttest. Result of T-test showed that in control group, in all three variables (writing quality, writing quantity, and genre analysis) there was no significant difference between the means of their scores in pretest and posttest. It means placebo in the control group did not affect students’ performance during posttest and their scores did not significantly change. Table 2 contains statistical details of paired sample T-test for the control group.

**Table 2**

*Paired T-test for control group*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.436</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, for the experimental group the situation was different. Students’ performance in different variables was not the same. Regarding writing quality and genre analysis, paired sample T-test revealed a significant difference in scores students got in pretest and posttest. It means students performed significantly different in these two test and their scores improved significantly in posttest. In writing quantity, however, results of T-test showed no significant
improvements of students’ scores. Table 3 includes statistical information of paired sample T-test for the experimental group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To compare students’ performance in control and experimental groups, researchers employed independent T-test for both pretest and posttest. Results of independent T-test for students’ scores in pretest for all three variables showed no significance difference. Meaning, students both in control and experimental groups did the same in pretest. In the posttest, however, results of independent T-test indicated a significant difference in two of the variables (writing quality and genre analysis). For writing quantity, of course, T-test showed no significant difference in scores of students in control and experimental groups. Details of independent T-test are shown in Table 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the statistical procedures employed and the obtained results, we can answer the research questions of this study. Regarding the first research question about the effect of genre consciousness on writing quantity, based on the results, it can be concluded that the instruction did not significantly improve students’ scores. Accordingly, the answer to the first research question is negative.

Regarding the second research question about effectiveness of genre consciousness on students’ writing quality, and the third research question about effectiveness of genre consciousness on increasing students’ generic knowledge, it was statistically proved that the instruction significantly improved their scores. Hence, it can be concluded that indirect genre pedagogy in the form of genre consciousness can improve students’ quality and their generic knowledge. Moreover, through carrying out paired sample T-test, it was statistically proved that placebo in the control group did not significantly changed students’ scores in none of the variables from pretest to posttest (Table 2).
7. Conclusion
This study aimed at examining effects of indirect genre pedagogy in the form of raising EFL students’ generic consciousness through engaging them in doing a genre analysis on samples of job application letters on their writing quantity, writing quality, and their gain of generic knowledge. The study was carried out in an EFL setting at University of Zabol in Iran, on 26 TEFL students in B.A degree. Results of data analysis indicated that indirect genre pedagogy was significantly effective in improving EFL students’ writing ability and their generic knowledge. However, for writing quantity results did not revealed a significant improvement in students’ scores.

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Title

Metadiscourse Markers: Explicit Instruction and EFL Learners' Translating Performance

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Abstract

Metadiscourse markers are aspects of a text which exclusively guide readers toward the meanings intended by the author. This study aims to investigate the impact of explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers on advanced, intermediate, and elementary EFL learners' translating performance. The participants of this study were 94 undergraduate students majoring in English Translation at the University of Khorasgan. To elicit the relevant data, participants were given a pretest of translation to check their initial knowledge and unprompted use of metadiscourse markers. All the three groups were then exposed to explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers for six successive sessions. Finally, a post test measuring their translating performance with metadiscourse markers in focus was administered. The results indicated generally that explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers significantly improves EFL learners' translating skills. It was however unpredictably revealed that learners at the intermediate level improved significantly greater than those at the advanced and elementary levels. The findings call practitioners to pay more serious attention to metadiscourse markers in making EFL curricula.

Keywords: Explicit Instruction, Language Proficiency, Metadiscourse Markers, Translation

1. Introduction
Metadiscourse markers are aspects of a text which exclusively guide readers toward the meanings intended by the author. Metadiscourse markers, also sometimes called 'transitions', are a good way to show the reader how ideas in a sentence are connected to ideas in a previous sentence. One can think of metadiscourse like street signs that are telling the reader whether the text is continuing in the same direction it was going, or in a new direction.

This paper explores the role of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse markers in improving the translating performance of EFL learners. Metadiscourse will be employed as an analytical framework since it is one of the devices that help a piece of written text to be more effective by directing readers through the text so that the writer's stance and the text are better understood.

Translation plays an important role in every community. It is via translating that two countries with two different languages communicate with each other. A translator is both a reader and a writer. S/he should firstly, understands the text by reading it, and then reproduce it in another language, as a writer. Therefore, metadiscourse markers can help him/her both in understanding the original text and in reproducing the target one.

As Hyland (2005) states in his book on metadiscourse, "the term metadiscourse was coined by Zelling Harris in 1959 to offer a way of understanding language in use, representing a writer's or reader's attempts to guide a receiver's perception of a text"(3). The concept has been further developed by writers such as Williams (1981), Vande Kopple (1985) and Crismore (1989).

Metadiscourse was first defined by Williams (1981) as "writing about writing". Vande Kopple (1985) also referred to metadiscourse as "discourse about discourse or communication about communication". Hyland (2004) maintained that metadiscourse help authors interact with their audience in order to communicate successfully with them. Moreover, Hyland (1998) contended that metadiscourse markers are integral to the text. In other words, they cannot be removed or changed at will. In a quantitative study, Hyland (1998) examined metadiscourse markers in 28 research articles and found 373 instances of metadiscourse in each research article. In another textual analysis, Hyland (1999) explored metadiscourse markers in 21 textbooks and found 405 instances of metadiscourse markers in each text, around one per 15 words. Hyland (1999) has concluded that metadiscourse play an important part in communication. Crismore (1984) has defined metadiscourse as" discoursing about spoken or written discourse" (p.66). She has added that metadiscourse provides readers or listeners with direction rather than information.
Indubitably, the advantages of metadiscourse are many. For instance, discourse structuring functions of metadiscourse guide readers through a text and help them organize content while reading, thus creating global comprehension (Crismore, 1989). Metadiscourse has been recognized as one of the major rhetorical features and strategies in the production of a text (Hyland, 1998). In fact, it "is not indispensable stylistic device which authors can vary at will. It is integral to the contexts in which it occurs and is intimately linked to the norms and expectations of particular cultural and professional communities" (Hyland, 1998).

According to Vande Kopple (2002) metadiscourse refers to elements in texts that convey meanings other than those that are primarily referential. As Hyland (2004) states the importance of metadiscourse lies in its underlying rhetorical dynamics which relate it to the contexts in which it occurs.

Hyland (1998), in a study on research articles in four academic disciplines, sought to show how the appropriate use of metadiscourse crucially depends on rhetorical context. The study identified taxonomy of metadiscourse functions and suggested that metadiscourse reflects one way in which context and linguistic meaning are integrated to allow readers to derive intended interpretations, also metadiscourse provided writers with a means of constructing appropriate contexts and alluding to shared disciplinary assumptions. Olivera et al. (2001) investigated metadiscourse devices used by copywriters to construct their slogans and headlines in selected women's magazines. The results showed that both textual and interpersonal metadiscourse help copywriters to convey a persuasive message under an informative mask.

Dahl (2004) investigated writer manifestation in three languages, English, French and Norwegian, and three disciplines, economics, linguistics and medicine, in research articles, to see whether language or discipline is the most important variable governing the pattern of metatext in academic discourse. The findings suggested that the language variable is the most important one within economics and linguistics, where English and Norwegian show very similar patterns, using much more metatext than French; within medicine, all three languages display a uniform pattern of little metatext.

Afros and Schryer (2009) investigated strategies and exponents of the promotional (Meta) discourse in natural and social science articles. The inquiry demonstrated that the distribution of promotional elements across article sections and moves in the two disciplines differed. On the whole, the study reconfirmed the advantage of specificity in teaching academic literacy advocated by many applied linguists and provided actual patterns that can be incorporated into the writing curriculum.

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Dafouz-Milne (2007) explored the role of metadiscourse markers in the construction and attainment of persuasion. 40 opinion columns, 20 in English and 20 in Spanish extracted from two elite newspapers, the British The Times and the Spanish El Pais. Findings suggested that both textual and interpersonal metadiscourse markers are present in English and Spanish newspaper columns, but that there are variations as to the distribution and composition of such markers, specifically in the case of certain textual categories (i.e. logical markers and code glosses).

Duen (2007) analyzed the use and distribution of self-mentions in 24 English and Spanish business management research articles. The results revealed greater use of self-mentions in English. The different results also suggested that the use of self-mentions in research articles is not only conditioned by the discipline to which the authors belong but also by the specific cultural context in which research articles are produced and distributed.

Hyland (2004) divides metadiscourse markers into two broad categories, each one with a set of subcategories, interactive (textual) and interactional (interpersonal):

I. Interactive Markers: They enable the writer to manage the information flow so as to provide his preferred interpretations. They include the following subtypes:
   1. Transitions: These markers mainly indicate: additive, contrastive, and consequential steps in the discourse. Some examples are: in addition, but, thus, and, etc.
   2. Frame markers: They indicate text boundaries or elements of schematic text structure, like: my purpose here is to, finally, to conclude, etc.
   3. Endophoric markers: They refer to information in other parts of the text and make the additional material available to the readers. Some examples are: in section, see figure, noted above, etc.
   4. Evidentials: They refer to sources of information from other texts, such as: X states, (Y, 2010), According to X, etc.
   5. Code glosses: They help readers grasp functions of ideational material. They show the restatements of ideational information, like: namely, such as, in other words, e.g., etc.

II. Interactional Markers: They involve the reader in the argument. They 'focus on the participants of the interaction and seek to display the writer’s persona and a tenor consistent with the norms of the disciplinary community' [Hyland 2004, p.139]. The interactional resources include:
   1. Hedges: They withhold writer’s full commitment to proposition. Examples: might, about, perhaps, possibly, etc.
2. Boosters: They emphasize force or the writer’s certainty in proposition. Examples: *it is clear that, in fact, definitely,* etc.

3. Attitude markers: They indicate the writer’s appraisal or attitude to propositional information. Some examples are: *unfortunately, surprisingly, I agree,* etc.

4. Engagement markers: They explicitly refer to or build a relationship with the reader. Examples: *consider, you can see that, note that,* etc.

5. Self-mentions: They explicitly refer to authors’ presence in terms of first person pronouns and possessives. Examples: *I, we, our, my, your,* etc.

Following what was mentioned above, the present research aimed at investigating the impact of explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers on EFL learners' reading comprehension.

2. Research Question and Hypothesis

Q: Does explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers have any significant impact on EFL learners' translating performance?

H0: Explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers doesn't have any significant impact on EFL learners' translating performance.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study were 94 EFL students, both male and female, and aged between 20 to 24 years, of whom 32 were elementary, 32 intermediate, and 30 advanced students. They were majoring in English translation at the University of Khorasgan. They were divided into three levels of language competence through the administration of a Michigan proficiency test. The mean score of the test was calculated. Those whose scores were two standard deviations above the mean were assigned the label 'advanced'. In the same fashion, the 'intermediate' students were those whose scores were either one standard deviation below the mean or one standard deviation above the mean, and those whose scores were two standard deviations below the mean were considered the 'elementary' group.

3.2. Materials

The materials used in this study comprised a) a Michigan proficiency test (MELAB 1992), with 100 multiple-choice items on vocabulary, various grammatical points as well as reading comprehension texts, intended to divide the participants into three levels of language
proficiency, b) a pretest to assess their initial knowledge and use of metadiscourse markers, and c) a post test to measure the participants reading comprehension after explicit instruction.

3.3. Procedures
As to the procedures applied in this study, the Michigan test was first administered and the population was divided into three groups of language proficiency based on the distance from the mean. Then, a pretest on translating performance was given to all participants. In this test, the three groups were given three different sport paragraphs to translate. Each participant was actually required to read the texts and translate them, in order to determine the extent of his/her initial knowledge and unprompted use of metadiscourse markers.

All three groups were then exposed to the same explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers in six successive sessions. They were initially provided and familiarized with a list of definitions and examples of the two categories of the taxonomy (i.e. textual and interpersonal metadiscourse) proposed by Hyland (2004). They were then repeatedly, and under the instructor’s guidance, given opportunity during the instruction sessions to give synonyms for different types of metadiscourse and generate sentences using them. Participants were also frequently given sentences with deleted metadiscourse markers and were asked to supply the markers. They were given passages with metadiscourse markers time and again and were required to first identify them and then write down the function of each marker on a sheet of paper. They were also required to use each type of metadiscourse in various types of sentences (simple, compound, complex, declarative, imperative, question, etc.) and in larger units as well. Some texts were given to them to translate, as well. The reinforcement of all such activities formed the 'explicit instruction' meant in this study.

Finally, the translating ability posttest (i.e. translating 3 different sport paragraphs) was administered to check the participants' achievement in terms of metadiscourse markers after having been exposed to explicit instruction. The participants' scores on the pretest and posttest were then compared to find the degree of improvement of each group. The obtained scores were statistically analyzed, using Paired Sample T-Test in order to identify the changes that had taken place as an outcome of instruction given to the groups as well as differences in achievement among the three groups.

3.4. Scoring Method
The scoring of translating tests was basically subjective, because there is more than one correct way of translating each paragraph. So inter-rater scoring procedure was used. Two raters scored the participants' translations based on the degree of their clearness and the
correct use of metadiscourse markers. In order to reduce the mentioned subjectivity, they were asked to base their judgments on such general assessment criteria as the clarity of the purpose, the clarity of the main ideas, the close relations between ideas, etc. The obtained scores were statistically analyzed, using Paired Sample T-Test in order to identify the changes that had taken place as an outcome of instruction given to the groups as well as differences in achievement among the three groups.

4. Data Analysis and Results

This section presents the results from the analysis of the obtained data. However, to bridge the results and the hypothesis of the research, below is a restatement of the null hypothesis mentioned earlier:

H0: There is no significant relationship between explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers and EFL learners’ translating performance.

The null hypothesis

The null hypothesis states that explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers doesn't have any impact on EFL learners' translating performance. Regarding this hypothesis, a Paired Sample T-Test was conducted to compare the means of the two sub-test results.

Each group in the study took a pretest and posttest on translating performance. The posttest was taken after the participants went through the necessary explicit instructions. Each student translated 3 different sport paragraphs. Two different raters scored the tests and the mean score for each test was calculated to see how each learner performed on his/her pretests and after the explicit instructions on the posttests. The results of the participants' pretest and posttest were compared through Paired Sample T-Test. Paired Sample T-Test is used to see a group's performance on two different tests. Table 1 below presents the mean score of the pretest and posttest of the elementary group.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the elementary group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair</td>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>8.5625</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2.47487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>10.515</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>2.7193</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Looking at table 1, one can clearly see that the mean score on the pretest (8.56) has improved to (10.51). This clearly shows that explicit instruction has affected the translating performance of elementary learners.

Having scanned the statistics of the paired sample T Test, know we should determine whether the difference across the variables is considerable. Table 2 below clearly illustrates the significance of the resulting difference.

Table 2: Paired sample T-test elementary groups’ performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Pre-test</td>
<td>1.95313</td>
<td>.58695</td>
<td>.10376</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.95313</td>
<td>.58695</td>
<td>.10376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Post-test</td>
<td>18.824</td>
<td>1.74151</td>
<td>2.16474</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>18.824</td>
<td>1.74151</td>
<td>2.16474</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now the results of the tables can be interpreted as such: as was mentioned before, this test was performed to discover the possible impact of explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers on translating performance of the learners. However, the mean difference between the two tests (equal to 1.95) has come out to be almost noticeably different, but not adequate to show a high significance of the difference. To get information about significance of difference, confidence interval of difference and significance value of the test has been provided. Generally, provided that confidence interval of difference does not contain zero and significant value is less than alpha level of test, it can be concluded that the difference between two tests is significant (table 2). Accepting that and taking a second look at the paired sample T Test table, one can undoubtedly observe that the above mentioned conditions are both met in this test, that is, confidence interval of difference does not contain zero (upper=-1.74, lower=-2.16) and significant value of the test is much less than the alpha level of the test (0.00<0.05).

Table 3 presents the results of intermediate group's level of achievement in their posttest. As shown in the table below, the mean score of the learners' on their pretest was 12.19. The mean score on their posttest indicates that the participants’ translating performance has improved to 15.05 which indicate a higher achievement compared to the elementary level students.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the intermediate group
As was mentioned before, this test was performed to discover the possible effect of explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers on translating performance of the learners. The mean difference between the two tests for the intermediate group was equal to -2.86. To see whether explicit instruction had a considerable impact on translating performance of the intermediate group learners, confidence interval of difference and significance value of the test have been provided. Confidence interval of difference does not contain zero (upper=-2.63, lower=-3.09) and significance value of the test is much less than alpha level of the test (0.00<0.05). This is shown in table 4 below:

Table 4: Paired Samples T Test - Intermediate group's performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Difference</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Mean</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair Pre-test</td>
<td>-2.86</td>
<td>.63797</td>
<td>.11278</td>
<td>-3.09</td>
<td>-2.63</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>.63797</td>
<td>.11278</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 below demonstrates the results of pretest and posttest for advanced level participants. The number of students participating in this group was 30. The mean score of the pre-test for this group was 16. The mean score after explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers improved to 17.5, which demonstrates the least improvement among the three groups.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of the advanced group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Difference</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std.Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair Pre-test</td>
<td>16.0000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.33907</td>
<td>.24448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>17.5500</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.24810</td>
<td>.22787</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The mean difference between the two tests for the advanced group was equal to -1.55 (Table 6 below). To see whether explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers had a considerable effect on translating performance of advanced group learners, confidence interval of difference does not contain zero (upper=-1.32, lower=-1.78) and significance value of the test is much less than the alpha level of the test (0.00<0.05).

Table 6: Paired sample test advanced group's performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Difference</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 Pre-test</td>
<td>-1.55000</td>
<td>.62076</td>
<td>.11334</td>
<td>-1.78180</td>
<td>-1.31820</td>
<td>-13.676</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All together, explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers does have an effect on the EFL learners' translating performance. In other words, the translating performance of the EFL learners was significantly related to the explicit instruction they received on metadiscourse markers; thereby the null hypothesis of the research was rejected.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

With regard to the analysis of the data in the previous section and the results thereof, the following significant conclusions can be drawn and discussed:

- Elementary learners improved significantly after explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers.
- Intermediate learners showed the highest improvement. In other words, explicit instruction showed to be most effective for this group of learners.
- Advanced learners had the least improvement after explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers.

The above conclusions for the three groups in the study confirm the major claim of this research that explicit instruction of metadiscourse markers in Iranian EFL courses is quite successful for improving learners’ translating performance. This strongly corresponds to Crismore's (1985) point of view that metadiscourse can develop critical thinking as readers are able to construct their own opinions of the writer. These findings can also confirm this
fact that metadiscourse markers are essential components for translators both in understanding the original text and in reproducing the target one.

As it was also observed in the preceding section, the participants in the second group (i.e. intermediate learners) did significantly better than the first and third group on their posttest. This is in contrast to Simin and Tavangar's (2009) finding that "the more proficient learners are in a second language, the more they use metadiscourse markers" (p. 230). It can thus be concluded that for intermediate learners the reinforcement of metadiscourse markers through explicit instruction in their reading courses seems to be indispensable, and that explicit instruction is not as helpful for elementary and specially for advanced learners, although they too showed comparatively less significant improvements on their posttest. The reason for this might be that advanced learners already know enough language, and are familiar with metadiscourse markers; therefore they recognize such markers in their reading and reproduce them in their translations. As to the elementary group, less improvement seems to be natural due to their inadequate language competence. The outperformance of intermediate learners in the present study and the possible reasons for it should however be investigated in future researches and different contexts.

The findings support Simin and Tavangar's (2009) statement that, "metadiscourse instruction has a positive effect on the correct use of metadiscourse markers" (230), although there is no report in their study of explicit teaching of metadiscourse markers to their participants. The findings are also in line with Perez- Llantada (2003), who conducted research on the effect of metadiscourse techniques on learners’ communication skills in university courses of English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and observed that students became successful communicators with regards to metadiscourse strategies.

A final word is that, first of all, this research can be a call to teachers, practitioners and researchers in translation courses to pay more attention to metadiscourse as an important aspect of language. Secondly, the findings can guide teachers for improving EFL learners' translating performance. This research also clarifies the fact that learners with different levels of language proficiency need to be treated differently in the classes.

References


Title
The Impact of Teaching, Reading and Writing Practice in a Game–based Context on EFL Learners' Anxiety

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Abstract
This study aims to investigate the impact of teaching reading and writing in a game-based context on EFL learners' anxiety. Since anxiety is a debilitating factor in language class and causes poor performance in learners, ways of reduction of it are important. One of the methods of reducing anxiety is considered to be language games. After an introduction of anxiety and game in language education, two experiments were done in order to evaluate the role of games in language education. For implementing this study 33 Participants at intermediate level are selected from four institutes in Kashan, Iran and in another study 20 students from a male high school are selected and by teaching reading and writing in two states with and without games anxiety is surveyed. Results of these studies showed that in experiment one and two there was not much difference between learners' anxiety before and after language games and these results can be due to low anxiety of participants. Meanwhile based on outcomes of two questionnaires in relation to teacher and learners' belief about language games, 80% learners and nearly all of teachers maintain that language games reduce anxiety.

Keywords: Language anxiety, Reading anxiety, Writing anxiety, Language games

1. Introduction
As we know, anxiety is one of the main concepts in language teaching and learning that is cognitively and affectively demanding (Abu-Rabia, 2004). A lot of research is done in this area and suggests that anxiety is important in second language acquisition (Na, 2007; Wei, 2007). Since, it causes poor performance and make the students cannot develop communicative skills, thus consideration of it is of prime attention of teachers and educationalists. Anxiety is generally seen as a psychological concept and has been explored by researchers.

Spielberger (1966) defines anxiety as "subjective feelings of apprehension and tension, accompanied by arousal of the autonomic nervous system." Anxiety can be either facilitating or debilitating. Facilitating anxiety motivates learners to confront the new learning task. Debilitating anxiety motivates learners to assume an avoidance behavior and therefore tends to escape from the learning task (Scovel, 1978). The factor of task difficulty affects learners to develop a facilitating or a debilitating anxiety. MacIntyre (1995) claimed only when a given task is relatively simple, foreign language anxiety could be facilitating.

Once the task is too difficult, anxiety will impair performance. In addition to task difficulty, factors such as teachers' attitude and evaluation, teacher-students interactions in class, parents' expectation, classmates' attitude, students' own achievement are the potential sources of foreign language anxiety.

Many other research done about role of anxiety in language learning but this study is important from this point that a way of reduction of anxiety in language class is supposed to be language games that provide cheerful and stress-free environment for learning. Furthermore techniques are introduced that can alleviate anxiety in classroom that teachers and material designers can consider in methodology of teaching and material preparation. In fact the purpose of these studies are that efficiency of games in reduction of anxiety in two skills of reading and writing is surveyed that results of this study can be used in schools and the other institutions.

2. Statement of the Problem

Since language learning is an anxiety provoking phenomena, thus consideration of it and ways of reduction of it is of prime importance in language education because it causes hindrance in language learning. The aim of this study is to consider the impact of teaching reading and writing in a game-based situation on level of EFL learners' anxiety. In fact, study
is based on considering anxiety in two situations through language games and without them. Then, in these situations anxiety is surveyed.

3. Research questions
In order to fulfill its purposes, the present study attempts to answer the following questions:
1- What is the effect of teaching reading practice in a game-based context on EFL learners' anxiety?
2- What is the effect of teaching writing practice in a game-based context on EFL learners' anxiety?

4. Statement of the hypothesis
In order to investigate the above-mentioned research questions, the following hypotheses are formulated:
1- There is much effect of teaching reading practice in a game situation on reduction of EFL learners' anxiety.
2- There is much effect of teaching writing practice in a game situation on reduction of EFL learners' anxiety.

5. Methodology
This study will investigate the impact of teaching reading and writing practices on level of EFL learners' anxiety in a game-based situation. What follows are different stages that researcher is going to take to pursue the objectives of the present study.

6. Participants
The participants of the study in experiment one are 33 learners in Kashan, Iran language institutes that are comprised of Kish, Goftearo, Mesbahe2, and Darolfonoon that consist of both male and females and in experiment two, 20 students from Hashemzadeh high school in Kashan, Iran are selected in this study.

7. Instruments
In order to pursue these studies, the following research instruments will be used to measure the afore-mentioned variables:
- Persian version of Foreign Language classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)
- Persian version of Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (FLRAS)
- Persian version of Foreign Language Writing Anxiety Scale (FLWAS)
- Four Reading games and four reading tests
- Four Writing games and four writing tests

FLCAS is a self-report measure of students' anxiety feeling in the foreign language classroom designed by Horwitz et al (1986). The instrument had 33 items on a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". Items were developed from student self-reports, clinical experiences and a review of related instruments. The items measured foreign language anxiety relating to three general sources of anxiety: communication apprehension, tests, and fear of negative evaluation.

FLRAS by Saito et al (1999) was designed to measure the anxiety that students experience in reading in a foreign language. The FLRAS was composed of 20 items, each of which was answered on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The highest degree of anxiety received a five and the lowest received one. FLWA by Cheng (2004) consists of 22 items that measure learners writing anxiety.

8. Design
The design of study is a quantitative and qualitative study that at first, a Persian version of general foreign language anxiety is given to each learner until we evaluate anxiety of students in general. Then, a reading comprehension test and a Persian version of reading anxiety questionnaire from Saito et al. (1999) are given to learners in order to evaluate the degree of anxiety with regard to reading text. After that, a writing activity is given to each learner. Then, Persian version of writing anxiety questionnaires from Cheng (2004) is given to learners. In another session, at first a reading game administered in class. Then, reading anxiety questionnaire is given to each learner. After that, a writing game is administered in class and writing anxiety questionnaire from Cheng (2004) is given to each learner. Finally, by comparing the results in these two situations the degree of learners' anxiety is gained. In another experiment this method is repeated too.

9. Data collection
In order to accomplish the objectives of this study, data will be collected through FLCAS, writing anxiety questionnaire from Cheng (2004) and reading anxiety questionnaire from Saito et al. (1999).

10. Procedure
In order to investigate the effect of teaching reading and writing practices on EFL learners' anxiety, a questionnaire from Horwitz et al. (1986) given to students to evaluate the level of anxiety of them. Then, in order to consider the effect of language games on anxiety a no game-based and a game-based teaching context provided for students and level of their anxiety with two questionnaires reading anxiety from Saito et al.(1999) and writing anxiety from Cheng (2004) are measured in these two situations. Results show level of EFL learners' anxiety with and without game context.

11. Data analysis

In order to discover the answers to the research questions of this study, a series of calculations and statistical routines with the SPSS software version 14 will be carried out. Secondly the correlation coefficient will be estimated to discover the existence and amount of the effect of teaching reading and writing in a game-based situation on learners' anxiety level.

12. Results

12.1. Overview

In order to accomplish this experiment, four reading and writing teaching in twosituations of with and without language games were used in four institutes. Theresults of reading and writing anxiety in these situations are discussed in thefollowing sections.

12.2. Results of experiment one

12.2.1. Result of learners' general foreign language anxiety

The FLCAS is a Likert scale which has been quantified by assigning points toeach of the responses. Those questions which have a positive response foranxiety have been assigned five points for "strongly agree", four points for"agree", three points for "no comment", two points for "disagree", and one pointfor "strongly disagree". The pointing system is reversed for negative questions.

Each questionnaire has been tabulated according to this system. The descriptiveanalysis is shown in Tab. I.

| Table I: Descriptive Statistics of FLCA |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| N                          | Range (Statist) | Minimum (Statist) | Maximum (Statist) | Mean (Statist) | Std. Deviation (Statist) | Variance (Statist) |
| FLCAS ValidN(1 listwise)   | 31              | 91.00            | 44.00            | 135.00          | 77.354           | 3.6185          | 20.14704        | 405.903         |
As seen in above table, the mean of general foreign language anxiety of learners is about 77 that mean it is not high in comparison with 165 that is the most quantity of anxiety.

12.2.2. Results of learners' reading anxiety in traditional classroom

The results of learners reading anxiety in no game-based situation is shown in Tab.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RABG</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>47.00</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>76.00</td>
<td>49.7188</td>
<td>97.628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on what can be seen from the experiment, the reading anxiety of learners is about 49 that it is not so much.

12.2.3. Results of learners' writing anxiety in traditional classroom

The result of writing anxiety of learners after giving writing activity is shown in Tab.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WABG</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>65.00</td>
<td>27.00</td>
<td>92.00</td>
<td>55.3030</td>
<td>12.76344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you see, the mean of writing anxiety of learners is about 55 that it is not high in comparison with total anxiety that is 110.

12.2.4. Results of learners' reading anxiety in a game-based context

The results of learners' reading anxiety with application of language games are manifested in Tab.IV.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RAAG</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>43.00</td>
<td>34.00</td>
<td>77.00</td>
<td>51.3077</td>
<td>104.702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As you see, the mean of reading anxiety after implementation of language games is about 51 that it is not high.

12.2.5. Results of learners' writing anxiety in a game-based context

The results of learners' writing anxiety after implementation of language games are shown in Tab.V.

Table V: Descriptive Statistics of WAAG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N Statistic</th>
<th>Range Statistic</th>
<th>Minimum Statistic</th>
<th>Maximum Statistic</th>
<th>Mean Statistic</th>
<th>Std. Deviation Statistic</th>
<th>Variance Statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WAAG</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>42.00</td>
<td>72.00</td>
<td>55.4400</td>
<td>9.87877</td>
<td>97.590</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you see, the writing anxiety of learners after using games is about 55 that it is not so much.

12.2.6. Comparison of reading anxiety in two situations with and without Language games

Table VI: Paired-Samples Statistics of RABG and RAAG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>RABG</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>49.5000</td>
<td>10.78610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RAAG</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>51.3077</td>
<td>10.23238</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VII: Paired Samples Correlations of RABG and RAAG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>RABG &amp; RAAG</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>.294</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table VIII: Paired Samples Test of relation between RABG and RAAG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>RABG, RAAG</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Std.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Deviation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>95%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RABG</td>
<td>-1.80769</td>
<td>12.49326</td>
<td>2.45013</td>
<td>-.685383</td>
<td>3.23844</td>
<td>-.738</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you can see, there is not much difference between mean of learners' reading anxiety in two situations of before and after language games and there is low correlation between two variables.

Based on data in table, because the amount of "sig" is more than 0.05 and 0 is between upper and lower of 95% confidence interval of the difference, there isn't significant difference
between reading anxiety before and after game. The results are better shown in" Fig. I."This result can be due to low general anxiety of learners and because reading skill is not so much anxiety provoking.

![RABG & RAAG](image)

**Figure 1:** Reading anxiety before and after game

### 12.2.7. Comparison of writing anxiety in two situations of with and without Language games

#### Table IX: Paired Samples Statistics of WABG and WAAG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WABG</td>
<td>55.5200</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.88772</td>
<td>2.57754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAAG</td>
<td>55.4400</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9.87877</td>
<td>1.97575</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table X: Paired Samples Correlations of WABG and WAAG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>.398</td>
<td>.049</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table XI: Paired Samples Test of relation between WABG and WAAG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>WABG – WAAG</td>
<td>0.08000</td>
<td>12.73748</td>
<td>2.54750</td>
<td>-.08000</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on what you see, because the amount of "sig" is more than 0.05 and 0 is between %95 confidence interval of the difference, thus there is no significant difference between writing anxiety before and after using games. The results are better shown in" Fig.II". This result can
be due to low general anxiety of learner and meanwhile with regard to this point that writing skill is not much anxiety-provoking.

![Figure II: Writing anxiety before and after game](image)

As you see, the mean of anxiety is about 93 that it is to some extent high.

12.3. Experiment 2

12.3.1. Result of reading anxiety before game

Reading anxiety of learners is shown in the Tab.12.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N Statistic</th>
<th>Range Statistic</th>
<th>Minimum Statistic</th>
<th>Maximum Statistic</th>
<th>Mean Statistic</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Std. Deviation Statistic</th>
<th>Variance Statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FLCAS</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>69.00</td>
<td>119.00</td>
<td>93.3500</td>
<td>3.11302</td>
<td>13.92187</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you see, the mean of reading anxiety before game is about 61 that it is almost high.

12.3.2. Result of writing anxiety before game

Writing anxiety of learners is shown in Tab.13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N Statistic</th>
<th>Range Statistic</th>
<th>Minimum Statistic</th>
<th>Maximum Statistic</th>
<th>Mean Statistic</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Std. Deviation Statistic</th>
<th>Variance Statistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RABG</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>42.00</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>77.00</td>
<td>61.3500</td>
<td>2.0879</td>
<td>9.33739</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Valid N (listwise) | 20 | 20 | | | | | |
As you see, the mean of writing anxiety of learners is about 64 that it is rather high.

**12.3.3. Result of reading anxiety after game**

Table XIV: Descriptive statistics of RAAG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RAAG Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27.00</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>77.00</td>
<td>62.8750</td>
<td>1.70018</td>
<td>6.80074</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you see, the mean of anxiety is about 62.

**12.3.4. Result of writing anxiety after game**

Table XV: Descriptive statistics of WAAG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WAAG Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>54.00</td>
<td>77.00</td>
<td>61.4000</td>
<td>1.68974</td>
<td>6.54435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As you see, the mean of anxiety is about 61.

**12.3.5. Comparison of reading anxiety before and after game**

Table XVI: Paired Samples Statistics of RABG and RAAG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>RABG</td>
<td>RAAG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>59.3750</td>
<td>8.88351</td>
<td>2.22088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>62.8750</td>
<td>6.80074</td>
<td>1.70018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XVII: Paired Samples Correlations between RABG and WAAG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>RABG</td>
<td>RAAG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>-.106</td>
<td>.695</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XVIII: Paired Samples Test of relation between RABG and RAAG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>RABG RAAG</td>
<td>-3.500</td>
<td>11.74734</td>
<td>2.93684</td>
<td>-9.75972</td>
<td>-1.192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on data in table XVIII, because amount of "sig" is more than 0.05 and zero is between lower and upper of 95% confidence interval of the difference. Thus, we conclude that there is not difference between reading anxiety before and after game. The result of study is better shown in the" Fig. III."
12.3.6. Comparison of writing anxiety before and after game

Table XIX: Paired Samples Statistics of WABG and WAAG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>WABG</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>62.2000</td>
<td>6.81595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WAAG</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>61.4000</td>
<td>6.54435</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XX: Paired Samples Correlations between WABG and WAAG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.265</td>
<td>.339</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table XXI: Paired Samples Test of relation between WABG and WAAG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>WABG</td>
<td>.800</td>
<td>8.09938</td>
<td>2.09125</td>
<td>.383</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>.708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WAAG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on information of table XXI, because amount of "sig" is more than 0.05 and zero is between lower and upper of 95% confidence level of the difference. Thus we conclude that there isn't difference between writing anxiety before and after game. The results can be shown better in the "Fig. IV."
12.4. Results of questionnaire one

12.4.1. Teachers' opinion about use of language games

Based on the questions, almost all of teachers agree that language games motivate students and make class interesting and reduce stress among learners especially when learners are children. Meanwhile learners don't feel that they are in a formal classroom. Teachers used language games more in speaking and writing skills. The limitations of language games based on teachers' opinion are that they are not suitable for adults and there aren't appropriate devices in class.

The other limitations are lack of time, lack of sufficient games in upper levels, students are slow to get the instruction of the games.

12.5. Results of questionnaire two

12.5.1. Learners' belief about use of language games

Based on information that are gained from another questionnaire, nearly 80% learners agree that language games are helpful and provide a cheerful and enjoyable environment for learners and reduce stress and by cooperation learners learn many things from another and the rest believed that it is only killing of the time and doesn't work for reduction of anxiety.

13. Discussion

Based on results of my research in experiments, it is evident that language games don't changed the stress of learners. These results can be due to this fact that learners of these studies are not anxious.

But, based on results of questionnaires about opinion of teachers and learners about usefulness of games, almost all of teachers and 80% learners agree with application of games especially in elementary levels.

Meanwhile some students believed that there is not culture of games in language classroom and may get class out of control.

14. Conclusion

Based on my study about the impact of language games in learners' anxiety, language games don't affect the anxiety of participants that this can be due to this fact that participants of the studies are not anxious.

But, results of my questionnaire show that all teachers and nearly 80% participants agree with application of games and role of them in reduction of stress.
Thus, we must use language games in language classes especially in elementary levels so that it provide a stress-free environment although we shouldn't ignore its pedagogical value and we must control the class when administering games.

References
Title

Footsteps of Mind Controlling in ELT Textbooks: A Critical Discourse Analysis

Author

Seyyedeh Fahimeh Parsaiyan (Ph.D Candidate)
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Biodata

Seyyedeh Fahimeh Parsaiyan is a Ph.D candidate of TEFL, Alzahra University. Her areas of interest include CDA, Syllabus Design and Classroom Methodology.

Abstract

Throughout the last two decades, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has raised perplexing questions regarding the non-neutral, ideological, and interest-serving nature of discourses, particularly those disseminated under the guise of academic textbooks. The prominent role played by instructional materials in influencing as well as controlling the minds, moods, and actions of recipients has, in turn, called for a heightened sensitivity. Sharing the same concerns, the present study purposively sampled a text from a reading comprehension course book, in an attempt to explore how issues of power/dominance, social inequality, and preferential ideologies are being enacted, reproduced, and legitimized throughout the text. Following the text analytic tools provided by Huckin (2002), the selected case was being analyzed in the next step. The findings of the study proposed hypotheses regarding the ideological foundation of the text, rooted in the notion of economic capitalism. An attempt on the part of the narrator and the textbook writers to support and legitimize such an ideology, through employing techniques of foregrounding the Self and backgrounding the Others, came to be seen too. The generic features of the text also revealed it to be more promotional in nature than academic. At the end, it is hoped that this small step can make contribution by bringing to the light issues already looked at with sightless eyes.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Power, Ideology, Foregrounding, Backgrounding
1. Introduction
The past decades of language teaching have witnessed a growing fascination with Discourse, Discourse Analysis (DA), and more recently Critical Discourse Studies (CDS)—also called Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). These current considerations have brought significant changes to conception as well as coverage of the term "discourse". Having gained a status as an interdisciplinary field of study, discourse has disentangled itself from its old ancestor, Linguistics, and has attracted theorists and practitioners from non-linguistic fields such as philosophy, anthropology, sociology and psychology, to name a few (Blommaert, 2005). Such a discursive turn has led to different understandings of what is meant by discourse: Conventional linguists come to see it as suprasentential unit of spoken or written language, characterized by internal features such as word order structure, cohesion, and coherence, and external features such as relevance to context, communicative function, purpose, and given audience/interlocutor (Brown and Yule, 1983; Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000; McCarthy, 1991).

On the other hand, mainstream discourse analysts involved in critical analysis of discourses have gone some steps further and believe that higher order operations of language at level of society should also be taken into consideration (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; van Dijk, 2008). They see discourse—either in written, spoken, or visual form—as a form of social practice and emphasize on the two-way, dialogical relations between discursive practices (discourse production and consumption) and social, cultural, economic, and political trends in different social domains. Seeing the issue from such a perspective, mainly rooted in sociopolitical views of language and discourse, critical analysts claim that no discourse is neutral and all discourses are ideologically laden (Fairclough 1995; Flowerdew 2008; Wodak & Meyer 2001). Interested in delving into the nature of discourse, CDA practitioners attempt to unveil hidden or "out of sight" ideologies, norms, values, and also power, control or inequality patterns which lay the foundation of forms of language as well as exploring the way such issues are expressed, produced, maintained, legitimized, naturalized or even resisted by discourse (Fairclough, 1995; Flowerdew, 2008; Gee, 2005; van Dijk, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2001).

2. Statement of the Problem
In alignment with other types of discourse, instructional textbooks—including written, oral, or visual materials—have come under scrutiny by critical discourse analysts due to the
leading role they play in enactment, reproduction, and legitimization of particular ideologies, power patterns and preferred mental models or stereotypes (van Dijk, 2008). Academic textbooks are perceived as indispensable or even obligatory reading materials in many societies and therefore attract a much wide target readership (children, youngsters, adults) all around. The crucial role they play in influencing the minds, moods, mental models, and even future actions of their readers make critical examination of such materials a pressing demand; "to ensure that discourse that is discriminatory and that reinforces social inequality be avoided to the extent that is possible, or—at the very least—explicitly and critically discussed if it comes up" (Celce-Murcia and Olshtain, 2000, p. 10).

Critically speaking, it really matters whose names are mentioned, whose pictured are portrayed, whose voices are heard or silenced, and whose actions are covered in a certain textbook, how they are said, and for what purposes (van Dijk, 2008). However, despite the influential roles played by the course books, the implicit and explicit ideologies behind the production and dissemination of such materials are rarely attended to or explored by teachers, students or even textbook publishers.

Conventionally, reading texts, particularly those written for English as Foreign Language (EFL) learners, along with their assignments and activities, are mainly used as a means of imparting grammatical, vocabulary, and content knowledge and are seldom revisited or challenged as sources of ideologies and stances (Wallace, 1999). In other words, having been brought up with the belief that the "text knows best", readers (here language learners) show a tendency to accept the printed words without actively challenging the content or implied assumptions (Wallace, 2003).

Vexed by these concerns, the present study opted to explore how the issues of "power"/ "domination", "social inequality", and "ideology" are being enacted and legitimized in an EFL reading textbook, Select Readings (Lee and Gundersen, 2011), pre-intermediate level. To make the claim capable of proof, the analysis was carried on a selected reading sample of the book. It should be noted that the textbook is one of the course books offered to Iranian university students upon their entrance to reading comprehension courses.

3. Review of Literature

The ideas, principles and practices of Critical Discourse Analysis can be traced to the contributions made by Fairclough (1995) and more recently to the works of van Dijk (2008), among others. What makes critical discourse analysis different from non-critical analyses is
its fascination with describing and interpreting discourses in context as well as explaining why and how they work (Rogers, 2004). Fairclough and Wodak (1997, pp. 271-80) present eight principles and methods of critical discourse analysis as follows:

1. CDA addresses social problems.
2. Power relations are discursive.
3. Discourse constitutes society and culture.
4. Discourse does ideological work.
5. Discourse is historical.
6. The link between text and society is mediated.
7. Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory.
8. Discourse is a form of social action.

Fairclough has particularly scrutinized the language of mass media as a site of power. Adopting a different direction, van Dijk (2008) has given a sociocognitive orientation to CDA by showing how mental schemas give rise to ideologies. He has focused especially on the study of the discursive reproduction of *racism* by what he calls the "symbolic elites" (politicians, journalists, scholars, writers), the study of news in the press, and on the theories of ideology and context. As another pioneer, Wodak, and his colleagues (1999 & 2001) have done some studies on the institutional relations and discourse barriers in courtrooms, school, and hospitals besides working on issues of sexism, anti-Semitism, and racism.

There are also those who study the role of discourse in *education* in general and second and foreign language learning in particular. Borrowing the notions of power/knowledge, dominance and resistance from Foucauldian post-structuralism and Orientalism (binary opposition between East and West) from Saidian post-colonialism, Kumaravadivelu (1999) brings into focus the educational application of such theories, through analysing sociolinguistic, sociocultural, and socio-political dimensions of classroom interactions or what he calls Critical Classroom Discourse Analysis (CCDA). He believes that classroom is a minisociety "in which many forms of domination and inequality are produced and reproduced for the benefit of vested interest..." (p. 479).

Probably inspired by the same concerns, ELT global textbooks, mainly published by international publishing centres in English speaking countries, have turned into researchable sites of critical investigations for the last two decades. Although in many parts of the world, imported textbooks due to the quality of sophistication in their organization and appealing format (layout, graphics, pictures, annexed multimedia, etc.) receive more "credibility" than home-grown, locally-produced materials; yet, they are seen to be sources for disseminating...
covert and overt socio-politically Western ideologies, cultural values, customs, life styles, norms of behaviours, history, etc. mainly through non-controversial, harmless and trivial topics (Abdollahzadeh & Baniasad, 2010; Akbari, 2008; Gray, 2002 & 2010). Akbari (2008) argues that through addressing “socially refined” and “harmless topics such as food, shopping or travel textbook writers attempt to “anesthetize” their products” (p.281). Gray (2002) refers to a list of “taboo topics” which publishers should avoid using in their exported textbooks. Among such topics are politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, ism, and pork—remembered through the acronym PARSNIP.

In nearly all practices of critical discourse analysis there is an attempt to include both textual analysis of discourse and social analysis of it; also called micro and macro levels of analysis (van Dijk, 2008). Text analysis concentrates on formal features of the text such as vocabulary selection, grammar, syntax and sentence coherence from which discourses and genres are organized linguistically. Social analysis, on the other hand, includes both discursive and non-discursive elements and issues such as power, dominance, and inequality between social groups (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Discourse analysts describe, interpret and explain the nature of discourse through using different techniques of analysis at word level, sentence level, text level, and context level (Huckin, 2002). What follows is a list of concepts that are frequently referred to in doing close textual work and social analysis:

4. Textual Analysis in CDA

4.1. Classification

The act of naming or labeling things or events is referred to as classification. This technique helps the writer or speaker to cast ideas in a certain light (Huckin, 2002). Purposeful use of words like "regime" for "government", "terrorist" for "combatant", "murder" for "killing", etc. in political news can be example of classification (Cook, 2003).

4.2. Presupposition

Presupposition is another linguistic device which is used to manipulate the readers or listeners by assuming that they share the same suppositions as the writer or speaker. Such presuppositions are quite common in public discourse, especially in political speeches, advertisements, and other forms of persuasive rhetoric. For example, in the sentence, “President Clinton’s liberal views are not popular with many Congressional Republicans,” it is presupposed that President Clinton actually holds liberal views (Huckin, 2002, p.7). In another example, when a politician says: "We cannot continue imposing high taxes on the
American people", he or she is sharing this presupposition with readers or listeners that "the taxes Americans pay are actually high" (Huckin, 1997, p.83). Similar to presupposition is the notion of *insinuation* which also makes reader or listener take something as granted without trying to challenge it.

4.3. Modality

Modality is the use of modal verbs and phrases like *might, should, will, we think, might have been, could have been, must have been*, modal adverbs such as *possibly, probably, maybe, and perhaps*, and perception modal adverbs like *evidently* and *apparently* to project a certain authorial “voice” or attitude (Simpson, 1993).

4.4. Transitivity

Transitivity refers to the agent-patient relations in a sentence, or how the main action of a sentence is acted on. In most cases, the semantic agent (or actor) in a sentence is depicted as having more power than the patient. If a text consistently has the same agent from sentence to sentence, it may reflect a perspective favoring the agent’s status. On the other hand, a tendency might also be apparent in the deliberate *omission* of some pieces of information in a sentence to achieve certain goals (Simpson, 1993; Huckin, 2002). Huckin (1997) believes that omission is often the most effective aspect of textualization because if the writer does not mention something, it often does not even enter the reader’s mind and thus is not subjected to his or her scrutiny. It is difficult to raise questions about something that is not even there (p. 82). A common instance of this occurs when a writer chooses, for one reason or another, to omit the agent of an action. Here is an example adopted from Tony Trew’s (1979) article on media language: He examines the headlines and opening texts of two British Newspapers which covered the same event (cited in Simpson, 1993, p. 105).

**POLICE SHOOT 11 DEAD IN SALISBURY RIOT**

Riot police shot and killed 11 African demonstrators

*(The Guardians, June 2, 1975, p. 1)*

**RIOTING BLACKS SHOT DEAD BY POLICE**

Eleven Africans were shot dead and 15 wounded when Rhodesian police opened fired on rioting crowd.

*(The Times, June 2, 1975, p. 1)*

Lexical choices in these two extracts are significantly different: the "African demonstrators" of the *Guardians* are transformed into "rioting crowd" in the *Times*. Employing an active sentence structure by the *Guardians* and a passive one by the *Times* also shows how
passivization and agency (actor or subject) deletion serve to shift attention away from those who did the shooting onto the victims. These selections and omissions reflect "the values of the writer and the view of the world which he or she wishes to encourage in their reader" (Cook, 2003, p. 65).

4.5. Topicalization

Topicalization is the positioning of a sentence element at the beginning of the sentence to show its prominence. For example, in the headline "Massacre of 25 Villagers Reported" more emphasis is put on the action which has happened rather than those who have committed it, "thanks to the nominalization of massacre" (Huckin, 1997, p.83).

4.6. Intertextuality & Interdiscursivity

The terms intertextuality refers to the recognizable borrowing, adoption or intrusion of words or phrases from other previous sources into a new text "either through citation, attribution or reference, and also hybridization of one genre or text with another" (Bloor & Bloor, 2007, p.52). Though very similar to the notion of intertextuality, the term interdiscursivity refers to "more innovative attempts to create hybrid or relatively novel constructs by… mixing, embedding and bending of generic norms" (Bahatia, 2008, p. 175) from different discourses.

4.7. Framing, Foregrounding, and Backgrounding

Framing is "how the content of the text is presented, and the sort or angle or perspective the writer, or speaker, is taking" (Patridge, 2006, p. 45). Huckin (1997) believes that framing is largely at work in newspaper articles in which the writer tries to open up an event or narrate the story from a certain angle. Closely related to framing are the notions of foregrounding and backgrounding. Foregrounding means the emphasis or prominence given to particular concepts or issues in a text. The opposite of foregrounding is backgrounding in which particular concepts or issues are played down or, left out, or not put into consideration in the text (Huckin 2002). Analyzing what has been emphasized or foregrounded and what has been de-emphasized or backgrounded in a text is a common technique used by critical analysts.

5. Social Analysis in CDA

As was mentioned earlier, critical discourse analysis involves the integrated study of text, discursive practices, and broader social context. There are a number of themes which are of importance in higher social order of critical discourse analysis. Some of these are fleshed out briefly here:
5.1. Power and Domination

Due to the emancipatory nature CDA identifies itself with; a well-known central theme considered in most critical discourse studies is the issue of power. The word power is not inherently "bad" as it can be used for many neutral, positive, or legitimate ends, and even normal inequalities grounded in authority or legality (Blommaert, 2005; van Dijk, 2008). What critical discourse studies are concerned with is abuse of power, how such an abuse may hurt people, and how it can lead to "social inequalities" or "illegitimate" uses of power (Fairclough, 1995; Fairclough & Wodak 1997; van Dijk, 2008). To distinguish legitimate or acceptable power from power abuse, the term domination is more commonly used in the literature of critical discourse analysis (van Dijk, 2008).

5.2. Ideology

As a contested concept, the notion of ideology has been defined differently throughout the history. In a simple and broad definition, it is described as a systematic body of ideas, or set of beliefs, attitudes, taken-for-granted assumptions, or values organized from a particular point of view or shared by members of a particular social group (Kress & Hodge, 1979; Simpson, 1993; Bloor & Bloor, 2007). However, when accompanied by concepts such as power and domination, ideology appears to have a political face. As Rogers (2006, p. 4) puts it, discourses "are always socially, politically, racially and economically loaded" and therefore never, in actual fact, ideology-free, objective, or neutral. When an ideology is put forth and supported by a particular powerful social group or social institution for example, government or law, it is said to be dominant (Simpson 1993). A dominant ideology becomes normative or naturalized through repeated use and eventually loses its ideological significance and appears to be neutral or natural (Fairclough 1995; Celce-Murcia & Olshtain 2000; van Dijk 2008; Cameron, 2002). What CDA is purported to do is to go beyond texts' propositional messages to trace and examine the underlying ideologies and their effects (Cameron 2002).

5.3. Access and Control

What paves the way for dominance of the powerful groups over the less powerful ones resides in their access to social goods, such as wealth and status, as well as most influential forms of public discourse, such as mass media, politics, education, etc. (Gee, 2005). Those who have more access are usually those who have more control over things and other. "Groups have (more or less) power if they are able to (more or less) control the acts and minds of (members of) other groups" (van Dijk, 2008, p. 88). The notion of control refers to the exercise of power not only over the actions of others but also their minds. And as
people's actions are directed by their minds, when their minds (cognition, knowledge, attitudes, or opinions) are being influenced, their actions are also being controlled indirectly. The exercise of power can be done physically—through using force and coercion—and mentally—through manufacturing consent or seeking consensus as done by influencing their opinions, attitudes, ideologies, mental models, norms, and values (Fairclough, 1995, van Dijk, 2008). Though the former case has a longer history, the latter one is more prevalent at modern time and paves the way for dominance of the groups in power.

6. Data Collection & Methodology

The present study attempts to investigate how CDA techniques of textual analysis and social analysis can be employed for analysing textbooks offered to Iranian EFL learners; upon their entrance to courses of Reading Comprehension. As proof, the study purposively samples an extract entitled as "How to Be a Successful Businessman?" selected from Pre-Intermediate Select Readings (Lee and Gundersen, 2011), published by Oxford University Press. The mentioned book is a series of reading texts for pre-intermediate and intermediate students of English which address a range of topics. Each unit of the book begins with a Before You Read section plus a Chapter Focus Box which introduces the content and skills and learning goals of the unit. Each reading text is also followed by a number of follow-up activities such as reading comprehension, vocabulary building, language focus, and discussion or writing exercises. The coursebook's current publicity and readership among Iranian academicians including English language teachers and students doubled the motivation and significance of this qualitative case study.

6.1. Procedure

In a closer examination, the selected text was analyzed using the tools and concepts provided by Huckin (2002) for critical discourse analysis. Based on these guidelines, the prominent features of text at social level, text level, sentence level, and word/phrase level were taken into consideration. This included the analysis of following elements:

- dominant ideology
- insinuated values
- authorial stance
- framing, foregrounding, backgrounding
- textual silence
- genre conventions
7. Data analysis

7.1. A synopsis of the Story

The selected text, originally adopted from *Wall Street Journal* tells the story of a poor Indian, Zubeir Kazi, who migrated from a small town in southeast of India, to United States in his youth in hope of getting a job in an airplane industry in California. However, he ended up working for a car rental company. While he was working there, he frequently used to eat at a nearby KFC restaurant. To save money on food, he decided to find a job as a cook's assistant with KFC. His hard work impressed the owners of the restaurants, in a way that they decided to appoint him as the manager of a newly-opened restaurant. A few years later, Mr. Kazi could afford buying a restaurant which was losing money and was in a terrible situation and in a short time he could change it into a profitable restaurant. With the money he earned from selling the restaurant, he bought three other ones which were again losing the money. Since that time, Mr. Kazi has continually been engaged in the act of buying restaurants; and despite owning 168 ones, "he is not planning to stop there". "He's looking for more poorly managed restaurants to buy".

7.2. Ideologies and Values

Reading and re-reading the text as a whole and thinking about the sequences of events and possible purposes behind the production of such a text helped to see a number of values or dominants ideologies highlighted in the text. Such values and ideologies came to be seen through posing the following questions:

7.2.1. How is the notion of success treated in this text?

The text narrates the story of a man who is recognized for his success at changing a scanty life to a vast fortune and now he's proud of owning 168 restaurants. A materialistic, quantitative picture of 'success' is what we see in this text: Mr. Kazi is introduced as a "successful businessperson" because he has been able to earn more money and add to his wealth. The writer also seems to be attempting to insinuate the idea of "big is good" to readers. In other words, the equation of success with wealth unveils a hidden value penetrated deep into the text: your value can be measured by the amount of money you have and supposedly the more money you have, the more successful and the more valuable you are. Furthermore, the text appears to reconstruct the cultural model of "success" embedded in US society. According to this model, "any one can make it in America if they work hard enough". D'Andrde (1984, p.95) describes the model in this way:
It seems to be the case the Americans think that if one has ability, and if, because of competition or one's own strong drive, one works hard at achieving high goals, one will reach an outstanding level of accomplishment. And when one reaches this level one will be recognized as a success, which brings prestige and self-satisfaction (cited in Gee 2005, p. 81).

The deliberate selection of the accomplishments of a non-native Eastern immigrant, while there are host of other native examples to be pointed at, might depict a utopian picture of the West as a place where anyone can fulfil his/her dreams regardless of his/her race, colour, class or ethnicity.

7.2.2. What does Mr. Kazi owe his economic promotion to? Does he owe it to an instinctive talent in business, tactfulness, craftiness, or an ability to take advantage of opportunities?

The second question asks about the secret of the so-called success Mr. Kazi is attributed to. A detailed and unbiased response to this question is not possible unless we have a more full-fledged picture of Mr. Kazi's life. However, a glance at the scenario shows that our leading character has earned his present economic status by pursuing a cyclical strategy of buying restaurants which are operating at a loss, changing them in some ways, and then selling them on profit. This magic formula can change the face of Mr. Kazi from a "hardworking" person who puts a lot of effort in his job to do it well—as emphatically presented in the text—to an opportunist whose apparent concern is to make profit out of the loss of others and apparently at the cost of obliteration of the smalls. The other side of the coin is that what is presented here as Mr. Kazi's progress is in fact others' regress: It is an economic growth which benefits him and rides on the economic shrinkage of many. The present situation seems to favour the interests of dominant groups (here Mr. Kazi as a representative of this class), or those in power, and disfavour the interests of non-dominant groups who are less powerful in socioeconomic domains or do not have the same privileged access to resources (such as money, access to media, advertisement, etc.) owned by power "elites". The consequences of this wealth condensation and economic inequality might also be predictable at a larger social scale: In such a society the rich get richer and the poor get poorer day by day and not surprisingly the gap in income between the poorest and the richest continues to widen. And this is where the concept of capitalism enters the picture. The long-lasting idea of capitalism is not an invention of today but has a history of centuries. Fairclough (1989) explains the notion in this way:
In capitalist society, production is primarily for private profit of commodities—goods which are sold on the market—as opposed to the production of goods for immediate consumption by their producers, for instance. And the class relationship on which this form of production depends is between a (capitalist) class which owns the means of production, and a (working) class who are obliged to sell their power to the capitalists, in exchange of wage, in order to live (p. 32).

7.3. Authorial Stance
Using the title "How to Be a Successful Businessperson", typed in bold capital letters, the author seemingly puts himself in the position of an all-knowing who is there to prescribe the secret or the know-how of becoming a "successful business person" to all those who apparently lack it. The opening sentence of the first paragraph begins with a similar question to keep the readers tempted: "Have you ever wondered why some people are successful in business and others are not?" (Lee & Gundersen, 2011, p. 53). The topic sentence is then immediately followed by other tempting sentences to persuade the readers to follow the lines by stating: "Here's the story about one successful businessperson. He started out washing dishes and today he owns 168 restaurants" (p. 53).

Addressing the leading character of story in a formal way through the frequent use of his last name of (Kazi), preceded by the title 'Mr.'—rather than using his first name 'Zubeir'—can also index author's politeness, deference and respect or to him, his distinguished status, or his accomplishments. Showing himself an admirer of Mr. Kazi as a clever and hardworking person, the writer projects himself as one his fans or advocates. Such a standpoint paves the way for the reproduction as well as legitimization of the underpinning idea of economic capitalism. This approval was seen to have been done through framing the text.

7.4. Framing: Positive Self Presentation / Negative Other Presentation
A frequent attempt can be seen on the part of the writer to describe Mr. Kazi in quite favorable terms and others in unfavorable ones. Taking advantage of words with positive connotations while describing the Self and negative words describing the Others also appeared to be a consistent framing device in the case at hand with the aim of emphasizing on the differences between ours and theirs, us and them. The picture we depict in our minds from other restaurants is quite annoying as reportedly they are all messy and "dirty"; are "losing money"; "poorly managed"; and the foods they serve are "terrible", "greasy", and "undercooked". However, a flavor of change is smelled as soon as these restaurants are
bought by Mr. Kazi: He gets them cleaned up, improves the food, remolds the building, retraining the employees, and keeps his customers pleased. Such a foregrounding can be seen in the following extract of the text:

… Mr. Kazi heard about a restaurant that was losing money. The restaurant was dirty inside and the food was terrible – greasy and undercooked. Mr. Kazi borrowed money from a bank and bought the restaurant. For the first six months, Mr. Kazi worked in the restaurant from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., seven days a week. He and his wife cleaned up the restaurant, fixed and painted the front of the building, and improved the cooking. They also tried hard to please the customers. If someone had to wait more than ten minutes for their food, Mrs. Kazi gave them a free soda. Before long the restaurant was making a profit (Lee and Gundersen, 2002, p. 54).

The frequent topicalization of Mr. Kazi, and Mrs. Kazi, named in two cases in the paragraph, as the agents of positive changes can reveal an attempt on the part of the author to highlight the efforts Mr. Kazi put into his work, the hardships he experienced, and the actions he creatively performed. In only one sentence in the paragraph, "The restaurant was dirty inside and the food was terrible – greasy and undercooked". The restaurant has been topicalized, probably to highlight the negative features it suffered from. In another interpretation, it can be assumed that the negative points of others are being emphasized to justify a need for our presence as saviors to offer solutions to others' problems. The idea is emphatically supported by Mr. Kazi himself in the last two sentences of the text when he says: "I love it when I go to buy a restaurant and find it's a mess," Mr. Kazi says. "The only way it can go is up" (p. 54). The same technique of positive self representation is also used in the image of the Mr.Kazi and in an activity which follows the reading text.

7.5. Visual aids

Before the beginning of the main text, a photo of Mr. Kazi is shown in one of his restaurants with a nice smile on his lips. The picture bears the caption: Zubair Kazi, President of Kazi Foods, Inc., at a KFC restaurant he owns in Sylmar, California (Lee and Gundersen, 2011, p. 52).

Although there is generally nothing wrong with a smile, yet, it is probable that the employment of such a picture can, in its own turn, add to the insinuation of a positive portrayal of Mr. Kazi to readers.
In a follow-up exercise the learners have to choose an adjective that describes Mr. Kazi from a given chart and complete the following sentence:

I think Mr. Kazi is a --------- person.

The six available options provided by the task designer are: smart – hardworking – creative – serious – kind – successful. Such lexical (vocabulary) choices whose effect is to reinforce a positive portrayal of Mr. Kazi could possibly contribute to push the intended mental model to the minds and pens of readers—as they are required to fill in the blank with one of the given options. This technique of insinuation displays a tendency for winning the readers' consensus through establishing a kind of solidarity with them.

7.6. Text silence

This framing of issues also succeeds in drawing attention away from the other aspects of the event. The following questions are among the issues which are left unanswered:

- What are the probable consequences which might happen to money-losers? Is this deal a change for the better or for worse for them?

- Do the sellers agree to sell their restaurants willingly or reluctantly? By force, consent or persuasion?

The text keeps silent in touching such issues.

7.7. Genre

Given the ideology behind the text, the text can not be seen as merely biographical or informational but rather promotional. That means that the text does not seem to have been designed to simply tell a story or narrate the gradual movement of a person in carving a niche or becoming an "economic elite", but to sell an ideological meaning on the one hand, and products or services, on the other hand. This promotion can be product/service appraisal and product/service differentiation techniques employed through detailed description of the offered services and products which repeatedly display that our restaurants are clean, our foods and cooking are superior, our employees are trained, and our customers are satisfied with the services. The notion of interdiscursiv ity can also be seen as the text employs a combination of genres: The text reads to borrow some qualities of promotional or advertising discourse, employed as a marketing tool to extol the virtues of certain goods or services (here Kazi' restaurants or foods), and encourage or recommend readers (here looked at as potential customers) to go off to the branches of Kazi restaurant. To sum up, this apparent focus on brand popularization (Kazi Foods) disentangles the text from being a purely academic one.
8. Results and Discussions

Our brief analysis of the selected text revealed its ideologically-laden nature, combined with power relations. Narrating the life story of an opportunist businessman, who has earned his wealth by taking advantage of economic shrinkage of others, changes the face of the story from a simple biography to a discourse with an ideological history. Rooted in the idea of capitalism, the text introduces Mr. Kazi as economic elite whose power gives him the authority to ride on others of lower socioeconomic classes. Such an ideology gains legitimization as the author and the textbook publishers keep showing themselves as admirers of him, his acts, and his policy, through extolling his paramount success. The technique of foregrounding or positive self-representation while describing the self, and highlighting the negative weaknesses of others at the same time, also appears to be a consistent pattern throughout the text. Furthermore, equation of wealth with success not only gives a quantitative nature to an abstract term like "success" but also insinuates the idea that your value can be measured by the amount of money you have. To sum up, the present text reads to be more an advertising one, produced for the sake of selling the products of a certain market, rather than an academic one. Doubtlessly, more fine-grained and detailed analyses of the text are needed to enrich the hypotheses.

9. Closing Words

Given the role played by textbooks in enactment, reproduction and legitimization of power patterns and controlling the discourse, mind and actions of their readers, a burden of responsibility is put on the shoulders of textbook writers one the one hand, and teachers and learners on the other hand. The role of textbook writers in adoption and adaptation of topics, contents, text' structures, styles, illustrations, images, and more importantly design of pre-and-post-task activities cannot be ignored. It is also our job as teachers to prepare ourselves and our learners for textual critiquing and to pen up spaces for challenging the ideologies of the texts studied in our classrooms. Though, regretfully condemned to scant attention, using critical discourse analysis as a tool can enable students to delve deeper into the sociopolitical aspects of current topics. Educational policies with the aim of equipping learners with techniques of practicing critical language awareness are our missing cameos. Whoever loves such a critical education is recommended not to sacrifice the present for the future.
References


Title

Metalinguistic Knowledge Assessment: Incorporating L2 Analytic-Ability to a Measurement of Metalinguistic Knowledge

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Abstract

This study was conducted to provide a further insight into the theoretical basis of the structure of metalinguistic knowledge due to the controversies over the operationalization and definitions of metalinguistic knowledge in various studies. The constituents of metalinguistic knowledge were investigated by adding language-analytic ability test to the traditional operationalization of metalinguistic knowledge which required error correction and justification. To fulfill the purpose of the study, 50 university-level learners of Bahonar University of Kerman were chosen by cluster sampling. In order to assess participants’ metalinguistic knowledge, second language-analytic ability measured by Oxford Language Aptitude Test (1996) was incorporated into a measure of metalinguistic knowledge. The result of a principle component analysis suggested that participants’ ability to correct, describe, and explain errors as well as their language-analytic ability may constitute a single construct. This finding led to the proposal that metalinguistic tests should test the ability to correct, describe, and explain highlighted L2 errors (traditional operationalization of metalinguistic
knowledge) and the ability to identify grammatical role of parts of speech in L2 sentences (language-analytic ability, sub components of aptitude test).

**Keywords:** Metalinguistic knowledge, Language-analytic ability, Language aptitude, Language proficiency

### 1. Introduction

Language learners, especially in university context, are often exposed to explicit teaching and learning of aspects of L2. Teaching grammar to EFL/ESL learners has long been considered a major concern in the whole process of language learning pedagogy. The presupposition is that such teaching and learning would facilitate the attainment of proficiency but the role of metalinguistic knowledge or explicit knowledge about the L2 in foreign/second language is the subject of continuing debate. Therefore, the essence of the relationship between learners’ L2 proficiency and their L2 metalinguistic knowledge should be established more clearly.

Increasing attention is being paid to the role of metalinguistic knowledge. Accordingly, a large body of research concerned with the role of explicit knowledge in foreign/second language learning is available. The deduction from existing researches reveals that learners’ L2 proficiency and their metalinguistic knowledge are moderately correlated (e.g. Alderson, Clapham, & Steel, 1997; Elder & Manwaring, 2004; Elder, Warren, Hajek, Manwaring, & Davies, 1999; Ellis, 2003; Green & Hecht, 1992; Han & Ellis, 1998; Klapper & Rees, 2003; Renou, 2000; Robinson, 1997; Roehr, 2008; Sorace, 1985; Spada, 1997). However, there are controversies over the operationalization and definition of metalinguistic knowledge.

Providing further insight into the relationship between learners L2 proficiency and their explicit knowledge can establish the fact that whether explicit teaching and learning is beneficial or not beneficial. In the first stage of inspecting the role of metalinguistic knowledge, its basis should be established. However, due to the limited researches in this area the theoretical basis of metalinguistic knowledge is not yet fully established and it deserves further investigation.

Recently, learners’ language-analytic ability (component of language learning aptitude) has been added to traditional test of metalinguistic knowledge which required error correction and justification (e.g. Alderson et al., 1997; Elder et al., 1999; Ellis, 1991; Erlam, 2005; Green & Hecht, 1992; Ranta, 2002; Renou, 2000; Roher 2008). Very few studies have addressed metalinguistic knowledge accompanying learners’ language-analytic ability (Alderson et al. 1997; Elder et al. 1999; Roehr, 2008). Thus, besides gaining more insight
into the role of metalinguistic knowledge in the attainment of proficiency, the theoretical basis of the construct of metalinguistic knowledge (its constituents) that is not yet fully established should be investigated.

Furthermore, there are relatively little published researches which have directly sought to link either language learning aptitude as whole or its specific components with metalinguistic knowledge as well as the role of these notions with respect to L2 proficiency. As the use of metalinguistic knowledge in L2 classrooms could be viewed as a particular instructional condition, it is likewise worth asking how components of aptitude relate to this construct. To the researcher knowledge, there has been no study on the relationship between metalinguistic knowledge and language-analytic ability in Iran. The findings of this research can theoretically shed more light on the oppositional stances with regard to metalinguistic knowledge.

The research questions formulated for the purpose of this study are:
RQ1: Is there any significant relationship between EFL university students’ L2 proficiency and their L2 metalinguistic knowledge?
RQ2: Is there any significant relationship between EFL university students’ ability to correct, describe, and explain L2 errors and their language-analytic ability?

3. Literature Review
3.1. Metalinguistic Knowledge
The research literature on foreign/second language learning is replete with various terms referring to L2 explicit knowledge all of which overlap in fundamental ways: language awareness, metalinguistic knowledge, metalinguistic awareness, metalinguistic abilities, metalinguistic performance, analyzed knowledge, conscious knowledge, declarative knowledge, declarative rules, declarative memory, learned knowledge, explicit knowledge, and meta grammar.

The following characteristics can be inferred from reviewing the given definitions of metalinguistic knowledge in literature: Explicit knowledge is conscious and not intuitive. It’s the knowledge to recognize ungrammatical sentences (Alderson et al., 1997; Elder et al., 1999; and Renou, 2001). This type of knowledge is declarative. It is generally accessible through controlled processing. It is learnable. It can potentially be verbalised. Explicit knowledge is not restricted to grammar and can therefore potentially refer to any aspect of
language and its use; yet, grammar appears to be most amenable to conscious reflection and manipulation (Ellis, 2004; Hu, 2002; Roehr, 2008).

In pursuing the vast literature of the researches about metalinguistic knowledge, the investigators have required participants to judge the grammaticality of L2 sentences (through grammar judgement tests) as the favoured method of investigating L2 explicit knowledge. But simply deciding whether a sentence is grammatical or not does not reflect metalinguistic knowledge because it can be done without it (Bialystok, 1991).

They have also required the participants to identify errors, to correct these errors, and to state the violated pedagogical grammar rules. This task requires the subjects to access and elaborate upon their linguistic knowledge which is a reflection of metalinguistic knowledge (Sorace, 1985). Additionally, some subtests of language aptitude tests (language-analytic ability), and verbal reports have been used to measure metalinguistic knowledge (Alderson et al., 1997; Elder et al., 1999; Erlam, 2005; Ranta, 2002; Roehr, 2008).

3.2. Language-analytic ability

With regard to empirical studies in 1980s, Skehan (1989) proposed that the components of grammatical sensitivity and inductive language learning ability the subtests of Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) (Caroll & Sapon, 2002) can be subsumed under a single label, that is, language-analytic ability.

Ranta (2002) defined language-analytic ability as “The capacity to infer rules of language and make linguistic generalization or extrapolations” (p.161). She claimed that language-analytic ability comprises the capacity to internally derive knowledge about language.

Alderson et al. (1997) and Elder et al. (1999) directly operationalized grammatical sensitivity and inductive language learning ability (notions subsumed under the label of language-analytic ability). Grammatical sensitivity was assessed by means of word-in-sentences subtest of MLAT in learners’ L1. In order to assess inductive language learning ability, they presented learners with a short passage in Swahili (a language they were unfamiliar with) and English translation of the first few sentences was provided and participants were then required to derive the English equivalent of subsequent sentences.

3.3. Review of the related Literature

By reviewing the literature we can interpret that metalinguistic knowledge and L2 proficiency have been found to correlate positively (e.g. Alderson et al., 1997; Elder et al., 1999; Elder & Manwaring, 2004; Roehr, 2008). Secondly, use of metalinguistic knowledge is associated with successful L2 performance but does not guarantee successful performance (e.g. Camps, 2003; Doughty, 1991; Green & Hetch, 1992; Roehr, 2006; Sanz & Morgan-Short, 2004).

Considering the operationalization of metalinguistic knowledge and the incorporation of language-analytic ability to its operationalization we can find some claims and researches in literature. Carroll (1990) claimed that scores on tests of formal grammatical knowledge and terminology might be revealing for comparisons with grammatical sensitivity subtest of MLAT, because this ability is called upon when the students try to learn grammatical rules and apply them in constructing or comprehending new sentences in that language.

Likewise, Robinson (1997) found that for implicit learners there was a strong link between grammar sensitivity (subtests of MLAT) and explicit knowledge about language. Learners in implicit learning condition with high aptitude were found to be those who look for rules, and also are able to verbalize rules. This aptitude subtest, therefore, positively predicted awareness during implicit L2 exposure, and awareness led to more learning for implicit learners.

Ellis (2004) claimed that, the constraints on learners' ability to acquire explicit facts about a language probably relate to "individual differences in the analytical skills needed to memorize, induce, or deduce those facts" (p.240).

Alderson et al. (1997) and Elder et al. (1999) inspected the relationship between L1 and L2 metalinguistic knowledge, L2 proficiency, and L1 language-analytic ability among English university students of French language. Alderson et al. (1997) and Elder et al. (1999) used a test of grammatical sensitivity inductive language learning ability. The test of inductive language learning ability did not correlate significantly with any other part of the instruments used in the two studies. However, they found only moderate correlations between the components of their test battery.

Following a study involving L1 English university learners of L2 German, Roehr (2008) employed a measure of L2 proficiency and incorporated L2 analytic ability into a measure of metalinguistic knowledge to shed more light on the relationship between L2 metalinguistic knowledge and L2 proficiency. Likewise, she investigated the components of metalinguistic itself. All the tests correlated strongly. The result of a principal components analysis indicated that learners' ability to correct the highlighted errors and to mention the violated
rules and their L2 analytic ability constituted a single factor. He proposed that metalinguistic knowledge is a complex construct consisting of at least two components, that is, the ability to describe and explain aspects of L2 and L2 language-analytic ability. Testing the presented proposal was the main concern of the current study.

Due to these claims and available researches (Alderson et al., 1997; Elder et al., 1999; Roehr, 2008), the notion of metalinguistic knowledge arguably shares many characteristics with language-analytic ability in particular but there is as yet relatively little published research which has sought to link these two notions. Both of these concepts would appear to require the explicit representation and use of linguistic categories and relations between such categories.

4. Methodology

4.1. Pilot study

The pilot study was run two weeks ahead of the main study in order to test the research instruments and to eradicate some of the possible problems in the method of the study. Ten students, who had the features of the target population, were asked to take the whole tests. They were excluded from the main group of the participants. Metalinguistic test consisted of three parts: a. error correction, b. description/explanation, and c. language analysis. Error correction and description/explanation sections were assessed through one test designed by the researcher. It was pretested and revised in accordance with testees’ performance. The tests showed good reliability after poorly performing items were excluded.

The language analysis part was assessed by Oxford Language Aptitude Test (1996), including inductive language learning ability and grammar sensitivity. The inductive language learning ability part was eliminated, due to the weak performance of the testees in the inductive language learning ability and the fact that the two components (grammar sensitivity and inductive language learning) appear to differ only in their degree of emphasis, rather than in qualitative terms (Dornyei, 2005; Skehan, 1998). The received feedback from the 10 participants’ performance resulted in revision and elimination of some of the items in the grammatical sensitivity section. Following item trimming and amendments, the final reliability indices for the test sections were: correction (10 items) $\alpha=0.54$, description/explanation (20items) $\alpha=0.78$, language-analytic ability (17 items) $\alpha=0.55$.

4.2. Participants The participants in this study were 50 university-level learners consisted of 33 females and 17 males and ranged in age from 19 to 25. Participants were required to
correct, describe, and explain L2 errors so the ones who have passed the grammar courses were chosen to participate in this study. Thus, the participants were in their third and fourth year of study at language department of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman. The participants were chosen through a cluster sampling procedure.

4.3. Instrumentation

This study utilized the following tests:

2. Metalinguistic Test
   a. Error correction (designed by the researchers)
   b. Description/Explanation (designed by the researchers)
   c. Language analysis (Oxford Language Aptitude Test, 1996)

The participants’ language proficiency was assessed using the Michigan Proficiency Test (1997). The test consisted of different sections: cloze test, vocabulary, grammar, and reading. It consisted of 35 discrete gap-fill and multiple-choice items. In this study, the reliability coefficient of this test was ($\alpha=0.76$).

Test of metalinguistic knowledge was designed by the researchers following a template used by Alderson et al. (1997) and Roehr (2008). The metalinguistic test consisted of three sections: a. error correction, b. description/explanation, and c. language analysis. The first and second sections (error correction and description/explanation) measured learners’ ability to correct, describe and explain highlighted errors through one test designed by the researchers. The third section, Oxford Language Aptitude Test (1996), tested learners’ L2 analytic ability by requiring the participants to identify the grammatical role of parts of speech in L2 sentences.

The error correction section and the description/explanation section of metalinguistic knowledge were constructed and developed to assess the participants’ explicit knowledge of grammatical structures embedded in 10 English sentences. The test was untimed and the participants had to do three tasks. For the error correction section the participants were required to correct the underlined mistakes in the sentences. For the second part of the metalinguistic test, description/explanation section, the participants were required to describe and explain the grammatical rule that had been broken (rule verbalization). The reliability of the correction section was $\alpha=0.54$. Given the small number of items in the correction section, however, decreased reliability was not unexpected. The reliability of the description/explanation section of metalinguistic test was $\alpha=0.78$. The target language
structures incorporated into this test are generally known to be universally problematic to learners and are also assumed to be those that participants had been taught through their education.

The third section of the metalinguistic test labeled as language-analytic ability examined learners’ grammatical sensitivity by Oxford Language Aptitude Test (1996). It included 17 items and they were in roughly ascending order of difficulty. In each of the questions, there was an English sentence containing a word underlined in capital which was the model. Each followed by at least one sentence. For each question, the participants should consider the function that the model has in the structure of its sentence. Then they should underline in the followed sentence the single word which most closely matches it in terms of the model’s function within its sentence. Counter to other studies, the current study operationalized language-analytic ability in terms of the L2. In completing this section learners again needed to employ their metalinguistic knowledge about grammatical categories and relations between categories. However, no description, explanation, explicit learning, or use of technical terminology was required. The reliability of this section was $\alpha = 0.55$.

The tests were untimed due to Hu’s claim that an untimed task invites learners to access their explicit knowledge whereas a timed task may prevent a learner from allocating sufficient attention to controlled processing involving metalinguistic knowledge. They were administered in written form because explicit knowledge is accessible via controlled processing and it is more likely to be activated in writing performance where there is time available for monitoring production (Hu, 2002).

With regard to the content validity, the target language structures incorporated into the metalinguistic test are assumed to be those that the participants had been taught through their education and universally problematic to learners.

The construct validity of explicit knowledge tests, according to Ellis (2004), is more if L2 learners have been asked to (I) identify the error in an ungrammatical sentence (learners are more likely to use their implicit knowledge for judging grammatical sentences and their explicit knowledge for judging ungrammatical sentences) (II) correct the error, and (III) state the violated grammatical rule.

4.4. Data collection and scoring procedures

Students were introduced to the study by being given a brief, informative oral overview of the nature and purpose of the study. The proficiency test and the metalinguistic test were administered during the learners’ regular class time in two separate sessions.
The first two sections of metalinguistic test, correction and description/explanation were scored dichotomously in accordance with prepared answer keys. Each item had potentially 3 points, for adequate correction, explanation, and description. The total numbers of points that can maximally be attained on the first and second sections of metalinguistic test were 30.

Adequate descriptions and explanations were defined as any descriptions and explanations that were not incorrect and that showed at least some evidence of meaningful generalization beyond the instances provided in the test items themselves. Responses were awarded a score if they minimally reflected the relevant formal description and functional explanation provided by targeted pedagogical grammar rule. The use of technical terminology was not set as a relevance criterion, if an adequate non-technical description/explanation was offered.

Scoring learners’ descriptions and explanations involved qualitative judgments; answers were first scored by the researcher and then scored blind by a second marker. The interrater agreement was $r=0.94$.

4.5. Data analysis

All statistical analyses were carried out with SPSS. In order to address RQ1, bivariate correlations (Pearson's $r$) for the various parts of the instrument were calculated. In order to address RQ2, a principal component analysis was carried out. The principal component analysis includes three variables: learners' performance on the correction section, the description/explanation section, and the language analytic-section of the metalinguistic test.

5. Results

The descriptive statistics for the proficiency test, the test of metalinguistic knowledge, and the subsections of the test that are correction, description/explanation, and language-analytic ability are shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table1 Descriptive statistics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalinguistic Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description/explanation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language analysis</td>
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</table>
Table 1 shows that, the description/explanation section was the most difficult test for the participants. The data suggest that the correction task of metalinguistic test was easy for the learners and the standard deviation is low. On the other hand, providing metalinguistic descriptions and explanations proved to be the most difficult component of the metalinguistic test. The range of scores with regard to proficiency test was broad and the standard deviation is relatively large. The standard deviations of correction, description/explanation, and language analysis parts are lower so there are fewer differences among participants. In other words, there is a greater variation among learners in terms of their L2 proficiency rather than their correction ability, description ability, and language-analytic ability.

Scatter plots of the test scores are shown in Figures 1 to 4. In general, the distribution of scores suggests a linear and positive relationship between performance on proficiency test and the other four variables, that is, performance on the metalinguistic test as a whole (Figure1), the correction task (Figure2), the description/explanation task (Figure 3), and the language-analytic task (Figure 4).

![Figure 1: Proficiency test and metalinguistic test scores](image1)

![Figure 2: Proficiency test and correction test scores](image2)
In order to address RQ1, correlations (Pearson’s r) between participants’ performance on the proficiency test, metalinguistic test, and its subsections were calculated. The correlation coefficients obtained are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Proficiency test</th>
<th>Metalinguistic test</th>
<th>Correction</th>
<th>Description/explanation</th>
<th>Language analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency test</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.82**</td>
<td>0.63**</td>
<td>0.72**</td>
<td>0.78**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalinguistic test</td>
<td>0.82**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.80**</td>
<td>0.94**</td>
<td>0.83**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>correction</td>
<td>0.63**</td>
<td>0.80**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.73**</td>
<td>0.50**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description/explanation</td>
<td>0.72**</td>
<td>0.94**</td>
<td>0.73**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.66**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language analysis</td>
<td>0.78**</td>
<td>0.83**</td>
<td>0.50**</td>
<td>0.66**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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

Table 2 shows that, in general, all parts of instruments correlated significantly. The correlation between proficiency and the three sections of metalinguistic test are as follows: error correction r=0.63, description/explanation r=0.72 and language analysis r=0.79. The correlation between proficiency and metalinguistic test as whole is r=0.82. The subsections of
metalinguistic test, correction, description/explanation, and language-analysis correlated strongly with the entire test. The correlations respectively are: $r=0.80$, $r=0.94$, $r=0.83$. The correlations between correction part and the other two parts, description/explanation and language-analysis are $r=0.73$ and $r=0.51$, respectively. The correlation between description/explanation and language-analysis is $r=0.66$.

In order to address RQ2, a principle component analysis was conducted. Inspection of the correlation matrix revealed the presence of many high coefficients (see Table 2). Prior to performing principle component analysis the suitability of data for factor analysis was assessed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was 0.67, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 (Pallant, 2005). At last, Bartlett’s test of Sphericity reached statistical significance at $<0.001$, supporting the factorability of the correlational matrix.

<table>
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<th>Table 3</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Variance Explained</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis included three variables, i.e. correction, description/explanation, and language-analytic sections of the metalinguistic test. The principle component analysis revealed the presence of one component with eigenvalue exceeding 1 (eigenvalue= 2.27), which explains 76 percent of the variance (see Table 3). Scrutiny of the Screen Plot confirmed that a one-component or factor solution was appropriate, with an evidence clear break after the first component (see Figure 5).

![Screen Plot](image)

*Figure 5: screen plot, number of components and eigenvalue*

6. Discussion
The results reported in the previous section provide insights into the relationship between L2 metalinguistic knowledge and proficiency, and the constituents of metalinguistic knowledge (traditional operationalization of the construct as learners’ ability to correct, describe, and explain faulty sentences) and a recently hypothesized component of the construct, that is, learners’ language-analytic ability. Results are discussed below in terms of these two dimensions.

With regard to RQ1, the findings from the correlational analysis show that all parts of instrument correlated strongly. In light of previous research, these findings are not unexpected. Overall, these results are more substantial than the correlation coefficients obtained in previous researches, which mostly found moderate relationships (Alderson et al., 1997; Elder et al., 1999).

The strong correlations between proficiency test and metalinguistic test provide evidence that the higher a learner’s metalinguistic knowledge, the higher the score is likely to be on the proficiency test. These results corroborate findings from previous studies (Elder & Manwaring, 2004; Gass, 1983; Masny, 1987) which have demonstrated that an increase in the level of metalinguistic knowledge is associated with an increase in L2 proficiency. It is worth to note that correlation coefficients just show covariance and cannot depict the direction of any cause-effect relationship, thus concluding about the firm role of metalinguistic knowledge on L2 proficiency is not admissible on the basis of the available statistics. However, with respect to the previous findings and the present one, the facilitative role of metalinguistic knowledge is not ignorable.

With respect to RQ2, a principle component analysis based on the correction section, the description/explanation section, and the language-analytic section of the metalinguistic test indicated the presence of a single factor, which explained 76% of the variance. This result is consistent with the hypothesis that learners’ ability to correct, describe, and explain L2 errors and their ability to identify the grammatical role of parts of speech in L2 sentences may in fact constitute a single construct.

In this context, it is important to remember that, unlike previous research that assessed language-analytic ability by means of L1, the present study operationalized it by means of L2-based measure. This circumstance may help account for both the stronger intercorrelations obtained in the present study and the unambiguous result of the principle component analysis.

In sum, the findings bear out the hypothesis that the ability to correct, describe, and explain highlighted L2 errors (the first and the second test sections of metalinguistic test) and
the ability to identify the grammatical role of parts of speech in L2 sentences (language-analytic ability test, the third part of metalinguistic test) are subcomponents of one construct that is metalinguistic knowledge. Therefore, L2 metalinguistic knowledge is a complex construct consisted of two components which are description/explanation ability and language-analytic ability.

Both of the abilities which were investigated under the metalinguistic knowledge heading (Language-analytic ability and L2 description/explanation ability) are based on the L2, which are developmental phenomena and are being acquired at a mature stage of cognitive development (Roehr, 2008). This argument leads to the hypothesis that “L2 metalinguistic knowledge may not only help learners construct implicit knowledge, but may have arisen from such knowledge in the first place” (p.194). Overall, the findings of this study shed lights on and lend more support to Roehr results and the theoretical implications that “metalinguistic knowledge is a complex construct consisting of at least two components: description/explanation ability and language-analytic ability” (p.194).

Moreover, the findings of the current study can be a proof on Ellis (2004) claim about the constraints on learners' ability to acquire explicit facts about a language. He argued that, the constraints are probably related to individual differences in the analytical skills needed to memorize, induce, or deduce those facts.

7. Conclusion

The present study attempted to shed light on the relationship between L2 proficiency, L2 metalinguistic knowledge, and its constituents, i.e. correction, description/explanation, and language analysis. With respect to the relationship between L2 metalinguistic knowledge and L2 proficiency, as it was hypothesized, they correlated significantly and remarkably strong. This finding represents an update on previous research although most of them gained low or moderate correlations.

With respect to the relationship between metalinguistic knowledge and language-analytic ability, the results indicate that the ability to correct, describe, and explain highlighted L2 errors (traditional operationalization of metalinguistic knowledge) and the ability to identify the grammatical role of parts of speech in L2 sentences (language-analytic ability) belong to one construct.

This finding led to the proposal that L2 metalinguistic knowledge may have to be reconceptualized as a complex notion incorporating the traditional characterization of L2
correction, description, and explanation ability as well as L2 analytic ability. It was further noted that the constituent abilities of L2 metalinguistic knowledge in use can be regarded as developmental phenomena that are being built up in the course of an individual’s language career.

It should be acknowledged that this proposal is not new (see Roehr, 2008), although the languages under investigation in Roehr’s (2008) study were English as L1 and German as L2. Consequently the instruments were different and she tested proficiency in narrow sense of L2 grammar and vocabulary.

The results of this study are of potential significance to the fields of second language acquisition as well as language teaching. It is worth to note that the positive correlation between L2 metalinguistic knowledge and L2 proficiency cannot depict the direction of any cause-effect relationship, although the facilitative role of metalinguistic knowledge on the attainment of language proficiency is not ignorable. Probably the most outstanding and moderate insight that can be gained from this study is that, a balance needs to be established between time devoted to the learning or teaching L2 metalinguistic knowledge and time specialized to the meaning-based communicative use of language, both of which may facilitate or contribute to the development of the implicit rule system (Green & Hetch, 1992). For teachers, the above findings mean that simply providing input, or input with minimally explicit instructions, may not be sufficient.

A larger-scale study which makes use of a full range of tests including measures of language learning aptitude (the entire MLAT battery), measures of L1 metalinguistic knowledge, and measures of L2 metalinguistic knowledge including L2 analytic ability would be needed to probe in greater depth the claims that have been put forward here.

Moreover, a longitudinal study would be needed to provide more informative insights into developmental issues. In other words, the interesting question of whether metalinguistic knowledge about specific L2 features is constructed on the basis of implicit L2 knowledge, whether it helps learners acquire implicit knowledge, or whether both types of knowledge mutually reinforce one another is still waiting to be addressed.

It would be of interest to examine the status of metalinguistic knowledge among learners who have not had extensive exposure to formal L2 instructions in comparison with the learners of formal L2 instructions. Furthermore, it would be worth investigating metalinguistic knowledge in relation to individual difference variables other than language learning aptitude, such as learning style, learning strategy, intelligence.
References


Title

Self-Assessment of Teacher-Fronted and Student-Centered Classroom Activities among Iranian Elementary and Intermediate Learners of English as a Foreign Language

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Abstract

With the shift in language teaching toward a more learner-centered approach, learners' opinions should be necessarily observed in the choice of any teaching and learning activity. In order to get some useful information from the learners to improve the teaching/learning situation, a small-scale study was conducted. 66 Iranian female learners (36 elementary and 30 intermediate) from Farzanegan English Language Institute in Gachsaran participated in this study. The learners experienced four types of classroom activities; teacher-fronted grammar (TFG), teacher-fronted fluency (TFF), student-centered grammar (SCG), and student-centered fluency (SCF) activities, during two months and then they were asked to evaluate them via a 4-item questionnaire in terms of relaxation, learning, enjoyment, and confidence, by rating on 5-point scales and writing reasons for their ratings. The results showed that there were some significant differences among the different levels of students. The results of this research can be used by those involved in the field of language teaching.

Keywords: Self-assessment, Learner-centered approach, Teacher-fronted activities, Student-centered activities

1. Introduction

Involving learners in the assessment of teaching and learning activities is not a new topic for TEFL educators. It has triggered a number of studies on learners' judgments and attitudes towards classroom activities. Nunan (1989, cited in Noora, 2008) reports two Australian
studies that show learners favor traditional learning activities over more communicative activity types. Some students want more opportunities to participate in free conversation, expressing their wish towards a more communicatively oriented approach. On the other hand, there are those who would prefer more emphasis on grammar teaching. In a study of learners’ views about teacher-fronted activities and student-centered activities, Garrett and Shortall (1994) examined the views of 103 Brazilian EFL students at beginner, elementary and intermediate level on teacher-fronted activities (whole-class work) and student-centered tasks (group and pair work activities) and found that intermediates make great benefits from group work and pair work over whole-class activities. They felt that teacher-fronted activities are monotonous, while group work and pair work provide more opportunities for them to use English. Beginner and elementary learners favored teacher-fronted activities more than group work and pair work activities. Their negative comments on the student-centered work focused on their use of mother tongue in pair work and also the domination of higher group members on the group activities. Barkhuisen's (1998) study was a larger-scale which surveyed perceptions of around 600 students in a high school in South Africa about the enjoyment and usefulness of 15 classroom activities and again reported learners' resistance to participating in communicative-type activities and their preference for more ‘traditional’ classroom work (p.95). In an attempt to investigate the issue of learners' preferences of the methodology of learning a foreign language, Kavaliauskiene (2003) found from his research that more than half of the learners favor communicative approach to perfecting their language skills by working in pairs/small groups, taking part in projects and practicing English by talking to their peers. In a recent study of Vietnamese learners by Tomlinson & Dat (2004), 69.7% of the student respondents said that they enjoyed group work but claimed that some factors like linguistic limitations, performance anxiety, and classroom atmosphere that doesn't stimulate discussion inhibited them from taking active roles in class and student-centered activities (pp. 208-211). Storch (2007) conducted a study to investigate the merits of pair work by comparing pair and individual work on an editing task and found that students sometimes seem reluctant to work in pairs, particularly on grammar-focused tasks. The results suggested that although pair work on a grammar-focused task may not lead to greater accuracy in completing the task, pair work provides learners with opportunities to use the second language for a range of functions, and in turn for language learning.

However, upon review of the literature found in this area, it becomes clear that although a number of studies have been conducted internationally on the learners' judgments of different classroom activities; similar research is relatively new and undeveloped in Iran. Therefore,
the goal of this research is to examine learners' judgments of what they gain from different types of classroom activities in order to help teachers, in general, and Iranian EFL teachers, in particular, to be more effective in their career. With regard to the above mentioned issues the following research question was addressed in this study:

How do Iranian elementary and intermediate EFL learners judge their experience of teacher-fronted activities compared to student-centered activities?

2. Methodology

2.1 Participants

Sixty-six Iranian EFL learners and four language teachers from Farzanegan Language Institute in Gachsaran participated in this study. For the sake of convenience and accessibility, all of subjects were females. They were all native speakers of Persian and their age range was 14 to 30, with a mean of 22.

2.2 Instruments

Three instruments were used to gather the relevant data for this study:

a. Proficiency test: to be sure that the learners were placed into right level of proficiency, elementary and intermediate, a chosen revised version standard NELSON test (1976) consisting of 60 multiple choice and cloze test type questions was administered. It lasted 90 minutes and was to test the learners’ knowledge of vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension.

b. Classroom activities: Classroom activities were devised in conjunction with the researcher and the other four teachers whose classes participated in the study. The activities were as follow:

(a) teacher-fronted grammar activities, (b) teacher-fronted fluency activities (c) student-centered grammar activities (d) student-centered fluency activities.

c. Self-assessment questionnaire: The self-assessment questionnaire was generated from the review of related literature to fit the purpose of the study. In order to test its internal consistency reliability, Cronbach’s alpha was obtained. Results showed an alpha coefficient of .71, indicating an acceptable degree of internal consistency for the instrument. Since the questionnaire was the most important source of information for the research, for the sake of ease of understanding and accuracy of data, it was translated in clear explicit Persian and invited responses in Persian so that the learners understood all the items in the questionnaire correctly. (An English translation of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix A). In order
to obtain both quantitative and qualitative data, the questionnaire was divided into two parts: the closed question section and the open-ended question section. The closed question section: After doing each task, the learners were asked to evaluate them by rating them in terms of relaxation, learning value, enjoyment, and confidence on a 5-point semantic differential scale, with 5 indicating a favorable judgment (e.g., very helpful for learning) whereas 1 indicated an unfavorable evaluation. The open-ended question section: This part aimed to identify learners’ reasons for their choices. Then, each closed question followed by an open-ended item asking learners to say why they responded on the scale.

2.3 Design and Procedure
The study was conducted at Farzanegan Language Institute in Gachsaran and lasted 2 months. Four language teachers and 66 language learners (36 elementaries and 30 intermediates) involved in this study. Four mentioned classroom activities (TFG, TFF, SCG, and SCF) were designed for the students to experience and then evaluate in a questionnaire according to their own judgments. To avoid novelty effects, all the activities were familiar to the students. The teachers were asked to integrate the activities into the normal day-to-day lessons of the learners during their regular class hour. Then, to make sure that the learners in each class were assigned the right level, a 60-item proficiency test, NELSON test (1976) was administered in 90 minutes. The reliability coefficient of the proficiency test was obtained by Kuder-Richardson formula (KR-21) and the obtained reliability of the test was .79. After scoring, the researcher ensured that the learners were placed into the right level, elementary and intermediate levels. Then, both Elementary and intermediate learners were randomly and equally divided into two sections. So, there were two elementary sections with 18 students in each section, and two intermediate classes with 15 learners in per section. One section of elementary learners and one section of intermediate learners were named teacher-fronted (TF) sections, whereas student-centered (SC) sections were assigned to the two other sections. TF sections received TF classroom activities, and SC sections carried out SC tasks. The sections were been administered tasks appropriate to their levels. During the first month of the treatment, students in TF classes had TFG, whereas SC classes carried out SCG tasks. For the second month TF classes experienced TFF activities, while SC classes performed on SCF tasks. At the end of each month, all participants were given questionnaires and were asked to rank it on the questionnaire based on their judgments on a 5-point scale, with 5 meaning a favorable judgment, whereas 1 indicated an unfavorable evaluation.

3. Results
3.1 Scales Data

Tables 1 and 2 display the frequencies and percentages of participants' ratings on each scale for each type of activity by learner level on all the four item questions of the questionnaires (make me feel relaxed, are helpful for learning, are a lot of fun, produce confidence).

**Table 1** Descriptive Statistics (Elementary Learners)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>TFG Task Frequency</th>
<th>TFG Task Percent</th>
<th>TFF Task Frequency</th>
<th>TFF Task Percent</th>
<th>SCG Task Frequency</th>
<th>SCG Task Percent</th>
<th>SCF Task Frequency</th>
<th>SCF Task Percent</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5 27.8</td>
<td>1 5.6</td>
<td>2 11.1</td>
<td>1 5.6</td>
<td>4 26.7</td>
<td>8 44.4</td>
<td>5 33.3</td>
<td>6 40.0</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 16.7</td>
<td>11 61.1</td>
<td>5 27.8</td>
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<td>5 33.3</td>
<td>10 55.6</td>
<td>6 33.3</td>
<td>10 55.6</td>
<td>6 33.3</td>
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**Table 2** Descriptive Statistics (Intermediate Learners)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>TFG Task Frequency</th>
<th>TFG Task Percent</th>
<th>TFF Task Frequency</th>
<th>TFF Task Percent</th>
<th>SCG Task Frequency</th>
<th>SCG Task Percent</th>
<th>SCF Task Frequency</th>
<th>SCF Task Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2 13.3</td>
<td>1 6.7</td>
<td>1 6.7</td>
<td>5 13.3</td>
<td>2 13.3</td>
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<td>5 33.3</td>
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<td>5 33.3</td>
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</table>

Iranian EFL Journal
In order to answer the research question 1, a Mann-Whitney test was run. Table 3 illustrates the results.

**Table 3 Mann-Whitney Test Results for Learners’ Opinions on Grammar-Focused and Fluency-Focused Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q/ Activity</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>M R TF Group</th>
<th>M R SC Group</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 / G</td>
<td>Elementary (N1 &amp; N2=18)</td>
<td>21.81</td>
<td>15.19</td>
<td>102.500</td>
<td>0.052</td>
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<td>Intermediate (N1 &amp; N2=15)</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>19.50</td>
<td>52.500</td>
<td>0.007</td>
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<td>2 / G</td>
<td>Elementary (N1 &amp; N2=18)</td>
<td>21.44</td>
<td>15.56</td>
<td>109.000</td>
<td>0.069</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Intermediate (N1 &amp; N2=15)</td>
<td>12.93</td>
<td>18.07</td>
<td>74.000</td>
<td>0.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 / G</td>
<td>Elementary (N1 &amp; N2=18)</td>
<td>17.44</td>
<td>19.56</td>
<td>143.500</td>
<td>0.522</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intermediate (N1 &amp; N2=15)</td>
<td>12.90</td>
<td>18.10</td>
<td>73.500</td>
<td>0.092</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 / G</td>
<td>Elementary (N1 &amp; N2=18)</td>
<td>19.69</td>
<td>17.31</td>
<td>140.500</td>
<td>0.457</td>
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<td>Intermediate (N1 &amp; N2=15)</td>
<td>15.70</td>
<td>15.30</td>
<td>109.500</td>
<td>0.895</td>
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<td>1 / F</td>
<td>Elementary (N1 &amp; N2=18)</td>
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<td>115.500</td>
<td>0.128</td>
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<td>Intermediate (N1 &amp; N2=15)</td>
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<td>19.10</td>
<td>58.500</td>
<td>0.017</td>
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<td>15.53</td>
<td>108.500</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intermediate (N1 &amp; N2=15)</td>
<td>13.30</td>
<td>17.70</td>
<td>79.500</td>
<td>0.134</td>
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<td>3 / F</td>
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<td>18.11</td>
<td>155.000</td>
<td>0.811</td>
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<td>Intermediate (N1 &amp; N2=15)</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>18.50</td>
<td>67.500</td>
<td>0.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 / F</td>
<td>Elementary (N1 &amp; N2=18)</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>99.000</td>
<td>0.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intermediate (N1 &amp; N2=15)</td>
<td>12.73</td>
<td>18.27</td>
<td>71.000</td>
<td>0.065</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*Q= item question; G = grammar-focused activities; F = fluency-focused activities; N1 = number of learners in TF group; N2 = number of learners in SC group; α = .05*)

As Table below presents, elementary learners in TF group gave higher scores than the learners in SC group for all item questions and activities, except for item question 3 of grammar-focused activities. But, these differences were statistically significant just in two
areas: On item question 1 about grammar-focused activities the elementary learners' views in TF group were significantly different from the opinions of those in SC group, $U (18) = 102.500, p = 0.052$. Also, on item question 4 about fluency-focused activities the elementary learners' views in TF group differed significantly from the judgments of those in SC group, $U (18) = 99.000, p = 0.025$. In addition, according to the table, the p value for item question 2 about grammar-focused activities is 0.069 which is very close to 0.05, and there is the possibility of being significant. Since the power of parametric tests is more than the power of non-parametric tests, the parametric equivalent of Mann-Whitney Test, independent sample t-test, was used to see whether this value is significant or not. The results of the independent sample t-test shows that the difference between the elementary learners' assessments of item question 2 about grammar-focused activities in TF and SC groups was significantly different, $t (34) = 2.327, p = .042 < 0.05$.

As can be observed in Table 3, intermediate learners in SC group gave higher scores than the learners in TF group for all item questions and activities, except for item question 4 of grammar-focused activities. But, these differences were statistically significant just in three following areas: Firstly, intermediate learners' judgments of grammar-focused activities on item question 1 in SC group were different from the views of the learners in SC group significantly, $U (15) = 52.500, p = 0.007$. Secondly, in SC group intermediate learners' opinions about fluency-focused activities on item question 1 differed from the learners' views in TF group significantly, $U (15) = 58.500, p = 0.051$. Thirdly, the judgments of intermediate learners in SC group about fluency-focused activities on item question 3 differed from the views of learners in TF group significantly, $U (15) = 67.500, p = 0.017$. Moreover, based on the table, the p value for item question 4 about fluency-focused activities is 0.065 which is very close to 0.05, and there is the possibility of being significant. To test verify this, an independent sample t-test, was applied to find if this value is significant or not. The results of the independent sample t-test shows that the difference between the intermediate learners' assessments of item question 4 about fluency-focused activities in SC and TF groups was not significantly different, $t (28) = 1.950, p = .061 > 0.05$.

3.2 Open-Ended Data

We now look at the open-ended data for discovering the learners' reasons for the ratings they gave. We include here qualitative data relating only to those quantitative comparisons which revealed significant differences.

a. Grammar-Focused Activities:
As Table 4 reported, the learners found significant differences in the grammar activity type in three areas: Elementary learners saw TFG activities more relaxing and helpful for learning than SCG work. And intermediate learners perceived SCG tasks more relaxing than TFG activities.

Elementary learners:

On item question 1 (make me feel comfortable), elementary learners rated TFG activities higher than SCG activities. Then, for elementary learners teacher-fronted activities are more relaxing than student-centered tasks. In keeping with the quantitative data, their comments on the comfort level of TFG tasks were 55.6% positive, 27.8% negative, and 16.7% neutral.

Their positive comments on the comfort level of TFG activities focused on: class atmosphere (All the students are active and in such environments I become eager to participate in the task), opportunities for practice and participation (There are many opportunities for me to practice the rules through the drills), and teacher's presence, feedback, and support (I learn better when I work with the teacher. She helps me if I need her).

Although they completely avoided giving negative comments on the comfort level of SCG activities, other comments seem to point to the notion of 'it depends': (I think it depends on how much my partner is proficient and active).

On item question 2 (are helpful for learning), elementary learners scored TFG tasks higher than SCG activities. So, for elementary learners teacher-fronted activities are better for learning than student-centered tasks. Their comments on the learning value of TFG tasks were 55.6% positive, 27.8% negative, and 16.7% neutral.

The learners who rated TFG tasks high on 'helpful for learning' focused their positive comments on: improvement of listening, pronunciation, and grammar (Listening to the teacher, I learn correct English), and better remembrance of the grammatical points (The rules are fixed in my memory through repetition).

Their negative comments on the learning value of SCG activities were about: lack of teacher's error correction (These tasks don't help me learn correct English because the teacher can't know if we are doing the tasks correctly or not), and feeling of doubt (We have a lot of doubts and it causes us to waste plenty of time just on discussion. So, we have less time to practice.)

Intermediate learners:

On item question 1 (make me feel comfortable), intermediate learners rated SCG activities higher than TFG activities. Then, for intermediate learners student-centered activities are
more relaxing than teacher-fronted tasks. Their comments on the comfort level of SCG tasks were 80% positive, 13.3% negative, and 6.7% neutral.

The comments of the learners who favored the comfort level of SCG tasks were mainly focused on: partner's support and help (If I didn't understand the point, I ask my partner immediately), lack of stress and fear (Working with a peer, I don't feel fear of making mistake), deeper and better understanding (I understand the point better when I receive my partner's explanation), being of the same age, rank, and level (Two persons of the same age always feel comfortable to work with each other), and information sharing (I benefited from the information sharing with my partner).

The comments from the learners feeling less comfort from TFG tasks mentioned: fear and shame of teacher (I feel tense when I have to work with the teacher. I do not like to be corrected by the teacher in front of other students).

b. Fluency-Focused Activities:
Turning back to the results of Table 4, we see that learners differentiated fluency-focused work from grammar-focused activities in three cases. Elementary learners received more confidence from TFF activities than SCF work. While for intermediate learners, SCF tasks produced more confidence than TFF activities. Also, intermediates found SCF work more fun than TFF tasks.

Elementary learners: On item question 4 (produce confidence), elementary learners rated TFF activities higher than SCF activities. Then, for elementary learners teacher-fronted activities produce more confidence than student-centered tasks. Their comments on the sense of confidence from TFF tasks were 88.9% positive and 11.1% negative.

Learners reporting more confidence for TFF tasks focused on: teacher's support, help, and feedback (Getting help and support from the teacher constantly, makes me able to do the activity well which gives me the sense of confidence), lack of the feeling of fear and stress (It produces confidence in me since I can ask the teacher what I want without any stress), learning new words (I feel as I learn more new words my English is improved and this gives me a sense of confidence).

Those who rated SCF low in 'produce confidence' focused on: lack of teacher's explanation and feedback (There is nobody to correct our mistakes, so I do not feel confident), and use of L1 (Sometimes we are really unable to communicate in English. Then, we resort to Persian)
Intermediate learners:

On item question 1 (make me feel comfortable), intermediate learners scored SCF activities higher than TFF activities. Thus, for intermediate learners student-centered activities are more relaxing than teacher-fronted tasks. Their comments on the comfort level of SCF tasks were 86.7% positive and 13.3% negative.

Their favorable comments on the comfort level of SCF activities were about: partner's help (I don't face a lot of troubles and problems to do the task. My partner helps me), lack of the feeling of stress, fear, and shame (Working with a classmate eliminates the feeling of stress and makes me relaxed), exchanging information (We exchange and share our information and we learn many things in this way), and interaction and cooperation (Interaction with partners creates a friendly and warm climate that facilitates our learning and improves our relationships).

Those learners who rated TFF tasks low on 'make me feel comfortable' expressed one negative comment: (I'm not as fast and proficient as the teacher. I prefer to work with someone of my pace).

On item question 3 (are a lot of fun), intermediate learners scored SCF tasks higher than TFF activities. So, for intermediate learners student-centered activities are more fun than teacher-fronted tasks. Their comments on the enjoyment from SCF tasks were 46.7% positive, 20% negative, and 33.3% neutral.

Many of the comments from the learners seeing a lot of fun in SCF tasks were focused on: interesting and fun environment (Although I sometimes feel a little tense, it is an interesting class. We laugh at our mistakes when the teacher is not around), group spirit and interaction (I think it is fun. We sit near each other and do the task with each other. We also talk in Persian about things other than our assignments), and lack of feeling of pressure, anxiety, and fatigue (The class is not monotonous. We do not have to sit and feel bored. We are active).

The learners who recorded less fun for TFF activities commented on: lack of stimulation (These tasks are complicated and tiring for me).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results from the Mann-Whitney Test proposed that language level is an important factor in finding and explaining learners' preferences for TF or SC activities. Elementary learners
made three evaluative distinctions between TF and SC tasks. Similarly, for intermediate learners there were three areas of significant differences between TF and SC activities. Strikingly, all the three differences that elementary learners reported show their tendency towards the TF activities, while the three areas of evaluative distinctions that intermediate learners made between TF and SC tasks show their preferences for SC tasks over TF activities. Elementaries regarded TFG tasks more relaxing, and also more helpful for learning than SCG activities. In addition, they claimed that TFF activities produce more confidence than SCF tasks. For intermediates SCG tasks were more relaxing than TFG activities. Moreover, they said that SCF activities are more relaxing and fun than TFF tasks.

These results suggest that on the relaxation dimension, elementary learners saw more benefits from TFG tasks, while intermediate learners found SCG activities more relaxing. Where elementary learners saw advantages like teacher's presence and support or more drilling and repetition occurring from TFG tasks, intermediate learners commented on the deeper and better understanding they gained from SCG work. Also, elementary learners perceived learning value from teacher-fronted grammar-focused activities and not from student-centered tasks (neither grammar-focused nor fluency-focused tasks). This result supports the ideas from Tyacke & Mendelsohn (1986) and Gowers and Walters (1983, cited in Garrett and Shortall, 2002, p. 44) that learners of lower levels tend to be much more dependent on the teacher. It also is consistent with the claims made by Naiman et al. (1978) that learners commonly expect some aspects of language learning to be frustrating and discouraging (as cited in Garrett and Shortall, 2002, p. 44).

Turning to preferences for teacher involvement and fronting, elementary learners showed a strong perception that teacher's presence and support improves learning in grammar-focused activities. They commented on the value of the teacher's modeling, feedback, and error correction. They felt that the opportunities that teacher provides for repetition and practice cause better understanding of the rules (Teacher modeling and drilling helps me learn better pronunciation and grammar rules). It is evident that elementaries are aware of this fact that in the early stages this is more difficult to learn and progress in the absence of the teacher. They are seeing the importance of the teacher's presence for their progress and they feel that without the teacher it is too hard to learn.

But intermediates did not share this. For them, grammar learning is not affected by the manner (TF or SC) in which they may receive the activities. It can be assumed that there is indeed a gradual preference emerging for less teacher intervention, as the learners reach...
higher levels of proficiency. Then, as Garrett and Shortall (2002, p. 45) believe, intermediates have perhaps reached the point at which they see themselves able to move away from totally teacher-fronted activities and gain from less tightly controlled student-centered work. They now need to escape the pressure, to laugh, and to feel they can get things wrong. Perhaps it is the reason why they differentiated the enjoyment and the comfort level dimensions from SCF tasks. According to their comments, these kinds of activities allow them a break from the teacher and also provide for them some enjoyable language-focused recreation. Hence, there are here some signs of a movement towards more communicative independence. While for elementary learners fluency-focused activities give them a sense of confidence just when they are proposed to them by the teacher. Their comments yield that TFF activities gave them significant advantages over SCF tasks (It produces confidence in me since I can ask the teacher what I want without any stress.)

References


## Appendix A:

### English Translation of Persian-language questionnaire

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<th>TFG activities</th>
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Title

The Role of Big Five Personality Traits in Language Proficiency of Iranian EFL learners

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Biodata

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Abstract

In the present paper we investigated the role of big five personality traits in language proficiency among EFL learners in Iran. 152 university students were chosen by cluster sampling to big five inventory and Michigan test. Since the research is a descriptive correlational survey ones, therefore Pearson Correlation Coefficient was applied to determine whether the two variables were correlated. The results revealed that there is not a meaningful relationship between the variables as it was proved by some other researchers. Final results indicate that learner’s personality traits cannot be considered as a good predictor for the learner’s language proficiency.

Keywords: Big five personality traits, Motivation, Language proficiency, EFL learners, Pearson Correlation Coefficient
1. Introduction:

In contemporary psychology, the "Big Five" factors are five broad domains or dimensions of personality that are used to describe human personality. The Big Five framework of personality traits from Costa and McCrae (1992) has emerged as a robust model for understanding the relationship between personality and various academic behaviors. According to Costa and McCrae (1992) the Big Five factors are Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. Conscientiousness is exemplified by being disciplined, organized, and achievement-oriented. Neuroticism refers to degree of emotional stability, impulse control, and anxiety. Extraversion is displayed through a higher degree of sociability, assertiveness, and talkativeness. Openness is reflected in a strong intellectual curiosity and a preference for novelty and variety. Finally, Agreeableness refers to being helpful, cooperative, and sympathetic towards others (Costa and McCrae, 1992).

Language proficiency (LP) has various definitions. A brief account of LP is as follows: “A person’s skill in using a language for a specific purpose. Whereas language achievement describes language ability as a result of learning, proficiency refers to the degree of skill with which a person can use a language, such as how well a person can read, write, speak or understand language. Proficiency may be measured by the use of a proficiency test” (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992, p.204).

Little research, if any, has been devoted to investigating the role of Big Five personality traits in predicting language proficiency of Iranian EFL learners. In addition, to the best knowledge of these researchers, no such research has been carried out in Iran, in which English has been taught and learned as a foreign language (FL). Considering the importance of Big Five personality traits in students’ language proficiency, there is a need for further research in this area. Some researchers like Kommaraju, Karau, & Schmeck (2009) worked on the relationship among each of big five factors and academic motivation whereas other researchers like O’Connor and Paunonen (2007) worked on the relationship between the Big Five personality dimensions and academic achievement. Accordingly the researchers in this study have put the potential role of big five personality traits in language proficiency of EFL learners to the test.

There are some related studies in the literature. Only a handful of studies have examined the relation of personality traits to aspects of academic motivation (e.g., Busato, Prins, Elshout, & Hamaker, 1999; Kanfer, Ackerman, & Heggestad, 1996, as cited in Komarraj & Karau, 2005). More recently, Kommaraju et all (2009) found that
Conscientiousness is related across all three motivation dimensions, and in particular, it was found to have positive relationship with intrinsic motivation and negative relationship with amotivation—students who are more organized and disciplined are most likely to be motivated and are less likely to disengaged. A similar positive relationship was found between openness and intrinsic motivation—students who are intellectually curious are more motivated in learning and schoolwork. In addition, agreeableness has been found to be negatively associated with amotivation while extraversion and neuroticism was positively related with extrinsic motivation. The researchers, however, reported that neurotic individuals tend to score higher on amotivation.

O’Connor and Paunonen (2007) carried out a research on the relationship between the Big Five personality dimensions and post-secondary academic achievement, and found some consistent results. A meta-analysis showed Conscientiousness, in particular, to be most strongly and consistently associated with academic success. In addition, Openness to Experience was sometimes positively associated with scholastic achievement, whereas Extraversion was sometimes negatively related to the same criterion, although the empirical evidence regarding these latter two dimensions was somewhat mixed. Importantly, the literature indicates that the narrow personality traits or facets presumed to underlie the broad Big Five personality factors are generally stronger predictors of academic performance than are the Big Five personality factors themselves. Furthermore, personality predictors can account for variance in academic performance beyond that accounted for by measures of cognitive ability.

Although there are many researchers who explored the relationship between personality traits and academic performance (Eysenck, 1967; Cattell & Butcher, 1968; Kline & Gale, 1971) but there are several researchers (Mehta & Kumar, 1985; Dollinger & Orf, 1991; Green, Peters, & Webster, 1991; Rothstein, Paunonen, Rush, & King, 1994; Allik & Realo, 1997) who concluded that personality is not significantly related to academic achievement to be of real significance in educational settings. Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by John, Donahue, and Kentle (1991) is used in this study.

So, as it was mentioned, the previous studies concentrated on personality traits and other aspects of academic achievement rather than working on just personality traits and language proficiency, so in order to fill this gap, this study will investigate different aspects of personality traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) with language proficiency. The present study is considered to meet one main
objective which is shedding light on the role of big five personality traits in language proficiency among Iranian EFL learners.

2. Research Objectives
The researchers have aimed to devote their time to one main objective which satisfies the need to clarify the role big five personality traits play in language proficiency in the present article. Accordingly the main objective requires five specific objectives to be emphasized which would be 1) the role of Openness in language proficiency of EFL learners, 2) determine the role of Conscientiousness in language proficiency of EFL learners, 3) the role of Extraversion in language proficiency of EFL learners, 4) the role of Agreeableness in language proficiency of EFL learners, and 5) the role of Neuroticism in language proficiency of EFL learners.

3. Research Methodology
The present research study was carried out quantitatively as the students’ responses to Big Five questionnaire and language proficiency were coded (they were given numerical values), and then they were analyzed statistically. Also, this study is a descriptive, correlational and survey research. It is descriptive because it describes variables. Also it is correlational as it’s a kind of research that involves collecting data in order to determine whether, and to what degree, a relation exists between two or more quantifiable variables. As to collect data, there was a need for two questionnaires and numerical data, it deserves the label survey research.

The questionnaire of Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by John, Donahue, and Kentle (1991) is used in this study. This scale is a 44-item Likert-type measure of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experience. In order to evaluate English proficiency of the participants, short version of Michigan English proficiency test was chosen. The examination for the certificate of proficiency in English (ECPE) was developed at English Language Institute of the University of Michigan (ELIUM). It is a test battery for assessing English proficiency as a second language at an advanced level. The short form of this test consists of 35 items which are embedded in 4 different sections: Cloze, Grammar, Vocabulary and Reading.

The participants of this study were selected using stratified random sampling. The sample were selected from the population of senior and junior university students who were majoring in EFL related fields (Teaching and Translation) from Universities of Sirjan. The
The rationale behind selecting EFL senior and junior students was that they had already passed more English courses, comparing to the sophomore or freshman students and they had already gained relative language proficiency. This was due to the fact that in this study the researchers aimed at finding whether Big Five personality traits could have any contribution to the differences in language proficiency scores among the university students or not. So, 250 junior and senior male and female EFL students of Sirjan Universities took the Michigan proficiency test and one other questionnaire, Big Five Inventory, among which 152 students returned the questionnaires which matches standards of Morgan sample size table. Each student was provided with an answer sheet and a test booklet. Since the questionnaires used are standard ones, their validity and reliability is proved before. First, the subjects were asked to answer the 35 multiple choice items of the proficiency test in class in 35 minutes and take the other questionnaire home to answer. Before starting to answer, the students were asked to write their student numbers on both the answer sheet and the questionnaire in order that the researchers would be able to match the scores of each student. After collecting the proficiency answer sheets, subjects were informed about how to fill Big Five Inventory.

In this study, the researchers used descriptive statistics and inferential statistics like correlation and regression for data analysis.

### 4. Results

This section provides the research with the result of spss calculations carried out for this study.

#### Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Openness F</th>
<th>Openness %</th>
<th>Conscienteness F</th>
<th>Conscienteness %</th>
<th>Extroversion F</th>
<th>Extroversion %</th>
<th>Agreeableness F</th>
<th>Agreeableness %</th>
<th>Neuroticism F</th>
<th>Neuroticism %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>95.4</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>70.4</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>72.4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 explains the descriptive statistics for all factors of Big five personality characters, the frequency and the percentages obtained from the answers by respondents of the research.

#### Table 2. Descriptive Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Michigan Test Frequency</th>
<th>Michigan Test Percentage</th>
<th>Big Five Frequency</th>
<th>Big Five Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>72.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>40.1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>98.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The relationship between Big five personality characters and Michigan Test was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality and linearity. Since there was (1) bivariate pairs, Bonferroni adjusted alpha of 0.01 (0.05/1) was used to test null hypothesis of the bivariate pairs.

Table 3. Model Summary (b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std.Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.965</td>
<td>0.009</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>8.65295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this research, the enter method was used to determine the regression. The Adjusted R here is .002 so it is considered negligible. The correlation is .01, therefore there is not a meaningful relation between the two variables. As a lot of researchers like Mehta & Kumar (1985); Dollinger & Orf (1991); Green, Peters, & Webster (1991); Rothstein, Paunonen, Rush, & King (1994); Allik & Realo (1997) concluded that personality traits is not significantly related to academic achievement to be of real significance in educational settings.

Table 4. Anova (b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>101.666</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>101.666</td>
<td>1.358</td>
<td>.246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>11081.274</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>74.873</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11182.94</td>
<td>149</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above indicates that the significant is .246 and it is bigger than alpha which is .05. What’s more, F = 1.358 makes it clear there is not a meaningful relation between the two variables.

Table 5. Coefficients (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Std . Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>std . Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>std . Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>23.111</td>
<td>2.745</td>
<td>8.420</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Five</td>
<td>-1.621</td>
<td>1.391</td>
<td>-0.095</td>
<td>-1.165</td>
<td>0.246</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As depicted by table 5, Beta in standardized coefficient equals -0.095 and it indicates the model in this research is not fit.
5. Conclusion
In this paper we studied the role of Big five personality traits in language proficiency among Iranian EFL learners. First Pearson Correlation Coefficients was used to see whether the variables were correlated and the results obtained, proved there is not a meaningful relationship between them and finally means of the variables were compared by Anova. Therefore as it is clear, personality traits cannot predict Iranian EFL learner’s success in language proficiency. This study is in line with several researchers (Mehta & Kumar, 1985; Dollinger& Orf, 1991; Green, Peters, & Webster, 1991; Rothstein, Paunonen, Rush, & King, 1994; Allik & Realo, 1997) who concluded that personality is not significantly related to academic achievement to be of real significance in educational settings.

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Title

Interactive Compensatory Model of ESP Reading Comprehension: Vocabulary Knowledge, Reading Comprehension and Reading Strategies in Focus

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Abstract

Reading comprehension is important to all students especially to Iranian ESP students due to their lack of exposure to oral skills and the long standing shibboleth among Iranian English teachers that language is grammar and reading. Reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge are also believed to have a nurturing relation. Reading is believed to improve vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary knowledge is believed to contribute effectively to reading comprehension. There is a huge body of research available on the contribution of reading to vocabulary improvement, but there is paucity of research available on the effects of vocabulary knowledge on reading comprehension and reading strategy use especially for ESP students. This study was, therefore, an attempt to study the relation between vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension and reading strategy use of Iranian ESP students. To that end, 27 ESP students at Isfahan University of Technology participated in the study. Their vocabulary knowledge was assessed by EVKS developed in this study. The results of the study showed that vocabulary knowledge affected reading comprehension and reading strategy use significantly.

Key words: Vocabulary size, Vocabulary depth, Reading models, Reading components, EVKS, Reading strategy
1. Introduction
Vocabulary knowledge is believed to play a vital role in language learning and in developing a linguistic system, and is believed to contribute effectively to reading comprehension (Wagner et al, 2007). Carlisle (as cited in Wagner et al., 2007), for example, believes that vocabulary knowledge is a key factor in reading comprehension, and students' difficulties in comprehending school texts can be largely attributed to their insufficient word knowledge. Similarly Schmitt (2000) believes that vocabulary knowledge can help reading and reading can help vocabulary knowledge. According to him, there is a high correlation between the scores on vocabulary measure tests and reading comprehension tests. Rupley (2005) also believes that there is a kind of nurturing relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension: "vocabulary is partially an outcome of a reader's comprehension capabilities, and reading comprehension is partially an outcome of a readers' vocabulary knowledge" (p.203). To a great extent, our interest in vocabulary development is, therefore, motivated by the relation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension: "people with bigger vocabularies also tend to be better readers" (Wagner, 2007). Learners, therefore, need to master adequate vocabulary knowledge to read a text successfully.

However, in Iran vocabulary is sidelined due to a common shibboleth among EFL teachers that an adequate knowledge of grammar along with some reading strategies are the only elements needed by students to understand a text (Baleghizadeh & Golbin, 2010). This belief has made all English teachers especially ESP teachers focus greatly on grammatical rules and translation, and disregard the role of vocabulary and turn it into a Cinderella element. This study is, therefore, an attempt to delve more into the relation between vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension and reading strategy use among Iranian ESP students.

2. Vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension
Unanimous support of a strong correlation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension can be found within L1 literature. In this regard four hypotheses are proposed for the interrelationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension in L1: the instrumental, knowledge, aptitude and access view hypotheses (Anderson & Freebody, 1981; Mezynski, 1983; Qian, 2002). The instrumentalist hypothesis regards vocabulary knowledge as a major prerequisite to reading. According to this hypothesis there is a direct relation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension: the larger a person’s vocabulary knowledge, the better he can read a text. For this reason, followers of this
hypothesis place high priority on vocabulary teaching (Anderson & Freebody, 1981). Knowledge hypothesis considers world knowledge as an essential factor for reading comprehension. The followers of this hypothesis interpret the score on a vocabulary test as an indication of a person’s world knowledge: the higher the score on a vocabulary test, the more the knowledge of the world. The aptitude hypothesis, on the other hand, claims that there is a direct relation between the score on a vocabulary test and a person’s mental agility: the higher the score on a vocabulary test, the more agile a person’s mental ability must be (Hunt, 1978). The heart of this hypothesis is that when a person’s mental ability is higher, he can also be better at reading comprehension. So, according to this hypothesis, there is no direct relation between reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge but rather an indirect one: the score on a vocabulary test can be an indication of a person’s mental ability, and the higher the person’s mental ability, the better he can read a text. So, the higher a person’s score on a vocabulary test, the better he can read a text (Anderson & Freebody, 1981). The last hypothesis, the access hypothesis, regards reading comprehension as comprising of several sub skills; two major ones are accessing word meanings and using these meanings in text processing efficiently (Mezynski, 1983). So what is essential based on this view is the automaticity of access to vocabulary knowledge as an aide to reading comprehension. What learners need to do according to this hypothesis is to have enough practice on the lexical items to access them quickly and efficiently in processing a text. The relation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension is a type of relation between the skill and its sub-skills: the more a person practices the lexical items, the more efficient he can access them in reading a text and the better he will be able to read the text.

In L2 literature, there is also support for the relation between vocabulary knowledge and reading performance. Nation (1993), based on what is discussed in the above mentioned hypotheses regarding the relation between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension in L1, and in an attempt to delineate the interrelation between L2 reading and vocabulary development, proposed a triangular diagram depicting vocabulary size, skill in use and knowledge of the world as the most important factors involved in L2 reading. His diagram, then, presents a kind of reductionist view toward reading comprehension: if you know the words, you have everything you need to carry out the reading process. It also neglects the role of vocabulary depth which is an important part of vocabulary knowledge. Bernhardt (2005) also studied research done on L2 reading comprehension in the literature and finally construed her model which, according to Lems et al. (2010), is comprehensible and can accommodate a large number of L1 and L2 groups. Her model contains three important
constituents namely, L1 literacy, L2 proficiency which is defined as word knowledge and syntax, and unidentifiable factors which mostly encompass learners' personality factors like motivation, intelligence, attitude, etc.

Figure 1
A compensatory model of English language reading (Lems et al., 2010, p.24)

As shown in figure 1, L1 literacy accounts for 20%, L2 proficiency about 30% and unidentifiable factors around 50% of L2 reading. By L1 literacy, Bernhardt (2005) means lower-level skills such as alphabetic, oral/aural language and vocabulary, and higher-level linguistic features such as background knowledge, knowledge of text structure, and beliefs about word and sentence configuration. L2 proficiency, in her idea, refers to learners' morpho-syntactic knowledge, existence or absence of cognates, and the linguistic distance that exists between the two languages in operation, and unidentifiable factors refer to factors such as cognitive strategies, interest in the text and engagement in the reading process, content and domain knowledge. By presenting this model, Bernhardt wants to "revitalize the conceptualizations of the second language reading process as a juggling or switching process in cognition" (Bernhardt, 2005, p.140). It means that L2 readers can compensate for comprehension difficulty that they have in one knowledge source, e.g. L2 knowledge, by activating skills and knowledge from another dimension, e.g. L1 literacy.

Birch’s (2007) hypothetical model of the reading process, however, contains two important parts, namely the knowledge area and the strategies used to process the text. The
knowledge area or base consists of world knowledge and language knowledge. World knowledge refers to our knowledge about our surroundings; people, places, events, activities etc. which can be obtained in any language, while language knowledge refers to our conscious and unconscious knowledge about the sentences, phrases, structures, sounds etc. of a specific language. The strategy domain on the next part of the model is also divided into two parts; cognitive processing strategies, which are universal in nature, and language processing strategies, which are language-specific. Cognitive processing strategies refer to strategies like inferencing, predicting, problem solving etc. which are used in different settings, not just in reading. Language processing strategies, however, refer to strategies like chunking, recognizing letters etc. These strategies like language knowledge are specific to a particular language, and without them reading cannot occur (Bernhardt, 2005; Birch, 2002, 2007).

![Hypothetical model of the reading process](image)

**Figure 2**
*Hypothetical model of the reading process (Birch’s, 2007, p.3)*

As shown in figure 2, reading process includes four aspects, namely cognitive processing strategies, world knowledge, language processing strategies, and language knowledge. Cognitive processing strategies and world knowledge are the universal factors or, as Birch (2007) calls them, are the higher-order skills that cannot be accessed if the low level skills, language processing strategies and language knowledge, are not learned in any given language. In these two models, vocabulary knowledge is also considered an important part of language knowledge which in turn contributes effectively to L2 reading comprehension.
Research on the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension in L2 is just beginning to gain attention. Within this area of interest, however, the two ends of the scale are still rather unbalanced. The greater part of the literature has been on how L2 learners acquire their vocabulary through reading and only a few studies have attempted to determine what role vocabulary knowledge plays in L2 reading comprehension in academic contexts. L2 research on this topic is only just emerging, and the research literature is still amazingly scant. Researchers have mostly made a distinction between two aspects of vocabulary knowledge (vocabulary depth and vocabulary breadth) and have explored their effects on L2 reading. Most of the studies done have, however, focused on the role of vocabulary size in L2 reading and suggest a strong relation between vocabulary size and reading comprehension. Meara (1996), for example, believes that learners with big vocabularies are better at different vocabulary skills including reading comprehension when the learners are the same except for their vocabulary size. Laufer (1992) found a meaningful correlation between the scores on the reading comprehension test and the scores on Vocabulary Level Test. She, therefore, concluded that scores on vocabulary test can be a good predictor of the scores on reading comprehension. Few studies have, however, probed the role of vocabulary depth and reading comprehension. Only two major studies can be found in the literature: Bot et al. (1997) and Qian (2002). Bot et al. (1997) in a study which was not designed to study the relation between vocabulary depth and reading comprehension found that some aspects of vocabulary knowledge are closely linked to reading process. Qian (2002) also designed a study to probe the role of vocabulary depth and breadth and reading comprehension, and found that both play an important role in reading comprehension. Even more recently Nassaji (2004) explored the relation between depth of vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary strategy use. He found that there is a strong relation between depth of vocabulary knowledge and the use of certain vocabulary strategies. Nobody has, however, attempted to explore the possible relation between depth and breadth of vocabulary knowledge and reading strategy use.

3. Reading strategies

The term strategy has been one of the difficult terms in the field of applied linguistics to be defined, observed, measured and classified due to the complexity which resides in its nature. Researchers (O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Purpura, 1997; Cohen, 1998; McDonough, 2006) define strategy as conscious and subconscious mental processes which
are employed by learners in language learning, language use and in language testing situations. These processes help them plan what to do, and let them control the flow of data. Accordingly, reading strategies are a set of mental operations that are employed by the readers to comprehend the text or to solve their comprehension problems (Grabe, 2009; Abbott, 2010).

Reading strategies are classified into two major groups, namely bottom-up and top-down strategies (Birch, 2007; Rumelhart, 1980; Phakiti, 2003; Purpura, 1997; Schueller, 2004; Young & Oxford, 1997). Bottom-up reading comprehension strategies are data-driven (i.e., they focus on linguistic parts and forms to interpret text on an element by element basis), whereas top-down strategies are conceptually or hypothesis-driven (i.e., they use existing schematic knowledge of real-life situations and discourse organization to make meaning) (Abbott, 2010, p.15). Lems et al. (2010) believe that to be able to read successfully, readers need to master two major sets of skills. The first group includes those that operate at the word level. They let readers decode the text and make sense of it. They are skills like scanning, breaking the lexical items into their constituent elements, using the knowledge of punctuation etc. These skills are called bottom-up skills or strategies. As readers proceed, they need other skills that let them make meaning of the text. These skills let them involve their world knowledge or their experience of the outside world to comprehend the text. They are skills like skimming, connecting or relating the information presented in different sentences or parts of the text, bringing background knowledge to the text etc. They are called top-down skills or strategies. Bottom-up strategies can be, therefore, defined as word-level skills which are needed to decode the text, while top-down strategies are defined as world-level skills which are analytical and are needed to comprehend the text. These two sets of skills must work in concert with each other (Lems et al., 2010; Meng, 2006).

4. Vocabulary size and depth

In research on vocabulary learning, a distinction is often made between depth and size or breadth of vocabulary knowledge which are considered as two important aspects of vocabulary knowledge (Meara, 1996; Haastrup & Henriksen, 2000; Read, 2000; Nassaji, 2004). Breadth of vocabulary knowledge refers to the number of words known by learners, while depth of vocabulary knowledge refers to the quality of vocabulary knowledge or one’s level of understanding of various aspect of a word (Meara, 1996; Haastrup & Henriksen, 2000; Read, 2000; Nassaji, 2004). According to these researchers knowing a word entails more than knowing just its meanings. Word knowledge is complex and multidimensional. To
have a profound knowledge of a single lexical element, one needs to have information about its pronunciation, spelling, register and stylistic aspects, its semantic relations with other words (collocations, antonyms, synonyms) and the ability of using it in a sentence with grammatical and semantic correctness.

5. Research questions

Based on the above stated problems, the answers to the following research questions were sought in the study:

Q1. Is there a relation between size and depth of vocabulary knowledge in Iranian ESP students?
Q2. Is there a relation between size and depth of vocabulary knowledge and Iranian ESP students' reading performance?
Q3. Does vocabulary knowledge affect Iranian ESP students' reading strategy use?

6. Materials and methods

6.1. Participants

To carry out the study, 27 ESP students at Isfahan University of Technology (IUT) were selected. They studied Electrical Engineering and were participating in an English course at ACECR at the time of the study (fall 2013). Their level of proficiency was assessed and controlled based on the results of OPT (Oxford Placement Test) given to them prior to the study. As it is impossible to change the arrangements of the classes in Iranian universities, those students who did not match the others in terms of proficiency could not be discarded from the class, but their data (their scores, responses to the questionnaires, etc.) were not calculated and analyzed not to affect the results. The students involved in the study were at an intermediate level based on their scores on OPT. The rest who were lower and a few who were higher were not involved. At the beginning of the study the students were informed that they were selected to participate in a study and were asked to sign the consent form in case they wanted to cooperate.

6.2. Vocabulary test

Different kinds and versions of tests for the measurement of vocabulary depth and breadth are devised and used throughout the literature like Vocabulary Size Test (Meara & Jones, 1990), Level’s Test (Nation, 2001), Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) (Paribakht & Wesche, 1993a, 1993b; Wesche & Paribakht, 1996), Word Associates Test (WAT) (Read,
1993, 1995, 2000), V_Links test (Wolter, 2005). These tests have their own advantages and disadvantages. Vocabulary Size Test and Level's Test are, for example, just measures of vocabulary size and due to their nature did not fit the requirements of the study. Word Associate Test is a test used as a measure of the depth of vocabulary knowledge. For each word, the learner is expected to identify two associates in each box. Although the test has been around for a while, it has little been used by scholars as a standard measure of vocabulary knowledge. Its problem is that it can be used for the words that appear well connected like "sudden".

Sudden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>beautiful</th>
<th>quick</th>
<th>surprising</th>
<th>thirsty</th>
<th>change</th>
<th>doctor</th>
<th>noise</th>
<th>school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Figure 3**  
*Sample items for revised version of Word Associates Test (Milton, 2009, p.163)*

It cannot, however, be used appropriately with the words like "alloy" in this study that are much more restricted in their use and do not collocate so widely, or may not appear to associate in the same way as words like "sudden" do (Milton, 2009).

The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS) (Paribakht & Wesche, 1993a, 1993b; Wesche & Paribakht, 1996) is a word knowledge test that asks learners not simply whether they know a word or not, but rather, how well they know the words they recognize. Vocabulary Knowledge Scale is, on the other hand, a popular and the most quoted test in the literature. Despite its popularity and practicality, it has some limitations as a measure of depth of vocabulary knowledge and some scholars like Wolter (2005) have voiced their criticism against it. It does not, for example, measure multiple meanings of a word and word relations like synonymy and collocations (Milton, 2009).

The test used in the study to assess the subjects' vocabulary knowledge was Extended Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (EVKS) developed by the researcher. It is a combination of the items taken from the first version of Word Associate Test, VKS and some items devised based on the available definitions of vocabulary depth. Its advantage over VKS is that it includes some more items like items 5, 6 and 7 that can better assess different aspects of vocabulary knowledge. Its advantage over WAT is that it has some self-report items like 5, 6, 7 and 8 that can be used with academic words like "inverter, diode, modulation" that do not associate and collocate well with other words and cannot be tested appropriately by the use of a fixed set of associations and collocations used in WAT. "Paste", for example, was reported by one of the students to have two meanings: 1. "چسب" (Chasb) glue 2. "خمیر" (Khamir) a
thick mixture, could be used with cement as "cement paste" and was used in the sentence "If water add to cement, it become cement paste". This word does not, however, fit WAT as words like "sudden" do.

As shown in table 1, EVKS is divided in two parts: vocabulary size and vocabulary depth. Vocabulary size contains four levels from total unfamiliarity to the ability of providing the correct meaning of the intended word. The size part determines the familiarity or non-familiarity of the subjects with the given word based on the provision of word meaning. The second part of EVKS is, however, intended to deal with the aspects of word meanings and subjects' depth of lexical knowledge. This part has four items each of which assesses a specific aspect of the word knowledge, including multiple meanings of the word, its relation with other words by asking for its synonyms and/or antonyms, its collocations and how it is used in a sentence with grammatical and semantic correctness.

The scoring procedure used for EVKS is as follows: for the size part, for items one and two that represent subjects' unfamiliarity with the given word, no point is assigned. For item three point 1, and for item four which shows a deeper familiarity point 2 is given. The minimum score for this part will be zero and the maximum will be 2. For each item of the depth part of EVKS one point is assigned except for number four to which 2 points are given, one for grammatical and the other for semantic correctness of the given word in the sentence provided.

**Table 1 Extended Vocabulary Knowledge Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Size:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I do not remember having seen this word before.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I have seen this word, but I do not know what it means.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have seen this word, and I think it means ………………………………………… (Farsi Translation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I have seen this word, and I am sure it means ………………………………………… (Farsi Translation).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Depth:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I know other meanings of this word, they are:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. …………………………………… 2………………………………………….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. An antonym or synonym for this word is …………………………………… (Collocations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. This word is usually used with …………………………………………….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I can use this word in a sentence:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…………………………………………………………………………………………………… (If you do Part B, do part 4, too).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was used in the study and scored twice after it was completed by the subjects. Once, each part (the size part and the depth part) was scored separately to assess the subjects'
vocabulary size and vocabulary depth, and then these two scores were added together to arrive at a general score for the subjects' vocabulary development.

It was reviewed by five experts to ensure its content validity and was also administered to a group of 26 ESP students twice with an interval of 14 days for the words which had already been taught to them. The correlation between the two sets of scores was 0.91 which proves the reliability of the test. The words were listed and under each word eight blanks were provided. The EVKS instruction was translated into Farsi and was given to the subjects on a separate and smaller sheet of paper in order for the students to know what information to provide for each blank.

6.3. Reading comprehension test (RC)

A reading comprehension test was used in the study to assess the subjects' reading ability before the study when the given words were unfamiliar to them and after the study when the words were taught to them to explore the effects of vocabulary size and depth on their reading comprehension. The texts were extracted from English for Electrical Engineering (Amiryousefi and Rezaee, 2013). The test was developed by the researcher and then evaluated by five experienced and proficient ESP teachers at IUT to ensure its content validity. It was given to a group of 26 ESP students that were comparable with the subjects in the study and the reliability obtained is as follows:

Table 2 The reliability statistics of the reading comprehension test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RC 0.74</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 2 Cronbach's Alpha is bigger than 0.7 which represents the reliability of the test used. The new words made almost 5.4% of the texts. Table 3 represents the characteristics of the texts used in the RC.

Table 3 The texts used in the reading comprehension test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Passages</th>
<th>Total number of the words</th>
<th>Number of the new words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Conductor, insulators and semiconductors</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Analog modulation</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Semiconductor diodes</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Logic gates</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1276</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.4. Reading strategy questionnaire (RSQ)

To explore the possible effects of vocabulary knowledge on cognitive reading strategies used by the subjects during their reading performance, a questionnaire was developed based on the available definitions and classifications of these strategies (Block, 1986; Carrell, 1989; Anderson, 1991; Purpura, 1997; Young & Oxford, 1997; Phakiti, 2003; Schueller, 2004: Abbott, 2010). The questionnaire consisted of 21 response categories which were divided into two parts. The first part of the questionnaire consisted of eleven response categories investigating the use of bottom-up strategies while the second part consisted of ten response categories investigating the use of top-down strategies (Appendix A). It was given to a group of 58 ESP students that were comparable with the subjects in the study and the reliability obtained is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RSQ</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.718</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 4 Cronbach's Alpha is bigger than 0.7 which represents the reliability of the questionnaire used. Students rated each category on a five-point Likert scale with anchor points of 1: always to 5: never. The questionnaire was given to the subjects after they completed the reading test before and after the study. The questionnaire along with its Farsi translation was given to the subjects to help them better understand the items.

6.5. The pilot experiment

Before being administered to the participants in the study, the tests and the questionnaire were piloted with a group of ESP students that were comparable with the subjects in the study. The main purpose of the pilot experiment was to confirm the appropriateness of the tests and to determine the time they needed to complete them.

The results of the pilot test was that the test instructions and items were well articulated and without any ambiguity. The results also showed that the tests (as discussed) had acceptable levels of reliability and validity to incur reliable and valid results.

6.6. Procedures

At first around 80 novel words were selected from the passages exiting in the RC and their novelty was tested two weeks before the study. The subjects were given a list of the words and were asked to mark those which were familiar to them and write down their meanings in Farsi. Those words which were familiar to the majority of the subjects were omitted and finally 69 words remained as the target words. Then the reading comprehension test was
given to them. After the reading test, the reading strategy questionnaire was given to the subjects to see what strategies were used by them before the study and when the words were unfamiliar to them. Then the students were provided with a list of the target words along with a brief and understandable definition, one or more examples and, when possible, synonyms, antonyms and some collocations for each. The words and the accompanying information were read out and described to the subjects. They were sometimes asked to give their own synonyms, antonyms, collocations and/or other meanings, and try to use them in some sentences. The purpose of this part was to provide a context which is deemed essential for vocabulary learning (Atay and Ozbulgan, 2007). Each session around 12 to 15 words were taught to them. The study lasted 5 sessions. At the end of the study the EVKS, RC and RSQ were given to the subjects again. These tests were, however, given to the subjects on two separate sessions, on one session the EVKS and on the next RC and RSQ.

7. Results and discussions

EVKS was given to the subjects and was scored based on the scoring procedure developed for it. At first each part of it, vocabulary size part and vocabulary depth part, was scored separately to assess the subjects' vocabulary size and vocabulary depth, and then these two parts were added together to get their overall vocabulary knowledge which is represented as "overall" in table4. To answer the research questions, the data were fed into SPSS (version 16) and the following results were obtained.

Table 5 represents the descriptive statistics of the subjects’ scores. As it is shown, the mean score of the RC at time 1 (when the words were unfamiliar), shown by number1, is 11.18, while it is 21.3 at time 2 (when the words were taught to them), shown by number2, which shows a considerable increase in the reading scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reading 1</th>
<th>Reading 2</th>
<th>Vocabulary size</th>
<th>Vocabulary depth</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>11.1852</td>
<td>21.3704</td>
<td>207.2963</td>
<td>132.0741</td>
<td>75.2222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>1.41522</td>
<td>1.27545</td>
<td>6.43198</td>
<td>2.89464</td>
<td>4.65199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>195.00</td>
<td>126.00</td>
<td>67.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>218.00</td>
<td>138.00</td>
<td>80.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To ensure sample homogeneity, Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was used. As shown in Table 6, all significance values are more than 0.05 representing sample homogeneity.
Table 6
The results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reading 1</th>
<th>Reading 2</th>
<th>Vocabulary size</th>
<th>Vocabulary depth</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test</td>
<td>0.788</td>
<td>1.272</td>
<td>0.499</td>
<td>0.818</td>
<td>1.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.564</td>
<td>0.079</td>
<td>0.965</td>
<td>0.516</td>
<td>0.082</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then paired sample t-test was used to see if there was a significant difference between the subjects' scores on the RC at time 1 and at time 2. As shown in table 7, the significance value is higher than 0.05 which shows a significant difference between them. By looking at table 5, we can understand that the mean score for the RC at time 1 is around 11, but it is around 21 at time 2 which shows an increase of about 52%. It can, therefore, be concluded that vocabulary development contributed significantly to the subjects' reading comprehension.

Table 7
The results of the paired-sample T-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Difference mean</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESP</td>
<td>Reading 1</td>
<td>11.1852</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.41522</td>
<td>-10.1852</td>
<td>-43.734</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading 2</td>
<td>21.3704</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1.27545</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pearson correlation test was also employed to answer question number three. As shown in table 8, the significance values for vocabulary size score, vocabulary depth score and the overall vocabulary score are less than 0.05 representing a positive relation between these scores and the RC score at time 2. It can, therefore, be concluded that both aspects of vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary size and vocabulary depth, contributed to reading performance of the subjects.

Table 8 The results of the Pearson Correlation test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Vocab. size</th>
<th>Vocab. depth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading2</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.563*</td>
<td>.492*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.002</td>
<td>.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 also represents the relation between vocabulary size and vocabulary depth. The significance value is less than 0.05 representing a positive relation between these two. The correlation between them is 0.421. It can, therefore, be concluded that as students vocabulary size increased, the depth of their vocabulary knowledge increased too.

**Table 9**

*The results of the Pearson Correlation test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary size</th>
<th>Vocabulary depth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>0.421 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.029</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was, however, used to see if vocabulary development had any effects on reading strategy use. The results are presented in table 8 and 9. Number 1 represents RSQ at time 1, number 2 represents RSQ at time2, B stands for bottom-up strategies, and T stands for top-down strategies. As shown in table 10, the significance value is less than 0.05 representing a significant difference between the responses of the subjects to the RSQ at time 1 and time 2.

**Table 10**

*The results of the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>MeadianB2 – MedianB1</th>
<th>MeadianT2 – MedianT1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ESP</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-3.182 a</td>
<td>-3.897 a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By looking at the results obtained from the rank test, it becomes evident that the medians of both B (bottom-up strategies) and T (top-down strategies) are bigger at time 1 than those at time 2. It can, therefore, be concluded that the subjects used more strategies when the words were unfamiliar to them.

**Table 11**

*The results of the rank test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESP MeadianB2 – Median B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Ranks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Ranks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESP MeadianT2 – Median T1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Ranks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Ranks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results of the present study, therefore, showed that 1) there was a positive relation between the size and the depth of the subjects' vocabulary knowledge, 2) vocabulary knowledge significantly improved their reading performance and 3) the use of both bottom-up and top-down strategies decreased when their vocabulary knowledge increased.

7. Conclusions
The results can, therefore, further prove that cognitive strategies and language knowledge, as presented in the reading models discussed earlier, are essential parts of reading comprehension. The subjects performed much better when their vocabulary knowledge, an L2 component, improved, and both at time 1 and time 2 they used reading strategies. The results, however, show that there is a kind of interaction between the reading components and the reading task which determines their contribution level based the availability levels of each. In our study, for example, reading strategies were more resorted to when vocabulary knowledge was less developed, while their use decreased when vocabulary knowledge was developed. It can be interpreted in the light of Bernhardt’s (2005) compensatory model which claims that the lack or the deficiency of one or some of the components can be compensated by the others. The results also show that vocabulary size and depth are interrelated and the improvement of one cannot be achieved without the improvement of the other.

In conclusion, based on the results of the present study and the proposed models of reading comprehension, reading is considered as an interactive process that happens between the reader and the text. To comprehend the text and to do the reading task successfully, a reader needs to gain mastery over specific components like vocabulary, reading strategies, etc. There are also other elements that affect the reading process such as L1 background and personal attributes. The contribution level of each is, however, determined based on the availability of each and the reading task. Sometimes, the lack or deficiency of one may be compensated by others. But what mix leads to a successful reading performance is different from person to person, task to task and situation to situation and is waiting for further investigation. Vocabulary size and depth cannot, however, be separated and should be improved in concert with each other.

References


Qian, D. D. (2002). Investigation the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and

Iranian EFL Journal


### Appendix A: Reading Strategy Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bottom up reading strategies</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I scan the text for explicit information requested in the reading questions or exercises.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I read aloud a word and/or a phrase while reading the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I read aloud a sentence while reading the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I question the meaning of a word or a phrase.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I use knowledge of punctuation (;, i.e., that is, ( ), -).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I translate some or all words / phrases into Farsi while reading the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I translate some or all sentences into Farsi.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I try to find the reference of words like &quot;this&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I notice the cohesive ties like &quot;however, therefore, in addition to&quot; used in the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I break lexical items into parts and try to guess their meanings from their structures like &quot;unbelievable: un + believe + able&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I rephrase a portion of the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top down strategies</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. I skim for gist of the text or to identify the main ideas, themes, or concepts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I connect or relate the information presented in different sentences or parts of the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I guess the meaning of the words and phrases based on the information presented in the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I pay attention to the text type and discourse format.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Coherence is important to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I pay attention to how ideas and facts are used to support the main ideas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I raise questions about the content of the text to understand it better.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I bring my background knowledge to the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I try to find the topic sentence, introduction and conclusion of the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I try to evaluate my comprehension of the earlier parts of the text based on the information presented in the new parts of it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Title

Incorporation of Persian Literature into ELT in Iran: A Necessity which has been Ignored

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Abstract

Literature as a powerful pedagogic instrument has been longused in language teaching. Teaching English through learners' native literature as a vehicle of thoughts and ideas can provide cultural content appropriate for the local context. Persian Literature involving Iranian culture, values and ideologies can be employed as a potent source in EFL classrooms in Iran. Using Persian Literature in Iranian TEFL context not only protects EFL learners against cultural and linguistic imperialism but also fosters national culture, values and ideologies in these learners. Additionally, cooperation of the experts in two fields of TEFL and Persian Literature can be of mutual benefit to the both fields. The present paper discusses the advantages of using literature in ELT generally and Persian
Literature in Iranian ELT particularly and then elaborates on the reasons why incorporation of Persian Literature into ELT is a necessity for the present status of TEFL in Iran. The results would be beneficial not only to those who are concerned with foreign language teaching and learning such as EFL teachers / learners, textbook / curriculum writers, and syllabus designers but also to those who are specialists or interested in the fields of literature, culture and humanism.

**Keywords:** ELT, literature, Persian Literature, HLT, cultural/cross-cultural awareness, Life Syllabus.

### 1. Introduction

Literature as a powerful pedagogic instrument has been long used in language teaching. By studying literature, learners can deepen their understanding of the world around them from different perspectives. Gathered wisdom of human experience at all times, can be exploited through literature (Khatib & Melati, 2012). With universal themes ranging from individual concerns to social issues, literature can provide EFL learners with motivating material which is conducive to their linguistic development, personal growth and cultural enrichment (Mckay 1982; Lazar, 1993; Parkinson & Thomas, 2004). Literature not only sharpens linguistic and cognitive skills but also deepens students' understanding of the human condition (Floris, 2004). Cultural awareness can also be developed by literature in EFL classrooms (Van, 2009). Language pedagogy includes different issues such as motivation, critical thinking, cultural awareness etc., which can be fostered through literature.

The advantages of employing learners' native literature in the context of English Language Teaching (ELT) have been mentioned by some researchers so far. Persian Literature as Iranian EFL learners' cultural heritage can be a rich source of input for Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Iran. It is capable of providing philosophy and wisdom for learners and also fostering their sense of national identity and cultural values in EFL classrooms. Unfortunately, Persian Literature as a source of language learning material has been neglected in Iranian TEFL context although it contains valuable concepts.

The present paper discusses the advantages of using literature in ELT generally and Persian Literature in Iranian ELT particularly and then elaborates on the reasons why incorporation of Persian Literature into ELT is a necessity for the present status of TEFL in Iran. The results would be beneficial not only to those who are concerned with foreign language teaching and learning such as EFL teachers / learners, textbook / curriculum writers,
and syllabus designers but also to those who are specialists or interested in the fields of literature, culture and humanism.

2. Literature in ELT

Literature offers many advantages pedagogically. Using literature in ELT context has received considerable attention from various points of view. On the one hand, opportunities to develop all aspects of English language proficiency can be provided for EFL/ESL learners by the integration of literature and literary texts into language classrooms (Khatib & Nourzadeh, 2011). On the other hand, human culture, knowledge and wisdom can be reflected through literature which is an important component of humanities (Zhen, 2012).

2.1. Literature and Humanistic Language Teaching (HLT)

Humanism, as a psychological trend of thoughts, emphasizes the importance of the inner world of the human being. According to humanism, the receiver in education is first a human being, then a learner. Stevick (1990) mentions five emphases within humanism which are: feelings, social relations, responsibility, intellect, and Self-actualization. The entrance of humanism into the field of second or foreign language teaching and learning changed the dogmatic insights into this field. Arnold (1998) affirms that humanism has much to offer to ELT. Humanistic Language Teaching (HLT) is an approach which considers the learner as a whole person who has physical, emotional, social and cognitive features (Tanemura & Miura, 2011 cited in Mehrgan, 2012).

Khatib and Ahmadi (2012) contend that the requirements of humanistic language teaching in ESL/EFL contexts can be satisfied by the integration of literature into second or foreign language teaching. In order to elaborate on the advantages and applications of literature in humanizing language teaching they draw on three of the basic tenets of humanistic education by Kerr (2007) i.e. human values development, the learner's personal growth, and affective and intellectual engagement. Literature can create opportunities for discussion, controversy and critical thinking, it can also educate the whole person (Lazar, 1993). Van (2009) believes that individual opinions and meanings in students can be created by literature (cited in Khatib & Ahmadi, 2012). Among different aspects of humanism, critical thinking, motivation and emotional intelligence which can all be enhanced through the integration of literature into second or foreign language teaching will be elaborated in the present paper.
2.1.1. Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the ability to analyze facts, generate and organize ideas, defend opinions, make comparisons, draw inferences, evaluate arguments and solve problems (Chance, 1986, cited in Khatib & Mehrgan, 2012). According to humanistic education students should be allowed to take responsibility for their own learning process. This is in line with the philosophy of critical thinking which contends that human beings are to be permitted to discover, reflect on problems, analyze etc. (Khatib & Mehrgan, 2012). Pishghadam and Naji Meidani (2012) point out the necessity of exposing students to critical pedagogy from the first years of schooling so that throughout an extended period they can have the chance to gradually absorb critical theories and develop the capacity to apply them constructively in their lives.

Regarding the engaging nature of literature, it can be used as a source to establish and develop critical thinking skills in students (Khatib & Mehrgan, 2012). Pishghadam (2008) is of the contention that reading literary works with their emotional and affective content along with discussion and debates on these works and relating them to day-to-day life issues can nurture critical thinking.

2.1.2. Motivation

Motivation can be defined as the reasons underlying behavior which is characterized by willingness and choice (Guay, Chanal, Ratelle, Marsh, Larose, & Boivin, 2010 cited in Vural 2013). Motivation, as an element which can drive learners to go ahead, is especially achieved when they are exposed to what they really enjoy (Khatib, Rezaei, & Derakhshan, 2011); Therefore, literature has a motivational function because it includes issues which are interesting in nature (Maley & Duff, 1982). Learners' personal involvement with literary texts increases their pleasure of reading these kinds of texts (Floris, 2004). Involving both emotions and intellect, literature increases learners' motivation and contributes to personal development of the students (Ur, 1996). Su (2010) and Vural (2013) also investigated the relationship between using literature and students' motivation in EFL classrooms and found that employing literature in ELT enhances EFL students' motivation.

2.1.3. Emotional Intelligence

According to Goleman (1995), Emotional intelligence is the understanding of feelings, both one’s own and those of others, and the ability to use that knowledge in making decisions in life. It is also the ability to maintain an optimistic outlook in the face of difficulties (cited in Ghosn, 2002). Goleman (1995) addresses the benefits of educating the whole person and bringing together the mind and heart in the classroom. He believes that the development of
emotional intelligence is important not only for the learners' own intellectual progress but also for the good of the society as a whole (cited in Arnold, 1998). Bar-On (1997) proposed five broad areas pertaining to emotional intelligence which are: intrapersonal competency, interpersonal competency, adaptability competency, stress management scales, and general mood (cited in Pishghadam & Zabihi, 2013)

English classes can play a positive role in enhancing EFL learners' emotional intelligence (Hosseini, Pishghadam, & Navari, 2010). Literature is a good source for nurturing students' emotional intelligence in EFL/ESL classes because it deals with affection, feeling and emotion (Khatib, Rezaei, & Derakhshan, 2011). Pishghadam (2009) counts reading literature as one of the helpful techniques which can be used to increase emotional intelligence in the classroom. Providing vicarious experiences, high quality literature can be used to foster emotional intelligence (Ghosn, 2002).

2.2. Literature and cultural/cross-cultural awareness

Taking cultural aspects of language into consideration has great significance in language pedagogy. Including cultural points in ELT is also an important part of designing syllabai and writing curricula. Promotion of cultural/cross-cultural awareness is one of the outstanding merits of literature integration into ELT in the globalization era (Khatib, Rezaei, & Derakhshan, 2011). Rezaee and Farahian (2011) also propose that literature can be employed as one of the possible ways to teach the cultural issues of the L2 to the learners in EFL classes.

In accordance with the current standard of morality in the ideology circle of a country, literature provides materials to teach ethics (Zhen, 2012). Khatib and Ahmadi (2012) assert that the values of a society constitute a part of its culture. Selection and use of appropriate literary materials in language teaching foster cultural awareness and human values development in learners (ibid). Mentioning the power of literature in developing empathy and tolerance Ghosn (2002) hopes that EFL learners around the world, become bridge-builders across cultures through communicating socially beneficial themes of good literature in EFL programs.

2.3. Literature and Life Syllabus

Pishghadam (2011) believes that language must be at the service of improving life qualities; therefore, in ELT, a kind of syllabus which considers life issues as its first priority should be presented. Pishghadam and Zabihi (2012) introduce such a syllabus as life syllabus which enables language learners to tackle the problems they may face in life. Consequently, language classes will become sites for enhancing learners' life qualities. With the contention
that the goal of a language class should not be language learning per se, Pishghadam and Zabihi (2013) introduce *English for Life Purposes* (ELP) as a new concept which focuses on learners' specific needs in life without marginalizing language learning. This new trend, provides opportunities for the nourishment of learners' other capabilities, talents, emotions, attitudes and various human values along with language learning in English classes. Material developers, syllabus designers and ESP practitioners may become empowered to enhance learners' quality of life through the integration of life skills in ESP classes (Ketabi, Zabihi, & Ghadiri, 2013).

Literature, in the same vein, contributes to the development of human values, learners' personal growth and also affective and intellectual engagement (Khatib & Ahmadi, 2012). Literature teaches learners about the value of life itself and also develops both social awareness and language competence (Floris, 2004). Having a well-rooted pedagogical value, literature can involve learners in problem-solving tasks through resolving conflicts (Khatib, Derakhshan, & Rezaei, 2011). Using literature in English classes provides learners with the opportunities to discuss their own interpretations of a literary texts and give feedback to those of their classmates and also discuss their own life experiences related to the theme of the literary text in hand (Khatib and Nourzadeh, 2011).

With respect to the achievements of literature use in ELT, it can be employed as a rich source of material for life syllabus and ELP.

### 3. Learners' native literature in ELT

Most of the reasons which advocate literature use in EFL/ESL classrooms, also support the use of learners' native literature in ELT context. Additionally, the integration of learners' native literature into second or foreign language teaching has more other benefits which have been mentioned by some researchers so far.

Using local literature in ELT can be described as serving local food in foreign plates (Elangovan, 2009). Talib (1992) suggests that in Singapore, a country where a particular non-native variety of English is spoken, the integrative goal in language teaching, involving the enhancement of the students' socio-cultural awareness, sense of self identity, and communicative competence within the community they live, is more easily achieved with a literary work written in that variety of English which the students understand or can empathize with.
Gray (2005) believes that the study of first language literature translated into the second language can serve as a bridge between the first and second language. He argues that as this certain type of literature is an important part of students' cultural heritage, they have strong opinions about it and often are not afraid to share them. Being provided with the requisite cultural background, language learners can then move on to reading and discussing second language literature (ibid).

Floris (2005) raises the benefits of using literary texts written by Asian authors in English for EFL/ESL classrooms in Asian countries. He mentions that in this way learners' local and regional cultural identities and value systems will be enhanced while learning the second or foreign language. Mohideen and Mohideen (2009) declare that using translated Malay short stories as a resource in ELT in Malaysian schools can not only introduce Malay or local literature to students, but also make it popular through the teaching and learning of English.

Mullah Nasreddin in Persian or Nasreddin Hoça (Hodja) in Turkish is a wise fool found in folklore throughout the Near East and Middle East. Exploiting Nasreddin tales in an ESL classroom, Baynham (1986) puts forth the use of traditional folk stories as a source in ELT context. He examines the process of involving post-elementary students in producing reading materials based on folk stories for the use of students at beginning levels. Erkaya (2011) also introduces tales of Nasreddin Hodja as traditional Turkish literature and mentions the benefits of traditional stories from students’ homelands as follow: 1. students will be motivated to read their own stories in English; 2. beginning students will not worry about getting acquainted with a different culture; 3. intermediate/advanced students will explore cultural aspects of stories without fear of criticizing them openly; and 4. instructors will be able to concentrate on vocabulary already known in the first language (L1) and guide students to learn vocabulary in context.

Cevik and Spahić (2013) mention that translated folk tales and learners' native stories which provide EFL learners with culturally familiar material, may be better comprehended than stories written in a foreign culture. Blending humor with wisdom and finding solutions to conflicts, Nasreddin Hodja tales are amusing and educating for every one; therefore, translated Hodja tales can serve to correct social faults which sound very attractive to EFL learners in Turkey (ibid). Prastiwi (2013) contends that Indonesian folktales as a representation of national culture can connect people from the past, present and future and also can construct national identity. In Indonesia, EFL teachers at primary schools incorporate translated
Indonesian folk tales into ELT to introduce local culture to learners and also enhance their sense of belonging to local culture.

4. Persian literature in Iranian ELT context

Human cognition tools (senses, intellect and heart) should be nurtured by educational methods and contents (Alavi, 2010). Containing a lot of intellectual, affective and spiritual subjects, Persian Literature can provide Iranian EFL learners with a wide range of material such as allegorical works, fables, didactic tales, epic narratives, mystic and spiritual tales, love stories, anecdotes and etc. Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, Molana's *Mathnavi*, sa'di's *Boostan and Golestan*, Nezami's *Panj Ganj, Kalileh va Demneh, Mullah Nasreddin anecdotes* and many other Persian literary works can be exploited as rich and motivating sources of material in English teaching.

An epic is a part of the national identity of a group of people. *Shahnameh* as one of the greatest epics in the world, reflects Iranians' history, values and religion in ancient times and enforces their sense of nationalism (Farhat-Holzman, 2001). Ferdowsi created an empirical, logical, and real sense of the past by facts and fables of the ancient Persian empires. In *Shahnameh*, narrative, mystical, lyrical, and folkloric modes are artistically intertwined (Zalipour, 2005). Trying to relate the pre-Islamic era to the post-Islamic time, *Shahnameh* reveals rationalism and piety as the basis of Iranian identity (Khosravi & Mousavi, 2008). This great literary work is filled with deep human concepts, wise messages and moral teachings which are in the form of stories told by the narrator or heroes of the stories (Nourazâr, 2013). These wise teachings are universal and belong to all times (Afrasiabpour, 2012).

Mystical Persian Literature not only contributes to personal growth but also has the potential for psychological treatment. Treatment methods of a variety of psychological and interpersonal problems through mystical teachings have been addressed by some psychologists and researchers. Hejazi (2010) introduces Attar and Molana as The physicians of spirit. She states that mystical literature generally and mystical works of Attar and Molana particularly are the purest prescriptions for psychoanalysis and psychotherapy in the field of comparative studies. A deep insight into these works on the one hand leads to the acknowledgement of human ego – which is the common aspect of psychology and literature- and on the other hand prevents psychological problems and sufferings before their treatment (ibid). Molana intends to teach the ways of achieving human perfection. Releasing from
human temptations is among his important mystical and moral teachings (Barani & Golafshani, 2012). Mirdal (2010) contends that Molana's teachings can be a way of dealing with the problems of living and a source of inspiration for modern approaches to the treatment of stress and suffering. Molana also addresses the issue of meaning in the communication process by means of tales and narration in mathnavi (Saghe'i, 2011). Javani (2010) states that theoretical and practical teachings of mysticism have positive effect on family institution. Spirituality, broadmindedness, purification of the soul, meditation, introspection, piety, virtue, humility, patience, trust in God and love are among these sublime teachings.

Didactic literature as an art and also cultural phenomenon has various functions such as cognitive, ethical, verbal and cultural ones (Razi, 2012). Sa'adi believes that "All the nature and life experiences can be considered as resources of knowledge and cognition....His ideas about morality and education constitute a systematic framework and model which can be applied by educators in real-life situations" (Alavi, 2010, p. 22). He contends that cultivation of all aspects of man's personality requires formal and informal education which is not limited to particular times and places (ibid). Sa'adi takes social and familial problems into special consideration. General skills in marital and familial life are mentioned 302 times in his Boostan. Speaking in a deliberate way, avoiding verbosity, speaking at the right time, benefits of silence, importance of nonverbal rather than verbal communication, controlling anger, love, patience, not acting impulsively, forgiveness, and being good tempered are considered by sa'adi as important factors in a successful marital and familial life (Fatehizade, Khanjani, & Bahrami, 2012). The value of sa'adi's works is not just for his art in writing but also for the moral content, mystical thoughts, and delicate points of wisdom in his works (Zolfaghari & Panbezari, 2012).

Incorporation of Persian Literature into TEFL in Iran can be discussed from two broad perspectives: benefits for English language pedagogy and benefits for Iranian EFL learners.

4.1. Benefits for English language pedagogy in Iran

Literature can serve as a medium to improve learners' foreign language proficiency by making the material meaningful to them. As a rich source of authentic material, literature has been used in ELT context for a long time. Regarding the fact that understanding L2 literary texts requires learners' familiarity with the cultural concepts included in the text, Khatib and Nourzadeh (2011) argue that sometimes this reciprocal relationship between literature and culture is overemphasized in EFL/ESL classes to the extent that learners' own cultures are
marginalized or neglected. Therefore, linguistic imperialism, self-marginalization, self-alienation, cultural colonialization and hegemony will be the consequences of becoming too preoccupied with monocultural literature rather than incorporating multicultural and multinational literature (Khatib, Ranjbar, & Fathi, 2012).

Incorporating Persian Literature into ELT is an attempt towards localization of ELT from cultural point of view which is an urgent remedy to the present culturally unbalanced situation of ELT in Iran. Regarding the current cultural status of ELT in Iran, Pishghadam and Navari (2009) assert that local materials must be provided by textbook writers, Persian and English cultures must be equally included and even the English culture should play the second fiddle to the Persian culture.

4.2. Benefits for Iranian EFL learners

It is obvious that people around the world see the world differently and have different cultural norms and value systems; Therefore, life issues and the ways of problem solving may vary in different countries according to different attitudes of their inhabitants. Giving detailed and dramatized descriptions of the social life of people and disclosing contradictions and problems in a society, literature provides readers with the chance to experience the life of the people portrayed in a literary work. That is to say that literature is closely connected with social culture (Zhen, 2012); Therefore, inclusion of learners' native literature in ELT context makes them aware of their cultural heritage which is their ancestors' ways of thinking and attitudes towards life and enhances their sense of national identity. In this way, they will have the chance to establish their own attitudes and even their own ways of life.

Using the target language perfectly does not require changing learners' values and beliefs, but these learners can be successful target language users while keeping their ethnic, religious and national backgrounds (Saniei, 2012). Moreover, EFL can be employed as the context for acquisition of local cultural knowledge. This makes students experience discussions about their own culture and the culture of the target language and also helps them recognize and define their own identity (Prastiwi, 2013). As Pishghadam (2011) states a number of topics are discussed in English classes and this is one of the unique features of these classes, "therefore English language learning classes have the potential to be the sites for developing the cultural and national identity of the learners" (ibid, p.11).

With respect to the vast domain of Persian Literature with its humanistic concepts, exposing Iranian EFL learners to simplified as well as sophisticated English translations of Persian literary works, provides Iranian EFL learners with the chance to get familiar with the valuable content of these works. Moral and spiritual teachings of Persian Literature result in
personal development as well as social growth. Linking the old thoughts and ideologies to the current social and cultural issues, inclusion of Persian Literature in Iranian ELT can help learners become critical thinkers and find solutions to their problems through raisin discussion.

5. Concluding remarks

Incorporation of Persian Literature into ELT in Iran doesn't mean ignoring English literature which provides EFL learners with authentic material but means adding learners' native literature into ELT syllabus. This can raise learners' motivation to think more critically about their own culture and the target culture. Exposing Iranian EFL learners to the rich content of Persian Literature in English classes not only enhances their sense of national identity but also equips them with a great deal of wisdom which they can exploit in life. Moreover, due to the large number of learners who attend English classes, these classes can create a tremendous chance to familiarize Iranian EFL learners with their native literature. In this respect, TEFL can be employed as a medium to convey the rich content of Persian Literature which is full of cultural values and wisdom.

There is no doubt that making the most of Persian Literature in Iranian TEFL context requires close cooperation of the experts in the two fields of TEFL and Persian Literature. In this way, the two fields can benefit from such cooperation mutually. Namely, on the one hand, Persian Literature can help TEFL enhance its humanistic aspects, balance its cultural content, increase learners' cultural/cross-cultural awareness, and foster learners' life skills. On the other hand, TEFL can help Persian Literature permeate among Iranian EFL learners so that it can revive Iranian cultural values, and prevent Iranian society from linguistic and cultural imperialism.

If these experts take effective steps in reviving Iranian cultural values, they can play an important role in preventing Iranian society from a great culture and identity loss in the globalization era. Strengthening Iranian national and cultural values through Persian Literature in TEFL context is one of the efficient ways by which these values can be kept from vanishing in the process of globalization.

In a nutshell, the merits of including Persian Literature in ELT are as follow:
1. Bearing humanistic value, it can develop Iranian EFL learners' critical thinking, motivation and emotional intelligence.
2. Playing an effective role in learners' personal growth it can enhance social culture.
3. Containing a great deal of wisdom as well as moral and spiritual teachings, it can nurture learners' life skills.
4. Being a part of Iranian EFL learners' cultural heritage, it can foster their sense of national identity.
5. Being an important element of Iranian culture, it can balance the context of TEFL culturally in Iran.
6. Including rich and valuable content, it can be conveyed to a great number of learners through English language teaching and learning.
7. Enforcing Iranian culture and values, it prevents Iranian society from cultural imperialism and self-alienation in the globalization era.

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Title

Investigating the Effect of Culture-Learning on EFL Learners' Listening Comprehension

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Abstract

This study was an attempt to investigate whether culture-learning for Iranian EFL learners has any influence on their listening comprehension. In order to carry out the research, two groups of EFL learners comprised of 35 students studying English in Zaban Sara Institute and Iran Language Institute in Bushehr took part in this study. The first group consisted of 20 female Iranian EFL students who enrolled at Zaban Sara Institute of Bushehr, Iran. They had learnt English through different books written by the well-known applied linguist, Jack C. Richards for about 2 years. The second group consisted of 15 female Iranian EFL students who enrolled at Iran Language Institute in Bushehr. They had learnt English through different books which are almost culture free and published by Iran Language Institute. Then two parallel tests of listening comprehension which were heavily culturally-loaded were administered to both groups to examine their cultural competencies. After that, the two groups received another listening test which was culture-free to determine their listening ability. Having analyzed the obtained
data, it is depicted that the first group who were familiar with the target culture outperformed the second group who were not familiar with the target culture. The results of the statistical tests made the fact clear that culture learning can have a significant impact on language learners' listening comprehension.

**Keywords**: Communicative competence, Culture-learning, Listening comprehension, Cultural competence

1. Introduction

Culture-learning is an important factor in foreign language instructions and it is believed that teaching a foreign language is not limited to learning new vocabularies and syntactic structures and it should also be integrated with some cultural elements of that language. As Krasner (1999) believed linguistic competence alone is not enough for learners of a language to be competent in that language. Foreign language teaching and learning should include cultural competency which is knowledge about the beliefs, ceremonies, conventions, etc. of the foreign language speakers. "Language cannot be separated completely from the culture in which it is deeply embedded" (Rivers, 1981, p.315). Nababan (1974) states that the word culture is derived from the Latin word "cultura" which means being cultivated. According to Brooks (1983) there are five aspects for culture: growth, refinement, fine arts, patterns of living, and a total way of life. He emphasizes the patterns of living as the most crucial one in language teaching programs. Seelye (1984) defines culture as a broad concept that involves all aspects of human life, "from folktales to carved whales" (p.26). Brown sees culture as "the mental constructs that enables us to survive in a way of life which we call culture" (1988, p.123).

In other words, the acquisition of a second language requires the acquisition of a second culture. Culture plays a critical role in language teaching and language learning and it has become very popular among the EFL students around the world. If they lack familiarity with the cultural norms of the target language, they may fail to understand the target language and therefore they will not have a successful communication. "Learning a language in isolation of its cultural roots prevents one from becoming socialized into its contextual use. Knowledge of linguistic structure alone does not carry with it any special insight into the political, social, religious, or economic system" (Seelye, 1993, p.10). As Thanasoulas (2001) points out, language teaching is culture teaching, and someone involved in teaching language
is involved in teaching culture at the same time. Leveridge (2004) concluded that language and culture are intertwined to such an extent whereas one cannot survive without the other.

As Risager (1991) believes, speaking with a native speaker includes the ability to act in real life situation, and not just having the knowledge of grammar and lexis. So it is important for the learners to understand the cultural references and views of the native speakers of the target language. Brown (1994) asserted that culture is like the glue that binds a group of people together.

Culture is the foundation of communication (Samovar, Porter, and Jain, 1981). When learners are given plenty of exposure to cultural information of the target language, they will be able to act and communicate well in the real situation community. "To teach a foreign language is also to teach a foreign culture, and it is important to be sensitive to the fact that our students, our colleagues, our administrators, and, if we live abroad, our neighbors, do not share all of our cultural paradigms" (Englebert, 2004, p.37). It is strongly believed that having cultural knowledge of target language for students will help them understand the language better. If they are not familiar with cultural norms of the target language, they may face misunderstandings in intercultural communication. So, it is worth exploring the impact of culture-learning on language learning specifically listening comprehension of Iranian students learning English as a foreign language.

2. Review of related literature
Since the 1960s, many scholars have concerned themselves with the importance of the cultural component aspect in foreign language learning, with hammerly (1982), seelye (1984), and Damen (1987) being among those who have considered ways of incorporating culture into language teaching. Kramsch (1993 & 1987) believes that culture should be taught as an interpersonal process rather than presenting cultural facts.

Chiang and Dunkle (1992) investigated the effect of speech modification, prior knowledge, and listening proficiency on EFL listening comprehension. The Chinese EFL students' listening comprehension was measured over listening to a lecture. The students were required to answer a multiple-choice test which contained both passage-dependent and passage-independent items. The results indicated that the students outperformed on familiar-topic lecture than on unfamiliar-topic lecture.

Brown (1994) asserted that language is part of culture and culture is part of language, and they are interwoven. According to Brown's assertion, when language is learned, the
culture of that language is learned along with it. However the role of culture, as an integral part of language learning has been neglected in the EFL curriculum in Iran. Sharifi (2000) investigated the role of culture in EFL curricula, and attempted to show that culture teaching should become an integral part of EFL instructions. Having discussed the importance of teaching culture, he addresses the questions of why, when, and how to teach culture in EFL situations. He also focuses on two major problems in incorporating culture into EFL classrooms and presents some possible solutions to these problems.

According to this study, language teachers should pick out the interesting aspects of the target culture and present them in the process of learning. Using strange or too difficult materials causes students to lose their interest in the target language. In the past, it was assumed that teaching culture is only for advanced levels, but many scholars, such as Chastain (1988), consider culture as an integral part of language learning that should be presented at all levels. In discussing the importance of teaching culture in the foreign language classrooms, Thanasoulos (2001) aimed to find out the contribution & incorporation of the teaching culture into the foreign language classroom. He tried to incorporate culture into the classroom by means of considering some techniques and methods currently used. The main idea of this paper is that effective communication is more than a matter of proficiency. In order to provide a different perspective on "the foreign culture", teachers should use comparisons within or between cultures. The foreign language class should become a "cultural experience" rather than a "cultural awareness" (Byram, & Morgan, 1994, pp.55-60).

The effect of background knowledge on listening comprehension was also explored by Sadighi and Zare (2002). Two TOEFL preparation classes allocated to EFL students took part in this study. The experiment group received some treatment in the form of topic familiarity, and their background knowledge was activated. Then a TOEFL test of listening comprehension was administered to both experimental and control groups. The results provided some evidence in support of the effect of background knowledge on listening comprehension. It has been emphasized that without the study of culture, teaching a second language is inaccurate and incomplete.

Gence and Bada (2005) conducted another study with the participation of the students of the ELT department of Cukurova University in Turkey. They have tried to find out what students think about the effect of the culture class they attended in the fall semester of 2003-2004. A five-item questionnaire was utilized in this study to assess these themes: (1) language skill, (2) cultural awareness of both native and target culture, (3) attitude towards the target culture, and (4) contributions to the prospective teaching profession. The findings
of the study suggest that a culture class is significantly beneficial in terms of language skills, raising cultural awareness, changing attitudes towards native and target societies. The participants believe that studying English culture is not an arbitrary but a necessary activity and culture classes have a motivating effect on the language learner and the learning process.

Bakhtiarvand and Adinevand (2010) also investigated the effect of cultural familiarity in improving Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension. To achieve this purpose, one hundred and twenty pre-intermediate language learners were selected and, based on systematic random sampling, divided into four groups. Group A (English culture), Group B (International culture), Group C (Persian culture), and Group D (culture-free). The subjects in each group practiced listening materials that reflected a particular culture. Thus, group A had exposure to target culture texts, group B had exposure to international culture texts, group C had exposure to source culture texts, and participants in group D had only exposure to culture-free texts. Then, the four groups took a listening comprehension test, which included sample authentic listening comprehension materials, as a post-test which was the same as pre-test to see whether or not there were changes regarding their listening proficiency. The results of the post-test showed that the four groups performed differently on the post-test, which was indicative of the fact that greater familiarity to specific culturally-oriented listening materials promoted the Iranian EFL learners' listening proficiency.

The significance of learning and teaching culture as an inseparable part of language is pointed out by Abdollahi-Guilani (2011). This study justifies the importance of including culture in the language teaching programs because familiarity with the cultural features of the target language helps the learners to modify their attitude toward other cultures. According to this study, it is important to connect language and culture especially in teaching vocabulary. This is because some words have different connotations from culture to culture. For example, having dates in some cultures is a taboo, while in many other cultures it is something usual. So knowing the customs and the vocabulary related to the events can make language learning easier. Therefore, it is necessary for a language learner to see how people actually use the language. According to the results, acknowledging that there are cultural differences, helps students understand that not only linguistic knowledge but also cultural information is helpful for successful communication.

Karabinar (2012) has questioned the attitudes of language teachers at Turkish universities towards teaching culture. This study investigated the effects of teacher-related variables on their perception of culture teaching. A survey called "Survey of Teaching Culture in EFL Classes" was administered to 155 preparatory school ELT instructors.
According to the findings of the study, the topic that is mainly given priority in teaching culture is tangible products of culture such as foods, dresses, types of dwelling and toys. It also showed that the most strongly supported reason for including culture in FL classrooms is because knowledge of culture is important in a communication and it prevents cultural misunderstanding. The second supported reason is that studying culture engages students and motivates them to study the language and retain what they learn.

As this review has demonstrated, there are a lot of interesting and challenging works going on about culture learning. All in all, considering the aforementioned studies, this paper addresses the following research questions:

Does target culture-learning have any effects on the language learners' listening performance?

Do the target culture-free texts have any effect on the language learners' listening performance?

Based on the above research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated in this study:

1. Target-culture-learning has no effect on language learners' listening performance.
2. There is no significant difference between the listening ability of the two groups in the target culture-free test.

2.1 Statement of the problem

Without knowing cultural aspects of the target language, students may have problems in understanding the language in context. Culturally familiar contexts do facilitate the second language learning. It is the aim of many EFL students in Iran to listen to different taped materials, listening to English radio programs, watching English movies, etc. However, despite their appeal to different means, they might not gain as much as they desire.

The researcher's experience as an English teacher who has been teaching in Iranian language institutes for seven years has shown that some English textbooks are not culturally well-defined, and most students are not proficient enough to communicate in a foreign language. Despite the fact that they study English for some years, they don't have the capacity for listening performance in a foreign language. Most of the students are not exposed to target culture and this could lead to problems faced by learners in processing the listening input. It is partly due to the textbooks used in some institutes, since they lack cultural categories of the foreign language. So these students cannot overcome the challenge of cultural unfamiliarity when performing in a foreign language. Students frequently face this problem because they have to listen to the topics that may contain new or unfamiliar words. Lack of socio-cultural
knowledge of the target language can be an obstacle to comprehension for the students, even if they are aware of lexical and semantic features of the language.

2.2 Significance of the study
Since language is acquired and transmitted culturally, we cannot hope to teach English without having an understanding of cultural knowledge. Steffensen (1979) demonstrated that when students are familiar with cultural norms, they make a better interpretation of the text than when they are not. Further, in cases of unfamiliar culture norms, students tend to refer to their own culture properties, which results in poor interpretation of the text. The issue of teaching culture in foreign language contexts is becoming increasingly significant without which they can only get the literal meaning. The less the background knowledge, the more difficult it is for learners to understand the language. So it is worth exploring the relationship between culture and language learning specifically listening comprehension of Iranian students learning English as a foreign language.

3. Methodology
3.1 Participants
The participants of this study were selected among a population of 65 students on the basis of the results of an actual TOEFL test. To select the homogeneous subjects, the researcher administered an actual TOEFL test to determine the subjects' listening comprehension proficiency. They included two groups. The first group consisted of 20 female Iranian EFL students within the age range of 20-28 who enrolled at Zaban Sara Institute of Bushehr, Iran. They had learnt English through different books written by the well-known applied linguist, Jack C. Richards for about 2 years. Since the books are heavily culturally-oriented, language learners were familiar with cultural values of English. The second group consisted of 15 female Iranian EFL students within the age range of 19-26 who enrolled at Iran Language Institute in Bushehr. They had learnt English through different books which are culture free and published by Iran Language Institute. Thus, they were not much familiar with English culture.

3.2 Materials
The materials of this study consisted of two kinds of English books. The first one was the New Interchange Series Book 3 by Jack. C. Richards which contains cultural aspects related to English such as holidays, customs, entertainment, celebrations and
festivals, etc. The other one was the ILI English Series Book High Intermediate 3 published by Iran Language Institute which is almost free from American cultural values. The readability of both textbooks have been evaluated based on the Gunning-FOG formula. According to this formula, the readability of the ILI and the Interchange books were 10.6 and 9.32 respectively. Thus, they proved to be at the same level.

3.3 Instruments
The instruments which are used in this study include three data collection instruments in gathering information on students’ knowledge of English culture. The two groups became homogenous by administering the listening section of an actual TOEFL. This test was applied to identify the English knowledge of the participants. Then, two parallel heavily culturally-loaded tests of listening comprehension consisting of 50 items were prepared and administered to them. After that, the two groups received another listening test consisting of 30 items which was culture-free. The tests were piloted before administering to the participants to detect any unforeseen problems and to collect data to test the reliability and validity of the instruments.

3.4 Data collection and Data analysis
The data gathered on the culturally-loaded test was used to elicit the cultural differences between two groups and it was an analysis of foreign culture competences of those who were familiar with foreign culture and then arriving at some conclusions such as lack of ability in listening performances across cultures for those who were not familiar with foreign culture. In addition to descriptive analysis, measures such as, means, standard deviation, and percentages, an independent sample t-test was also run to explore the possible differences between culture learning and listening ability of the learners. The results of the second test determined both groups' listening comprehension ability in culture-free tests. All the statistical procedures were conducted by SPSS software. After gathering the required data and in order to see the possible differences between the performance of the two groups in listening comprehension test, one independent t-test was run. In addition, in order to see both groups' listening ability another t-test was run.

4. Results and Discussion
As mentioned before, in order to identify the English knowledge of the participants a proficiency test (TOEFL) was administered to the participants. The first table shows the descriptive statistics of the participants' scores on the proficiency test.

**Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics of the proficiency test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Institute</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Std. Error of Mean</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zaban Sara</td>
<td>16.7500</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.61815</td>
<td>335.00</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>.36183</td>
<td>19.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILI</td>
<td>16.3333</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.44749</td>
<td>245.00</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>.37374</td>
<td>19.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16.5714</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1.53940</td>
<td>580.00</td>
<td>14.00</td>
<td>.26021</td>
<td>19.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from Table 4.1, the mean of the first group (M=16.75) in this test is a bit higher than the mean of the second group (M=16.33) but the difference is not remarkable. The standard deviations also do not show any great diversity in the distribution of the scores of the two groups. So, according to the results of the proficiency test they were at the same level of proficiency. Having done the required calculations on TOEFL scores of the subjects, the researcher administered the culturally-loaded test to the participants of the two groups to see any possible difference in their performance. Table 4.2 reveals the descriptive statistics of the two groups on the first test which was culture-oriented.

**Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics of the culturally-loaded test for the two groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culturally loaded test, 50 scores</th>
<th>Language Institute</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error of Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zaban Sara</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40.2000</td>
<td>2.14231</td>
<td>.47903</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILI</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.9333</td>
<td>4.55861</td>
<td>1.17703</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the results, the mean of the scores obtained from the administration of this test is 40.20 and the standard deviation is 2.14, for the first group. As is observed, the mean of the scores of the second group for this test is 22.93, which is highly different from the first group. And the standard deviation is 4.55, which shows great diversity in the distribution of the scores. Table 4.2 clearly indicates that the means of the two groups are different and as can be seen in this table, the mean score of the first group is higher than the second group. It is depicted that the first group who were familiar with the target culture outperformed the second group who were not familiar with the target culture.

In order to visually show the findings of Table 4.2, there is a line graph below.
Figure 4.1 *culturally-loaded test*

As illustrated in figure 4.1, the blue line stands for the first group (Zaban Sara), which is higher in scores than the red line that shows the scores of the second group (ILI). It can be seen from figure 4.1, that the minimum score of the participants of the first group is 37 and the maximum score is 44. But the minimum score of the participants of the second group is 16 and the maximum score is 32. So, there is a great difference between the performance of the two groups in listening comprehension of the culturally-loaded test.

As for the purpose of the study, we wanted to seek the effect of culture-learning on the performance of the two groups in the listening comprehension test. So, the statistical t-test was run to make sure that the difference in the mean scores of the two groups in the listening comprehension test was statistically significant. The results are shown in Table 4.3 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>culturally loaded test 1, 50 scores</td>
<td>14.934</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>17.26667</td>
<td>1.15622</td>
<td>14.91433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from the table above, the results of the t-test indicated that the performance of the first group differed significantly ($P = 0.00$) from the second group. ($M = 40.26, SD = 2.14$) ($M = 22.93, SD = 4.56$); $t$ (33) = 14.93, $P = 005$. In other words, it can be claimed that the participants of the first group who were familiar with the target culture did better on the culturally-loaded test than the second group who were not familiar with the target culture. Therefore, the first null hypothesis of the study which stated that "culture-learning has no effect on language learners' listening
performance" can safely be rejected and it can be said that there is a significant difference between the performance of the two groups in the culturally-loaded listening comprehension test. This shows that subjects in the first group performed better in the culturally-loaded test than the second group.

After that, to examine the subjects' listening ability and to see if the two groups performed statistically different or not in the listening comprehension test, disregarding their cultural familiarity, another listening test which was culture-free was administered to both groups. The descriptive statistics are shown in table 4.4. According to this table, the mean score of the first group is 24.75, and the mean score of the second group is 24.20. And the standard deviations also do not show any great diversity in the distribution of the scores of the two groups (1.55 and 1.89).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Institute</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Std. Error of Mean</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zaban Sara</td>
<td>24.7500</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.55174</td>
<td>495.00</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>.34698</td>
<td>27.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILI</td>
<td>24.2000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1.89737</td>
<td>363.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>.48990</td>
<td>27.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24.5143</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1.70417</td>
<td>858.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>.28806</td>
<td>27.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is also another line graph (4.2) for the performance of the two groups on the second test which was culture free.

As illustrated in the graph the minimum score of the participants of the two groups is 20 and the maximum score is 27. So, they are not significantly different in their performance in the culture-free test.

In order to find out whether or not this difference is statistically significant, another t-test was employed. Table 4.5 shows the results of this t-test.
Table 4.5 Independent sample t-test of the culture-free test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>culture free test 2,</td>
<td>.943</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By looking at this table, it can be seen that the second null hypothesis, "There is no significant difference between the listening ability of the two groups in the culture-free test" was verified: Zaban Sara students (M = 24.75, SD = 1.55) and ILI students (M = 24.20, SD = 1.89), t (33) = 0.94, P = 0.35. Therefore, low scores of the second group (on the first test), were not due to their listening comprehension ability; rather, lack of culture familiarity was the reason. The listeners who listened to the culturally-oriented texts did not have to deal with unfamiliar terms in the texts and this resulted in better comprehension.

Based on the results, a significant difference was observed on the listening performance of the two groups and it can be stated that culture familiarity has a positive impact on the listening comprehension of the learners. As it was discussed in the preceding part of the study, culture and language learning are linked together and cannot be separated and teaching culture to EFL learners is unavoidable.

The findings of the study show that the first group who were familiar with cultural values of the target language had a better performance in their listening comprehension, as compared with the other group who were not, and this better performance in the listening comprehension tests seems to be the result of the culture familiarity of the target language. This familiarity enabled the students in the first group to successfully identify the cultural elements of the listening test. This ability facilitated their understanding of the text which explains why they performed significantly better in the culturally-loaded test. All these findings, confirm the significant effect of culture familiarity on language learners' listening comprehension performance.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Findings
As mentioned earlier, the role of culture learning in the foreign language classrooms has been the main concern of the current study. Based on the results obtained, it was observed that having cultural information had a positive effect on learners' performance in comprehending the listening test and having cultural background can boost their listening comprehension. Cultural familiarization has a significant effect on listening comprehension and this familiarity enabled the students to successfully comprehend and identify the details of the listening test. This ability facilitated their understanding and, therefore, they performed significantly better than the second group.

According to what is mentioned about the effective role of culture, the findings of the current study are in line with studies of Markham & Latham (1987), Chiang and Dunkel (1992), and Schmidt-Rinehart (1994), since they all claimed that background knowledge and topic familiarity would improve students' performance in listening comprehension and topic familiarity facilitates listening comprehension. All in all, the findings of the study showed that the first group had a better performance in comparison to the second group in their listening comprehension and this better performance seemed to be the result of the cultural familiarity that the students obtained during their learning English. So, the participants in the second group could improve their listening comprehension through having greater exposure to target culture texts as one kind of specific culturally-oriented materials.

By way of conclusion, the main purpose of this study is that culture teaching should become an integral part of the foreign language curriculum. It seems important and necessary to incorporate culture into an EFL curriculum with a view to increasing the cultural awareness. Such a cultural awareness can develop students' understanding of the target culture and, therefore, develop their tolerance for those whose attitudes and values are different from theirs.

5.2 Applications and implications

Having background knowledge is a key feature of any kind of listening material, so language learners wanting to improve their listening comprehension should have greater exposure to target culture materials. Through greater exposure to specific culturally-oriented materials, language learners can improve their listening comprehension. The findings of the study underlined the importance of inclusion of culture in EFL contexts. Therefore, one implication of this study is that teachers should go beyond dealing with the linguistic
information and pay more attention to the cultural information. Learners need to get acquainted with different aspects of the new language like culture. Bex (1994) suggests that “Awareness of cultural diversity can be introduced into the classroom gradually, first by developing the pupils’ perceptions of the grosser differences between their own culture and that of the target language, and then by comparing linguistic variation within their own culture with linguistic variation within the target culture” (p. 60). Incorporating the target culture in the language curriculum seemed to be a component of language learning and it develops the communicative competence as well as other skills of language learning. So intercultural activities must be given the same importance in the curriculum as well as other language activities.

5.3 Suggestions for further research
Since this study was narrowed down in terms of its participants, genre, age, etc., it seems necessary to point out some further research to be done in this regard:
1. Considering the fact that this study was limited to only 35 participants, it is suggested that similar studies be conducted with more students.
2. More studies could be done to investigate the effect of culture on other skills, since this study investigated the effect of culture on listening skill.
3. This study was conducted with female learners of English. Similar research could be done with male participants to find out if there is any different result in the findings.
4. The need is felt to carry out similar experiments to investigate whether the effect of culture varies among different age groups.
5. As the materials of the study included Interchange Series, as a heavily culturally-loaded textbook, other sources or textbooks which are culturally-loaded are recommended for further studies.

References


Title

The Effect of Transcript-aided Listening Tasks on Intermediate Iranian EFL Learners’ Listening Comprehension

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Abstract

This research endeavors to probe into a kind of precise research over the effect of transcript and non-transcript based listening tasks on Iranian intermediate EFL learners’ listening comprehension. This research involves 30 male students who were selected from the learners in two English institutes in Shabestar and Tabriz. Their proficiency level was determined by a standard test, namely Cambridge University Placement Test (2005). In this quasi-experimental research, a proficiency test was used to make sure that the students in the two groups were homogenous and that they were at the same level. Having determined a homogeneous research group, students are divided into two groups (control and experimental). The Control group was asked to listen to listening comprehension taken from ESL-lab listening web site without transcript. While experimental group was asked to listen to the same listening drills with transcript. Then, they were also asked to write a summary of listening task on a separate sheet of paper. Student’s summaries were gathered. Subsequently, students answered the same
multiple-choice questions about the listening task. Having done a test, results are compared to show the effect of transcript and non-transcript based listening tasks on Iranian EFL learners’ listening comprehension. The result of this study is expected to be useful to English language teaching methods, making them be much more effective in improving learners’ language proficiency, especially in situational contexts such as Iran in which EFL learners lack a great deal of oral interaction in English.

**Keywords:** Transcript-aided listening task. Listening Comprehension

### 1. Introduction

The importance of listening comprehension is something worthwhile to consider. Although listening is now well identified as an important dimension in language learning, it still remains one of the least understood processes. Until recently, listening comprehension attracted little attention in terms of both theory and practice, while the other language skills (i.e. reading, writing, and speaking) receive direct instructional attention (as cited Osada, 2004, p.36).

According to Field (2008), the teaching of listening skills is still neglected in the English language teaching process. EFL learners have serious problems dealing with English listening comprehension due to the fact that universities and schools pay more attention to English grammar, reading and vocabulary. Listening and speaking skills are not important parts of many course books or curricula and teachers do not seem to pay attention to these skills while designing their lessons. Thus, the importance of listening in classroom instruction has been less emphasized than reading and writing.

Mendelsohn (1984) states that “listening plays an important role in communication as it is said that, of the total time spent on communicating, listening takes up 40-50%; speaking, 25-30%; reading, 11-16%; and writing about 9%. The teaching of listening comprehension has long been somewhat neglected and poorly taught aspect of English in many EFL programs” (p.9).

It is a standard practice nowadays for language teachers to provide sessions that focus on a particular skill such as listening. There is a wide choice of listening materials available with accompanying CDs, and DVD or video which are used in many ELT classrooms. Nevertheless, there is still plenty of evidence that listening is undervalued. When there is
pressure on contact hours, it is often the listening session that is cut. Students are rarely assessed on their listening skills, and the problems of many weak listeners pass undiagnosed. Consequently, in this research researcher does its best to have a close look the effect of transcript –aided and non-transcript aided listening tasks on intermediate Iranian EFL learners’ listening comprehension.

1.1 Research Question

Is there any difference between listening task with and without transcript in terms of improving learner’s comprehension?

2. Review of the Related Literature

The use of English as a foreign language teaching (FLT) has been receiving attention in Iran throughout the last four decades. The significant step in the development of ELT is understanding how using English as a foreign language takes place, can facilitate ELT practice in various contexts. According to Richards (2001), history of language teaching has been characterized by a search for effective ways of teaching second or foreign language. Debates within teaching have often centered on issues such as

a) The role of grammar in the language curriculum
b) The development of accuracy and fluency in teaching
c) The role of vocabulary in language learning
d) Teaching productive and receptive skills
e) Learning theories and their application in teaching
f) Memorization and learning
g) Motivating learners
h) Effective learning strategies
j) Techniques for teaching the four skills
k) The role of materials and technology.

According to Willis (1996) Task-based language grows out of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Crooks and Gass (1993) claim that TBLT is mainly used in two areas: “first, as an aspect of the research methodology used in studies of second language acquisition (SLA) from the beginning of the 1980s, and second, as a concept used in second language curriculum design from the middle of the 1980s” (p.1).

Ellis (2003) asserts that, tasks can be interactive or non-interactive. That these relatively refer to as reciprocal or non-reciprocal. Non-reciprocal tasks correspond to what is generally
understood as listening task. In other words, learners listen to a text without any occasion to interact. Reciprocal tasks are task that require a two-way flow of information between a speaker and a listener.

Grgurovic and Hegelheimer (2007) design an empirical study to provide evidence about whether subtitles or transcripts are more effective in providing modified input to learners. A multimedia listening activity containing a video of an academic lecture was designed to offer help in the form of target language subtitles and lecture transcripts in cases of comprehension breakdowns. Eighteen intermediate ESL students enrolled in an academic listening class at a research university participated in the study. Two tests and questionnaires in addition to screen recording were used to analyze students’ performance on the activity and their use of help. The result indicated that participants interacted with the subtitles more frequently and for longer periods of time than with the transcript. Also, the study indicated four patterns of learning.

Neuman and Koskinen (1992) investigated whether comprehensible input via captioned television influenced acquisition of science vocabulary and concepts. The participants were children in immersion programs and the video material was of science lessons. They picked out 90 of the most difficult words from these video lessons as target words, 10 for each week. Participants were assigned to one of four treatment groups: captioned TV, TV without captions, reading along and listening to the sound track and reading only.

3. Method
3.1. Design of the study
In this quasi-experimental research, a proficiency test was used to make sure that the students in the two groups were homogenous and that they were at the same level. After implementing the proficiency test, students were divided into two groups. Students in experimental group were asked to listen to nine listening drills taken from ESL-lab listening web site with transcript while students in control group are asked to listen to the same listening drills without transcript. After that, researcher took away the transcript. Then they were also asked write summary to eliminate the memory effect. Then, students answer the same multiple-choice question about listening task. Having done the t-test, results from both groups were compared together to show using independent a sample t-test in order to examine hypothetical effect on listening comprehension.

3.2. Participants
This research involved 30 male students (within the age range of 16-19) who were selected from in two English institutes in Shabestar and Tabriz (i.e. Iran National Language Institute and International Language Institute). Their mother tongue was Azerbijani. All of the students were studying at high school. There wasn’t a big age difference between the students. Their proficiency level was determined by a standard test, namely Cambridge University Placement Test (2005). All the students involved in the research were taking intermediate level courses in their corresponding institute.

3.3. Materials

For the purpose of homogenizing, a standard placement test by Cambridge University (2005) was administrated as a proficiency test which Included 70 multiple-choices questions listening (20 question) reading (20 question), and language use (30 question). It was administrated and those who scored 24-49 were selected as the participants of the study as the intermediate level.

Transcript listening test was consisted of nine listening passage and 45 multiple-choice questions (five questions for each passage) and that lasted 45 minute.

3.4. Procedures

This study took two weeks to completed and concentrated on 6 class sessions. The data collection had to be made by accidental sampling because it was not possible to do a randomization. Although all participants were at the intermediate level, before the listening comprehensions tested, a standard placement test of Cambridge University (2005) was administrated as a proficiency test. The test included 70 multiple-choices questions, listening (20 questions) reading (20 question), and language use (30 questions). It was administrated and those who scored 24-49 were selected as the participants of the study. The class was chosen as experimental and the other as the control group based on a random decision.

Students in the experimental group (15 students’ in Iran National Language Institute) are asked to listen to listening comprehension taken from ESL-lab listening web site with transcript. Because it was very important for researcher to clearly understand whether the students had understood listening passage, each tape was played twice. After the second playing, they wrote what they could remember. Then, they were also asked to write a summary of the task. Student’s summarizing was provided for them on a separate piece of paper. After wards, the participants’ responses to multiple-choice questions about listening task were obtained, which consisted of nine listening passage and 45 multiple-choice questions (five questions for each passage) and that lasted 45 minute. Unlike the experimental group, students in control group (15 students in International Language Institute) were asked...
to listen to the same listening task without transcript. Then, they were also asked write a summary of listening task on a separate sheet of paper. Student’s summaries were gathered. Subsequently, students answered the same multiple-choice question about the listening task. Since the control and experimental groups were equal in size, an independent t-test was used to get a total mean of listening proficiency in both experimental and controlling groups. Having done the t-test, results from both groups were compared together to show the effect of transcript based and non-transcript based listening on Iranian EFL learners’ listening comprehension.

4. Data Analysis and Results

To select learners with the same level of knowledge from among students of the institute, a standard placement test of Cambridge university (2005) was used as a proficiency test; and conducted by the researcher to find out how much homogeneous the classes are. Therefore, 30 students’ high school (age 16-19) was chosen. Moreover, the mentioned test includes 70 multiple-choices questions, listening, reading, and language use that the researcher used. In order to be in the intermediate level, the range of the scores in all the two groups should be 24-49. Consequently, after administrating and evaluating the test, each group's mean scores were separately calculated.

Table 4.1. Presents the descriptive statistics for homogeneity in two groups and it makes obvious that all the participants are homogeneous and distributed well.

Table 4.1. Descriptive statistics of control and experimental groups' homogeneity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>group</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>control</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>49.969</td>
<td>9.41356</td>
<td>2.43057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>48.376</td>
<td>9.53425</td>
<td>2.46173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1. Demonstrated the homogeneity of all the two groups. The results were expressed as mean ± SD (N=30). According to the descriptive findings of the quasi-experimental, the first variable was the control group of the learners that mean was archived 49.99 and standard deviation 9.41

The second variable is experimental of the participants that mean is archived 48.37 and standard deviation is 9.53

As it was clearly shown in table 4.2. the difference between the mean scores of control and experimental groups were not significant.
Also, as we discussed earlier, this table shows that the range of scores were between 24-49 in a 70 item placement test, so the mean of the scores emphasize that groups were in the correct order and they have been distributed well.

Also, as mentioned before, all the learners were in the intermediate level and participants were homogeneous.

4.3. Descriptive Statistics for the Research Question

The results of the descriptive statistics for listening comprehension in two groups during the six sessions of the study are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Descriptive statistics of listening comprehension in control and experimental group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35.4074</td>
<td>4.55936</td>
<td>1.17722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60.8889</td>
<td>6.10317</td>
<td>1.57583</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2. Categorized mean and standard deviation of control and experimental groups’ in listening comprehension. With a glance at the mean scores of two groups, we found that means of two groups were difference significant from each other.

It was obvious that learners in experimental group have varied mean and standard deviations. So, as it is shown, experimental groups mean was achieved as 60.88 and standard deviation as 6.10, and control group’s mean was 35.40 with standard deviation of 4.55 in listening comprehension’s questions.

Table 4.3. Independent sample t-test for control and experimental group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learners test for equity of variance</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variance of assumed</td>
<td>1.372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variance not of assumed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.4 clearly demonstrates the major differences between the mean of two groups of Control and experimental.

So the results and finding were shown in the following tables and figures. In each table and figures the scores of control and experimental groups are shown and compared with each other.

First of all a descriptive statics showed the mean scores, standard deviation and standard error.

Then an independent sample test showed the result of t-test and finally the figure showed the mean score of the control and experimental group.

The experimental group outperformed control group (that is mean scores 60.88 vs. 35.44). Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected.

5. Conclusion

As stated before, the main focus of the study was to find out whether transcribing-aided listening task affects the listening comprehension improvement or not. As other scholars also believed, finding of the study was that transcript improves listening comprehension and ability of learners to recall information. Therefore, in teaching of listening, there is a need to combine the development of listening ability with the development of other skills such as reading. By such activity students will learn to combine the act of listening with reading.

Guo and Wills (2006) stated the ability to guess the meaning of words is also an important listening micro skill. Listening comprehension does not mean understanding every word, but some words do play a crucial part in listening comprehension. It is a normal phenomenon not to understand every word that is uttered. However, students may guess the meaning of new words on the basis of the topic being discussed and gain some understanding of the probable linguistic items on the basis of the context of discourses, the grammatical structure and the background knowledge of the topic.
In academic contexts, reading is considered the dominant means for learning new information and gaining access to alternative explanations and interpretations. Additionally, reading plays a primary role in independent learning whether the goal is performing better on academic tasks, learning more about a subject matter, or improving language abilities (Grabe & Stoller, 2001).

Harmer (2001) argued that extensive reading had a number of benefits for the development of language skills, and that the effects of extensive reading are echoed by the effects of extensive Listening: “The more students listen, the more language they acquire, and the better they get at listening activities in general” (p. 204).

As mentioned above, because the reading comprehension is priority to the other skills in Iranian educational system. The learners were encouraged to learn more listening comprehension with text. So, the learners decided to use listening comprehension with reading comprehension learning.

5.1. Pedagogical implications
The result of this study applied to English language teaching methods, making them be much more effective in improving learners’ language proficiency, especially in situational context such as Iran in which EFL learners lack a great deal of oral interaction in a foreign language like English. This study provided data that reflects the essentials needs of our classrooms. The results provided can be of help to institution language teachers. Listening comprehension has been neglected in research and practice quite recently. Therefore, it is of absolute importance to introduce to students that listening comprehension is one of the four skill learning in comprising interaction with other skill. Learners must comprehended the text as they listen to it, retain the information in memory, integrate it with what follows, and continually adjust their understanding of what they hear in the light of prior knowledge and incoming information. It was very common in control group that some of the student give up question listening comprehension when encounter with unfamiliar word. But the other group participant generally shoved motivate positive when they received transcript. This research applied in intermediate level because researcher thought that binger hadn’t background knowledge about listening comprehensions.

5.2. Limitations of the study
Obviously, no research study seems to be perfect and without any limitations, and this study is not an exception and it has its own limitations that need to be acknowledged. As in all classroom studies, there are inevitable limitations.
Results of this study are applicable to just intermediate level of English language learning classrooms since all the research data have been collected through intermediate level Therefore; we cannot generalize the findings to beginners or advanced students in second or foreign language study.

Results of this study are applicable to just foreign English language learners since participants in it are not English native speakers.

This research is done on the base of 30 participants that the all participants of the study were male. The more participants are involved, the more applicable are the results. The homogeneous group may not be accurate since giving other proficiency tests may leads to somehow different results.

Results of the study are just applicable to young EFL learners since all the participants employed are with age range 15–19.

The authenticity of the listening text and audio text used in this study are a concern. Because they are taken from ESL-lab listening web site, therefore they might lack authenticity.

This research was better to conducted in the laboratory, because all the students were equipped with individual headsets to listen to listening drills.

In this study, the researcher could also explain about strategies and listening task, because that was unclear for students.

5.3. Suggestions for Further Research

In the future it is better for researchers to use strategies of listening comprehension in promoting E2 learners listening comprehension. This study is limited in intermediate level students, in the future it is better to use advanced levels. And it can be recommended that in further researches, other researchers investigate at university classes. Also because of some problems, the researcher was not able to ask for the participation of females in this research, however, it is suggested that females can also be included in the further studies.

References


Title

Islamic Azad University Entrance Examination of Master Program in TEFL: an Analysis of its Reliability of the General English section

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Abstract

The M.A. Entrance Examination of TEFL held at Islamic Azad University (IAU) has never been scrutinized in terms of its reliability. To this path, the study reported to estimate the reliability of the General English Section of this test administered to the M.A. candidates sitting in 2011 exam of IAU. In so doing, 30 male and female student of B.A program of English translation at IAU (Khorasgan Branch) participated in this study voluntarily. In collecting the data to investigate the reliability of the exam, Consent Form of Participation, Testing Questionnaire, and General English Questions of Entrance Examination of TEFL of IAU were used. The method of investigating reliability was based on split-half. To report the reliability results, the papers were corrected based on negative score formula. Later, the reliability was established by Spearman-Brown prophecy.
formula. In interpreting reliability, IF and choice distribution were also used. The results showed that in spite of the existence of the high reliability in the whole test, R in this test is under question.

**Keywords**: Reliability, Entrance Examination, Islamic Azad University, General English

### 1. Introduction

Entrance Examination (EE) as an important aspect of today’s educational system needs to be considered in various issues including testing principles. The necessity of entrance exam is increasing day to day to make the process of admission more transparent, especially in some type of universities in Iran. The exam qualify only those students who will manage to pass it on with high grades, and this admission procedure is based on norm-referenced testing in which the norm of getting accepted is achieving a higher score. As experts in the field of language testing have always recommended the candidates; it is of paramount importance to be aware of questions, syllabuses, pattern, mode and nature of exam. The eligibility task in such exams is easy. It is enough to make right choice of questions and to avoid the negative marking.

Even though many studies have been conducted on the testing issues of entrance examinations in Iran, no study has mentioned the probable problems of the IAUEE (especially in TEFL). The research studies done in the past twenty years or so indicate that the shortcomings of university entrance examination in Iran are abundant. In this regard, the investigations of Yarmohammadi in (1986) in which he mentioned that the problems of the entrance examination in state universities in Iran are huge can be referred. Also, Farhadi in (1985) analyzed the exams of 1983 to 1985 and found little correspondence between the manner the materials are taught to the students and the manner students are tested on them.

### 2. Background

Based on a research paper by Hitotuzi in (2005), Amazonas Entrance Examination was analyzed for its reliability. The participants were two groups of secondary school students each consisting of 45 people. The method of investigating reliability of this entrance examination was based on test retest method. The results proved that it was neither reliable nor valid. In other words, the English test was considered disposed of basic requirement to be qualified as a series test of English. The results also showed that Amazonian students cannot
achieve an intermediate level of proficiency in English after having studied this subject for fourteen terms at state and private schools.

Fernández in (2005), in a research paper investigated the reliability and validity of the entrance examination in Spain. He item analysed the exam and found out that the exam lacks content validity because it does not include a representative sample of what it supposedly intends to measure. Regarding the Reliability of the exam, the composition makes the main source of unreliability because of its subjective marking. Also the importance of inter-rater reliability in this exam is denied because only one scorer makes the scoring procedure possible. The scorers are neither constantly trained, nor there is any constructed scoring key. The researcher also stated that the exam does not measure students’ abilities in a truthful way and the exam must be changed.

Ito in (2005), in a study investigated reliability and validity of the English test in a Japanese nationwide university. He first examined the reliability and concurrent validity of the JFSAT-English test. The reliability was acceptable. Examination of the correlation matrix indicated that the paper-pencil pronunciation test had low validity with almost no significant contribution to the total test score. It is argued that though the JFSAT-English test can work as a reliable and somewhat valid measure of English language ability, the paper-pencil pronunciation test should be eliminated and a listening comprehension test might be included as one of the subtests in the JFSAT-English test. The other subtests, however, showed satisfactory validity.

In a research study by Madandar Arani (2012), the problems of the assessment system in Iran were investigated. Madandar (2012) has stated that the assessment system in Iran is with serious problems. In his research paper it is stated that some researchers believe that the lack of awareness and understanding of the detrimental effects of traditional exams, the severe lack of teachers’ specialized knowledge of modern assessment approaches, and the lack of sufficient awareness of global innovations and experiences are of the most important obstacles to the reformation of the assessment system in Iran (Ahmadi, 2004; Ghosgolk, 2005).

Based on the reports of ministry of education in (2008), the tests of 1995 to 1999 have actually limited the teaching learning process. Also, some researchers have shown that excessive emphasis in this system on the final score has caused damage to the students’ creativity as well as lack of exposure to higher cognitive skills (pormohammadi, 2008; Kakia & Almasi, 2008).
Farhadi (2009), in another study researched the language assessment policy in Iran. He stated that the experienced teachers write parallel tests for each subject matter area including the foreign language each year. Regarding the strategies of investigating in the exam, it is stated that the only strategy that ministry of education applies to improve the quality of the exam is to analyze test items after their administration. Regarding these procedures, this should be mentioned that there is no written report available.

In Khoii’s study in (1998), regarding the qualitative and quantitative evaluation of English subtests by using Rasch model; he proved that there is no satisfactory result in reliability and validity of state university entrance examinations.

Fazilatfar (2010), in a study investigated the validation and justification of Iranian TEFL M.A. entrance examination. He stated that the exam is suffering from deficiencies in reliability and validity, since the exam is too long and it has memory-based or trivial items. He attempted to design a new test and calculate its reliability and validity to be used interchangeably with the previous exam. The results proved that the new exam also didn’t have a satisfactory reliability and validity. To reach this aim, he item analysed the questions.

2.1. What is Reliability?
In general, test reliability is defined as the extent to which the results can be considered consistent or stable. As a matter of case, imagine an English language teacher who administers a placement test of vocabulary on one occasion. If the test is reliable, there mustn’t be any significant change in students’ performances if the test is to be administered 15 days later (or in an acceptable interval).

Mousavi (1999) has defined reliability as: “a quality of test scores which refers to the consistency of measures across different times, test forms, raters, and other characteristics of the measurement context” (p.323). As definitions indicate, reliability means stability. How stable the results of student’s performances are? If one test is administered now under standard conditions, and again two weeks later, can it prove the same results from the same population? Although some sources of variance are acceptable. Mousavi (1999) has named the synonyms of “reliability as dependability, stability, consistency, predictability, and accuracy” (p.323).

Bachman (1990) states, reliability is a quality of test scores and a perfectly reliable score is the one which is free from errors of measurement. In other word, as Mousavi (1999) confirms “reliability has to do with accuracy of measurement” (p. 324).

Testers most often use internal consistency strategies to estimate the internal-consistency reliability. “Internal consistency reliability strategies estimate the consistency of
a test using only information internal to a test, that is available in one administration of a single test” (Brown, 2008). Internal consistency as Bachman (1990) stated is concerned with how consistent test taker’s performances is on different parts of the test with each other. According to Farhadi (2003), “the idea behind split half method is deeply rooted in parallel form assumption; of course, not parallel forms of two different tests, but, parallel forms of the items in the same test”.

“Of the three basic reliability strategies, test-retest reliability is the one most appropriate for estimating the stability of a test over time” (Brown, 2008, p.175). As its names indicate a test will be administered twice. It’s concluding that test-retest reliability is an approach of calculating reliability with (A) two test administrations (B) time interval between administrations (C) the same target population in each administration. In test-retest definition time interval is important because it can change exams results. Brown (2008) mentions that “administering a test two times to the same group of students is not a very attractive proposition for the teachers or students-clearly a major drawback for this method” (p.176). Administering a test twice with exactly the same administrational procedures is not possible in reality. As is stated in different sources, test-retest is stated as the reliability obtained by administering the same test twice and correlating the scores. This type of reliability is not recommended in practice, however, because of its problems and limitations. It requires two administrations of the same test with the same group of individuals. This is expensive and not a good use of people’s time. If the time interval is short, people may be overly consistent because they remember some of the questions and their responses. If the interval is long, then the results are confounded with learning and maturation, that is, changes in persons themselves.

2.2. What is Item Facility?

As the name indicates, item facility deals with the question of how easy an item is. Based on Farhadi (2009), “one of the most important characteristics of a single item is its facility” (p.100). He concluded that item facility is defined as “the proportion of correct responses for every single item” (p.100). In this definition proportion means the division of all the correct responses to the total number of responses. “It is necessary to state that the items with facility indexes beyond .63 are too easy, while items with the facility indexes of below .37 are too difficult” (Farhadi, 2009). An important part in item facility is that the closer the index to the number 1 is, the easier the index would be. This definition shows that an item facility index of one indicates a perfectly easy item which is not useful in the test and doesn’t provide useful information about the examinee’s knowledge. An acceptable value for item facility is
the one between .40, and .60. Items that are too easy or too difficult must be deleted from the test, since these exams can’t provide enough information about the exam.

2.3. What is Choice distribution?
Choice distribution which deals with the distribution of choices is aimed at improving the test. Farhadi (2009) states that “choice distribution is used to improve the quality and quantity of a test” (p.105). Choice distribution refers to the question that how many times an alternative is selected by the examinees. It is choice distribution which helps the test developer to find out the effectiveness of the distracters. There are some issues with regards to choice distribution; if a particular distracter doesn’t attract the exam participants it must be changed or removed from the test. It is stated in Harris (1969), “the inspection of the performance of the distracters will sometimes show that a wrong answer attracted more high than low scorers” (p.107). Madsen (1983) said that “A distracter must be chosen by at least one or two examinees in a sample of 20 to 30 papers” (p.184).

2.4. The amount of Reliability
Most large scale tests report reliability that exceed 0.80 and often exceed 0.90. In tests used for special education placement, high school graduation, and professional certification, then the internal consistency reliability needs to be quite high at least above 0.90, preferably above 0.95. Misclassifications due to measurement error should be kept to a minimum. Classroom tests seldom need to have exceptionally high reliability coefficients. As more students master the content, test variability will go down and so will the coefficients from internal measures of reliability. Further, classroom tests don’t need exceptionally high reliability coefficients. Teachers see their students and the day and have opportunities to gather input from a variety of information sources. Teacher knowledge and judgment, used along with information from the test, provides superior information. If a test is not reliable or it is not accurate for an individual, teachers can and should make appropriate corrections. A reliability coefficient of 0.50 or 0.60 may suffice.

3. Method
3.1. Participants
In this research study, the population was IAU students of Bachelor program majoring in English Translation during the academic year of 2013.

From the accessible population, a volunteer sample of 30 Iranian university students (18 females and 12 males) majoring in English translation at Islamic Azad University,
(Khorasgan Branch) (IAUKB) during the academic year of 2013 responded to General English section of IAU Entrance Examination of Master Program in TEFL.

Most of the students were locals of Esfahan. The reason for selecting these students was based on availability. The criterion for being selected in this study was: (A) being a bachelor graduate student of English translation or, (B) student of semester five, six, seven, or eight. In countries, such as Iran and United Kingdom where master program is a postgraduate degree, admissions to a master’s program normally requires holding a bachelor degree. To this end, because this research study was for master candidates, they must have met the above mentioned criterion for selection.

Generally speaking, bachelor students of fifth till seventh or eighth semesters try to find information about the working opportunities, reading lists, and the good universities in their field. So, providing this exam at this time seems logical. To prove this saying, the researcher also discussed with different students of semester two, three, and four at bachelor program to see if they are interested in taking part in the exam. It was stated that we have such a long journey ahead; it’s too soon to decide. With regards to the gender difference in the exam, there is no confirmed research study regarding the effect of gender on reliability of the exam; however, the researcher tried to provide a semi- equal gender distribution for the study. By semi equal number of participants it’s meant a distribution of 18 female and 12 male participants. Table 1 summarizes the participants’ characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Student</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Mother Tongue</th>
<th>Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>22-45</td>
<td>Female:18 Male:12</td>
<td>Farsi</td>
<td>6 and 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To run this study, an entrance examination of M.A. of TEFL of Islamic Azad University must be hold. To reach this, a M.A. student who has already passed research and language testing courses at (IAUKB) and was familiar with the testing procedure, run the examination.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Consent Form of Participation

To reach the objectives of the study, creating a real exam environment was necessary. To this end, it was a must to prepare consent form of participation. The consent form was prepared based on the instructions of Mackey and Gass’s book entitled as second language research published in 2005. The reason for selecting theirs model was based on availability. The
consent form was distributed and the participants signed the agreement to participate in this exam. This section lasted 10 minutes.

3.2.2. Testing Questionnaire

Regarding the questionnaire, when volunteers sit for Entrance Examination of M.A. program of TEFL at IAU of Khorasgan Branch (TEFLEXAM), they will be given a questionnaire of 30 questions regarding the exam content, environment, satisfaction, and setting. Based on this section in the Entrance Exam, an open ended questionnaire for the participants to ask about their satisfaction, exam environment, and exam content was distributed. The exact questionnaire that was used at the entrance examination session could also be used, but as it was a multiple choice questionnaire, students may not choose to answer patiently, so an open ended version of that was used. The content and face validity of the questionnaires were also checked by desk of examinations at the university. Regarding the language of the questionnaire, because the main questionnaire provided at the entrance examination session was in Persian, this version was also provided in Persian.

3.2.3. General English Questions of Entrance Examination of TEFL of Islamic Azad University

The main research instrument that was used in this study was the questions of general English of Entrance Examination of TEFL of IAU. This section included 100 questions. The questions were categorized based on their topic. Section one, instruction which had two parts (part A, 23 questions, and part B, 17 questions). Section two, cloze passages; in which four cloze passages were included (each passage had five questions). Section three was a 20-question section made of vocabulary. And the last section which was the reading comprehension section had five reading passages.

3.3. Procedures

3.3.1. Data Collection Procedure

To collect the data, some meetings with professors of Bachelor program at IAUKB were arranged. From the population of professors (five professor with the courses of sixth and eighth semester), only two professors agreed to help during the data collection procedure. After the agreement, an introduction session regarding the timing, materials, aims /objectives of the program, and benefits of participation in the program was hold. The test was clearly defined and some notices were put on university board regarding the exam, venue, and registration. After two weeks, the exam was started at 10:00 am at Law’s Department of IAUKB. The exam lasted for 90 minutes because the real entrance examination of master program in TEFL is based on this timing. Students were not allowed to leave their seat till the
end of exam. They were notified to be seated within 20 minutes before the start of exam. A friend of researcher did all of the exam procedure as it is not advisable that the researcher herself run the data collocation section. The instructions were again clearly written on the board to avoid any misunderstanding. The materials to collect the data were a subjective questionnaire, and general English section of master entrance examination of TEFL of Islamic Azad University of the year 2011. The reason for selecting 2011’s exam was to avoid the probable test wise problem. It’s recommended to use last year questions for preparation purposes. In this way, participants may be aware of the questions. Students started marking the correct choices on their papers. They were asked to check mark the correct options on their papers. There was no answer sheet provided because the study was a volunteer research study, and some participants may choose to randomly check mark the answer sheets based on a pattern. Before taking the test, students were notified about the existence of negative score. At 11:30 am the test booklets were collected and there was no disserted booklet. At the end of the exam, the participants were given the subjective questionnaires to write about timing, light, suitability of testing environment, preparation, the reality of the exam, and test weaknesses. The students freely wrote about their opinions and were informed about the confidentiality of their responses and their scores. The questionnaires were analyzed by two raters. Many of the students (97 %), agreed about the suitable timing, date, environment, and lighting. Students were asked to write cell phone number to be texted about their scores. All the data collection procedure was in a single test administration which was for 90 minutes.

3.3.2. Data Analysis Procedure

As the students were promised to be notified about their results, the questionnaires were corrected by two raters. The questions were multiple choice questions and the correction task was not time consuming. The answers of the questions were based on a well-written book from Sad’s publication. The reason for choosing this source for the answers was based on its structure and truthfulness among the candidates of TEFL of IAU. Many teachers and bookshops advise to buy this reliable source. By reliable source, it means that the answers are the ones published by IAU’s test center. To avoid any mistake regarding the number of correct and wrong questions, each paper was corrected two times by two different scorer to see the inter rater reliability. Based on Experts’ opinion in the field, there was one question that didn’t have any correct answer; to solve this problem, the researcher talked with Sad’s publication regarding the problematic answer, they mentioned that it’s the published answer by testing center of IAU. During the scoring procedure, no mistake was observed. The data about the scores were tabulated, and each student was texted about his/her score. When the
text messages were delivered, some of them found that the results were face treating, and they asked me to keep them private; not to publish them for their professors. Many thank you messages regarding the usefulness of this exam were also received. In order to analysis the data for estimating the reliability of the whole exam, the split half reliability was applied. As was mentioned, the split half reliability is an approach to estimating the internal consistency of a test. Split half reliability has got different versions including odd and even method. In comparing and contrasting the advantages and disadvantages of using each version based on the research questions and objectives of the study, it was concluded to use odd and even method of splitting. Also this approach is particularly applicable to tests in which the items are designed to measure the same ability and to be independent of each other, such as typical multiple choice tests of grammar or vocabulary in which the items stand alone. To prove the truthfulness of the decision, three Experts’ in the field helped in the decision-making process.

In order to prepare the scores to be useful for the split half method, the exam was divided into odd and even sections. In odd section, there was a number of 50 questions starting from question number one and ending to question number 99. In even section, there were also a number of 50 questions which was started from question number two and was ended with question number 100. The questionnaires were corrected separately on each half to have one score for each half. Entrance examination of TEFL at IAU is a speed test which has got negative score effect. The negative score effect behaves like omitting one correct answer when facing with more than three wrong answers. To calculate the scores, the negative score formula which is as the following, was used.

\[
\text{Number of Correct Answers } \times 3 - \text{Number of Wrong Answers/ Total Number of Questions } \times 3 \times 100
\]

Feeding the scores to the formula, percents as the results were resulted. In order to prepare the data to run correlation and Spearman brown prophecy formula, the percents were changed to scores based on experts’ opinions. In computing the reliability of the whole test Spearman-Brown prophecy formula was used. Spearman-Brown prophecy formula is as the following:

\[
\frac{2 \times \text{Reliability on half of the test}}{1 + \text{Reliability on half of the test}}
\]

As the formula indicates, the reliability of the whole test would be measured. In order to answer the first, second, third, and the fourth questions, the same strategy was also used. The difference was that in structure section there were a number of 40 questions, and the rest had 20 questions in each section. each section was divided into odd and even halves and by
using the negative score formula calculated the students’ scores on each half separately. Then, the scores were feed into the spearman brown prophecy formula to investigate the reliability of each skill (naming structure, cloze, reading and vocabulary) separately. Another section in this research study dealt with identifying the item facility of the questions of the general English of M.A. in TEFL at IAU. To this end, the papers were analyzed based on the number of correct responses, wrong responses, and not attempted questions. Each paper was corrected twice by two different raters to avoid any mistake regarding these statistics. Later, the data were tabulated in different tables to make the formulation task easier. After that, using item facility formula, the item facility of all the questions of the test was calculated. Item Facility formula (as mentioned in Farhadi (2009), is:

$$IF = \frac{\sum C}{N}$$

In this formula, the face of fraction shows the sum of correct responses, while N shows the total number of participants. In analyzing the questions in terms of choice distribution, the papers were analyzed to see how the choices are distributed. A table of 100 rows, and six columns was made to make the choice distribution task more comprehensible. The papers were analyzed twice by two different raters to avoid any problem.

### 4. Results and Discussion

The participants of the study attempted to questions of the general English section of IAUEE of Master program in TEFL. As a part of general English section, the structure section had 40 questions as a whole. This was included in two subsections. In one section there were 23 questions, and 17 questions in the rest. The scores were sent to be analyzed by SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Science). The mean scores and standard deviations of the scores in both halves were calculated. Table 2 demonstrates the descriptive statistics and correlation coefficients used in the structure section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.Deviation</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Odd-Numbered</td>
<td>9.4597</td>
<td>8.39206</td>
<td>.557**</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even-numbered</td>
<td>10.1480</td>
<td>8.21516</td>
<td>.557**</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels
As it was demonstrated in Table 2, the number of students in the odd half and even half were equal (30 students in each half). Mean score of the students in the odd-numbered half was 9.45, and standard deviation was 8.39, while these values for the structure section of even-numbered half were 10.14, and 8.21 respectively.

In order to find out the reliability of the structure section of the test, the strength of the relationship between the two halves via Pearson correlation coefficient procedure must have computed, to this end, the reliability of the half of the structure section of the test was .76. To obtain the reliability of the whole structure section of the test, however, it is to utilize the Spearman- Brown split –half reliability formula. The internal consistency of the whole Structure Section of the test (calculated via split-half reliability method), as such, was .71.

Cloze passage section of the exam had 20 questions in general. The questions were divided in four cloze passages of each five questions. The results of the scores of each half were fed into the SPSS to calculate mean, and standard deviation. Table 3 depicts these numbers, and shows that the descriptive statistics regarding each half of the Cloze Section of the test. The mean score for the cloze odd-numbered scores (COD) half is 22.88, while this value for the cloze even-numbered scores (CES) half is 19.30. The Standard deviation and the number of questions in each half were also reported. It is also shown that the strength of relationship between the two halves via Pearson correlation coefficient procedure is .53 indicating a strong positive relationship between the two halves of the Cloze Section of the test. This demonstrates that the reliability of the half of the Cloze Section of the test was .53. The reliability of the whole Cloze Section of the test, (computed by the Spearman-Brown split-half reliability formula) was .69.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Haves</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Odd-numbered scores</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>22.8853</td>
<td>13.61782</td>
<td>.539**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even-numbered scores</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19.3083</td>
<td>10.87431</td>
<td>.539**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels

The vocabulary section also as well as other sections had a two time correction task. The questionnaires were scored once based on odd half of the section, and the next time based on the even half of the section. The point was that all the scores were based on negative
score formula. The results were analyzed by SPSS to have the mean and standard deviation. Table 4, presents these statistics. As it is shown, the mean score for the vocabulary odd-numbered scores (VOS) half was 15.45, while this value for the vocabulary even-numbered scores (VES) half was 13.94. Standard deviation and the number of questions in each half were also shown. Regarding the strength of the relationship, the coefficient in this case was .60 indicating a strong positive relationship between the two halves of the Vocabulary Section of the test. To obtain the reliability of the whole Vocabulary Section of the test, however, the Spearman-Brown split-half reliability formula should be used. The internal consistency of the whole Vocabulary Section of the test (calculated via split-half reliability method), as such, is .75.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Haves</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Odd-numbered scores</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15.4590</td>
<td>15.63723</td>
<td>.602**</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even-numbered scores</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.9417</td>
<td>12.68838</td>
<td>.602**</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels.

The reading comprehension section of the Islamic Azad University Entrance Examination of M.A. in TEFL was also analyzed. The scoring procedure was based on negative score formula. The results were fed into SPSS to check mean and standard deviation. Table 5, depicts these numbers. The mean score for the reading odd-numbered scores (ROS) half was 9.05, while this value for the reading even-numbered scores (RES) half was 10.88. Standard deviation and the number of questions in each half was also shown here. It is also shown that the strength of relationship between the two halves via Pearson correlation coefficient procedure is .79 indicating a strong positive relationship between the two halves of the Reading Comprehension of the test. This says that the reliability of the half of the Reading Section of the test was .53. The reliability of the whole Reading Section of the test, (computed by the Spearman-Brown split-half reliability formula) was .88.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Haves</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Note: ** Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels.
As was stated, the method of investigating reliability was based on odd and even type of split half reliability. To do so, the descriptive statistics regarding each half of the test is offered. As is indicated in table 6 the mean score and the standard deviation of the scores were shown. In order to measure the strength of the relationship between two halves of the test, the Pearson correlation coefficient procedure was applied. The calculated results showed that the correlation was significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The coefficient in this case was .76 which indicates a strong positive relationship between two halves of the test. This shows that the reliability of half of the test was .76. In order to obtain the reliability of the whole test, however, it is to utilize the spearman-Brown split half reliability formula. The internal consistency of the whole test is .83.

Table 6 Descriptive Statistics/Correlation Coefficient of the Whole Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Haves</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Odd Score</td>
<td>25.5303</td>
<td>17.10451</td>
<td>.761**</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even Score</td>
<td>25.1290</td>
<td>15.52048</td>
<td>.761**</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this section the results of item analysis including Item facility (IF) and Choice distribution were discussed. In calculating IF, it was shown that each section of the test had a different IF index. Table, 7 shows these statistics. The results of IF analysis showed that out of 40 questions in the structure section, Five items naming: four, 22, 30,35, and 37 were too easy, while 25 items naming: two, three, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, 11, 16, 17, 19,20,24, 25, 26,28, 29,31, 32,33,36,38,39, and 40 were categorized as too difficult questions. The point to mention was that the rest of the questions were acceptable items, and item number 15 didn’t have any correct answer at all. Table also shows Choice Distribution analysis. In analyzing the choice distribution of the exam, 27 questions were problematic questions. By problematic questions it was meant that they had an equal number of participants’ attraction among two choices. This meant that the questions were 2-choice questions instead of 4-choice questions.

Table 7 IF and Choice Distribution Index for Structure Section
In this section the results of item analysis for cloze passage section are presented. Table 8 shows these statistics. The results showed that in the cloze passage section, there was a number of nine items categorized as too easy, naming: 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, and 57. The results also showed that eight items naming: 49, 50, 51, 53, 54, 55, 58, and 60 were too difficult questions. In this section only three questions/items were categorized as acceptable. The choice distribution results of Cloze passage section showed that only three questions were categorized as acceptable questions with a true choice order in this section. The rest of the choices were either two or three choice questions which attracted an equal number of participants.

Table 8 *IF and Choice Distribution Index for Cloze Section*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Too easy</th>
<th>Too Difficult</th>
<th>Acceptable IF</th>
<th>Problematic</th>
<th>Acceptable CD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cloze</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This section was aimed at showing the IF, and Choice Distribution results of the vocabulary section. Table 9 depicts these statistics. It showed that two items (63, and 66) were too easy, while 11 items including: 61, 62, 65, 67, 69, 70, 72, 73, 75, 77, 78, and 80 were too difficult. The rest were acceptable items. Table also shows Choice Distribution analysis. Eight items had an acceptable choice distribution, while 12 items were problematic. This showed that the items were two or three choice questions rather than 4-choice.

Table 9 *IF and Choice Distribution Index for Vocabulary Section*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Too easy</th>
<th>Too Difficult</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Problematic</th>
<th>Acceptable CD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 depicted IF results of the reading comprehension section. The results showed that no item was categorized as too easy, while 17 items naming: 81, 83, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, and 100 were too difficult questions. As was stated in table, the choice distribution of the last section of the booklet had 20 problematic items which were of 2-choice questions instead of 4-choice questions.

Table 10 *IF and Choice Distribution Index for Reading Comprehension Section*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Too easy</th>
<th>Too Difficult</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Problematic</th>
<th>Acceptable CD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>No items</td>
<td>17 Items</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As was shown in the reliability results of structure, vocabulary, cloze, reading comprehension and the whole test, numerically speaking this exam enjoys an acceptable amount of reliability based on the type and purpose of the test. However, reliability is not a single concept and there are cases which determine the acceptability or non-acceptability of reliability. In this case, the results of item facility and choice distribution analysis in all the sections of the test proved that the exam does not enjoy reliability. The results of this study are in agreement with Hitotuzi (2005), and Fernandez (2005) in which their concluded that their entrance examination also is not reliable. In this study the method of investigating reliability was based on split-half. The results of this study are in line with Ito (2005). In the studies by Arani (2012), reports of ministry of education (2008), Farhadi (2009) and other mentioned scholars in which they investigated the assessment system in state universities, it was proved that entrance examination in Iran is with serious problems. The testing issues must be carefully reviewed in both entrance examinations. The study provided statistical results on the unreliability of Azad entrance examination.

5. Conclusion
The reliability of the IAUEE of M.A. in TEFL was analyzed using split half method of reliability. In the light of these findings it was concluded that the reliability of the whole general English section is .83 which indicates a fair reliability based on the purpose of the exam. It was also concluded that there was a strong positive relationship between the two halves of the test. This strong positive relationship was significant at 0.01 levels and was .76. Furthermore, the analysis of item facility index revealed that in this exam, out of 100 questions, 15 questions were too easy, 60 questions were too difficult, and 25 questions were at the moderate level of difficulty. These statistics revealed that the reliability of the exam is under question, though the correlation results showed good and fair reliability in different sections. Low IF index and poor Choice distribution are categorized as threats to reliability and this issue needs to be taken care in such large scale exams.

As was stated in the previous sections, no study has scrutinized the M.A. entrance examination of TEFL at IAU, but the common point was that the entrance examination in both universities (either state or Azad) is not highly supported by the testing principles (matters of reliability and validity).

The findings of this research study can be applied both in macro and micro level uses. At the macro level analysis it can be useful in ministry of science planning’s regarding
Islamic Azad University exam center, exam board, and the exam protection center. It may also help syllabus designers, language developers and curriculum planners. The point is that each year this university attracts a large number of candidates to further their education at different levels. Research studies have proven the importance and devotion of IAU to science and development of education at national and international scopes. To this end, it’s a must to plan more carefully and design more comprehensibly, the content of this huge entrance examination.

At the micro level of study, the results can pave the way for IAU to do more investigations regarding its exam in terms of reliability and standardization. Based on a research study by Farhady (2009), it was mentioned that the experienced teachers write parallel tests for each subject matter area at state universities. This includes the foreign language each year. Regarding the strategies of investigating in the exam, it was stated that the only strategy that ministry of education applies to improve the quality of the exam is to analyze test items after their administration. Regarding these procedures, this should be mentioned that there is no written report available. These analyses have been done only in state universities, and no one has ever taken the issues of reliability and validity of M.A. in TEFL at IAU into spotlight.

References


Title

The relationship between examinees’ academic background and their performance in the reading section of two types of English exam: IELTS and TOEFL (iBT)

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Biodata

Narges Kamali is an English Teacher. She studied English translation in Kharazmi University and now she is M.A student of TEFL. Her research interest is in language testing, particularly test fairness.

Abstract

This study investigated the relations between examinees’ academic knowledge and their performance on the reading section of IELTS and TOEFL (iBT) through using generalizability theory. G-theory was utilized to investigate the effects of subtest, test items, participants and academic knowledge on the reliability of IELTS and TOEFL (iBT) score. A placement test was administered to 119 students studying at intermediate level of IELTS and TOEFL preparatory courses, 96 of them passed the test and were put in the three academic background groups and were given the reading tests. The results of 60 of them were randomly selected for G-study. The outcomes suggested the relative influences of the facets were not stable for both reading tests and also across all three academic groups. Moreover, considering the effect of academic background, there was no stable finding, as it in TOEFL (iBT) reading test significant influence of academic knowledge was detected on the other hand in the IELTS reading no interaction was detected. Finally, the results were shown that academic background was related to IELTS and TOEFL (iBT) reading test on certain items, which could be attributed to academic characteristics of passage and test item features.

Keywords: Academic knowledge, IELTS and TOEFL (iBT) reading test, CTT, Generalizability theory

1. Introduction
IELTS and TOFEL are utilized as admissions tests, and many universities, organization and institutions in different countries, including Iran, use the scores on these tests. The candidates of the tests have a various academic knowledge. According to the Content schema theory (e.g., Xiao-hui, Jun, & Wei-hua, 2007) candidates who have acquired knowledge in a particular field develop schemata in that area, so their prior knowledge can promote the text comprehension related to their study field. The important point is that, the passages which are used in TOFEL and IELTS exam are on academic topics so if the passages are related to the field of specific groups of participants the validity and fairness of these tests got under questions. These tests should examine communicative language skills rather than specific content knowledge.

Certifying about the reliability of test scores is a significant activity. According to Bachman (1990), elements outside the test itself such as examinees’ characteristics may turn into systematic sources of measurement error. The present study through utilization of G- theory tried to scrutinize the relationship between academic background and the test takers performance on the reading section of TOEFL (iBT) and IELTS in order to examine the fairness of the tests and find out each test is in a favor of which classification of academic background and also pave the way for moving from using one all-purpose language test to specific and discipline-oriented tests.

2. Literature Review

The question about the probable role of academic knowledge on reading comprehension has interested many researchers in second language reading comprehension and scholars in the field of language testing (Johnson, 1981; Farhady, 1982; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983; Mohammed & Swales, 1984; Alderson & Urquhart, 1985; Bernhardt, 1991; Clapham, 1996; Usó-Juan, 2006).

One theory referred to the influence of prior knowledge on reading comprehension is related to the ability of the test-takers to make inferences. As it was mentioned by Hammadou (1991), inference referred to a cognitive process utilized to construct conclusion through a thinking process that consist of multiple reasoning through generalization and explanation. Hammadou (1991) in a study, investigated inference strategies utilized by students and finds that background knowledge influences the comprehension process. The results of the study show that novice readers utilize a greater amount of inference than advanced readers. In other words, language proficiencies of readers have a direct influence on
inference. Since beginner readers use more inference, it shows that the readers’ background knowledge affects the comprehension process and also comprehension is not the products of the text alone. On the other hand, there are almost few researches which suggest that under some conditions content knowledge does not have effect on language test performance (Salmani-Nodoushan 2007).

In a study that was conducted by Usó-Juan (2006) 380 Spanish-speaking undergraduate students who had proficiency in English as a foreign language and knowledge of the topics being tested, were given six English for academic purpose (EAP) texts. The results of the study showed that; while language knowledge accounted for a range varying between 58% and 68% for EAP reading score variance, background knowledge accounted for a range fluctuating between 21% and 31%. In other words, the standardized regression coefficients of language proficiency weighted 1.83 to 3 times as much as that of discipline-related knowledge. It declared that language knowledge has a greater effect than background knowledge.

On the contrary, Clapham (1996) found that the effect of discipline-related knowledge was different on the IELTS academic reading comprehension texts across three different English proficiency levels. On two of the three revised academic units that composed of passages with higher content specificity, the effect of content knowledge was not evident on reading scores for the students with grammar scores below 60%; however the effect of background knowledge effect was noticeable in all three units for those who scored 80% and above. The findings indicated that the major contribution to the students’ score is their proficiency level, so examinees with low proficiency couldn’t make use of their background knowledge.

While a number of researchers examined the role of discipline-related knowledge on language proficiency test scores, it is difficult to make a definitive statement about this issue. Alderson (2000) declared that considering all these different results, it is amazing why few researches have been conducted to examine the possible explanations for these disparate findings in this issue and obtain convincing evidence. There are some possible explanations for the inconclusive findings.

First of all, it might be related to diversity in the methodological designs which is considerably varied in the way the independent variables (i.e., academic background and English proficiency level) and the dependent variable (i.e., reading compression performance were assessed, as well as in the statistical analyses used to investigate those variables (Usó-Juan, 2006).
Secondly, it can be related to the method for defining the background knowledge (Jennings, Fox, Graves, & Shohamy, 1999). The previous studies didn’t provide comprehensive picture of examinees’ academic knowledge. Academic knowledge can come from several sources and researchers should try to be aware as much as possible of all of these sources.

Thirdly, it might be related to the steps used to investigate validity (Messick, 1989). After all, considering the mentioned studies, none of them have specifically examined the probable role of academic knowledge on the dependability scores of reading proficiency test; however recently a study was conducted by Karimi (2012) which deal with similar issue. The study observed the relative influence of discipline-related on the reliability of the scores of the Tehran University English proficiency test and the result displayed that academic knowledge did not lead to bias in this test. However the study like other studies did not control the participants’ proficiency level and just focus on one kind of proficiency test. One important reason for the inconsistent findings may be due to application of non-standardized tests for measuring language proficiency. Since scholars have used different instruments to measure language proficiency, definitions of the high and low proficiency group in one research may differ from that of other researches.

In summary, the difference between language knowledge and background knowledge has long been a serious problem in the interpretation of test results (Salmani-Nodoushan, 2007). In addition, research on this issue has failed to reach a clear relationship between discipline-related knowledge and reading performance. Up to now, only a few studies, not without methodological deficiency, have investigated the influence of major-field area and English-language proficiency level on reading performance. It is obvious that, it is the kind of issue that is worthy to be investigated more comprehensively.

3. A Brief Historical Overview of Generalizability Theory

Although Bolus, Hinofotis, and Bailey (1982) gave the first non-technical introduction to the advantages of G-theory, he recommended further utilization of the theory in the area of language testing; it was formally introduced by Cronbach and his associates (Alkharusi 2012). A number of related researches have been conducted since then. Bolus et al. (1982) were the first scholars who suggest the usefulness of generalizability theory to language testing. In addition, Brown (1984) was the first to actually utilized generalizability theory in language testing. Kunnan (1992) applied G-theory along with factor and
cluster analyses to study the dependability of a criterion-referenced test. Brown (1999) examined the relative impact of persons, items, subtests and languages to TOEFL score dependability, and asked for more utilization of this theory to various versions of the TOEFL test as well as different high-stake tests with the purpose of figuring out if the outcomes are valid or not.

4. Methodology

According to previous studies, it is clear that familiarity with the text content may have a positive effect on candidates reading performance. With this regard, the major purpose of this study is to investigate, by means of generalizability theory, the contribution of discipline-related knowledge to IELTS and TOEFL (iBT) reading comprehension. Furthermore, it will examine the error variance of these reading tests along with how to make the tests well-organized and upturn its reliability through more rational modifications. To those ends, the study poses the following research questions:

1. Is there any meaningful correlation between academic knowledge and the examinees’ success in the reading section of IELTS and TOEFL (iBT)?
2. What is the relative contribution for each of the three academic groups on the dependability of IELTS and TOEFL (iBT) reading score, after controlling their proficiency level? Is academic background biasing the results of the IELTS and TOEFL (iBT) reading test score?
3. What are the relative influences of test items, subtests, persons, academic background plus their numerous interactions on IELTS and TOEFL (iBT) reading test scores’ reliability?

4.1. Participants

The participants were 119 university graduates studying at intermediate level of IELTS and TOEFL preparatory courses. They were all at the intermediate and upper intermediate level at three private English language institutes in Iran, namely Ofogh, Safir and Arian, and Golestan University Jahade-daneshgahi. A placement test was designed and based on the results of the test and for the sake of homogeneity 96 of them (36 male and 60 female) who passed the test were considered as the target participants of the study. Then after, these participants were put in the three academic background groups, humanities, natural sciences and mathematics. Finally, after tests’ administration 60 of them were randomly selected for G-study.

4.2. Instrument
The first instrument of the study was a placement test, which was used to ensure about the participants’ English proficiency level. According to Uso-juan (2006) cloze test can be used to measure English proficiency level because it assessed grammar and vocabulary knowledge in context rather than in isolated sentences. With this regard, two neutral cloze tests each with 25 multiple-choice questions was designed which consist of both grammatical and lexical deletions. The reliability of the tests as it was determined by the Flesch-Kincaid Reading Ease was respectively 82.4 and 70.6, a higher score indicates easier readability; scores frequently range between 0 and 100. The second instrument was IELTS and TOEFL (iBT) reading test, six passages in total.

The lengths of the six texts were made as similar as possible. Because of the coherence necessity, it is not probable to give the passages precisely the same word count; instead, the passages ended when the given topics were appropriately covered. All of them are reasonably difficult as determined by the Flesch Reading Ease index (Flesch, 1948), ranging from 26.4 to 38.6 out of a total range from 0 to 120, the lower numbers demonstrating more difficult texts to read. The texts that have a Flesch Reading Ease index from 0 to 30 are mostly appropriate for by university graduates (Flesch, 1948). The selection is directed based on these principles; firstly, the texts should have either heavily science-oriented content or be about literature. Secondly, the text should be chosen from one of the most recent IELTS and TOEFL iBT administrations, not before 2006. The first principle was not executed in the selection process because some of the items may lack construct validity, given their heavy emphasis on science or literature content. In this sense, the selected passages do not represent typical IELTS and TOEFL (iBT) reading passages, as other texts contain more neutral content than the selected ones.

4.3. Procedure

In the current research academic knowledge had been chosen to indicate the diversity in the content knowledge for different groups of examinees. Since background knowledge can be obtained from many sources, systematically or acquired by chance so two different methods are selected for catching a comprehensive picture of this issue; students’ field of study and a text content familiarity questionnaire which was given after the test. These two tests carried out at the same time, with one week interval, IELTS exam was carried out via paper and participants should answer questions within 50 minutes. TOEFL (iBT) was held through e-mail the questions sent to the test takers. After test takers clicked the link provided in the e-mail, they can go to a Web page where they can answer the questions online within 55
minutes. After completing each test, candidate were asked to answer text content familiarity questionnaire and also rate the difficulty level of the test on a scale of 5 _1, from (5) very difficult to (1) very easy.

5. Results

In this study, the analyses began with the descriptive statistics and the classical theory reliability estimates and R-squared. In order to assess the relative influences of persons, items, subtests as well as academic background to the test scores, five G-studies were conducted on the data through the computer program GENOVA (Crick & Brennan, 1982).

With this regard, Brennan (1983) provided an explanation for such a separate analysis that is when a measurement population is stratified with regard to a number of distinctively defined subpopulations, it is suggested to do separate evaluation for every subpopulation. It is also possible to do a global analysis over subpopulations.

In order to answer the first question, the raw score descriptive statistics are given in Table 1 table 2 for both tests. As it was presented 1, mathematics and natural science group slightly outperformed humanities. In addition, examinees’ scores are more homogenous in natural science and Humanities than those of mathematics group.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for TOEFL (iBT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of study</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>std. division</th>
<th>min</th>
<th>max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL reading score</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>56.17</td>
<td>4.5957</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54.53</td>
<td>3.2935</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural sciences</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>57.92</td>
<td>3.6074</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>56.08</td>
<td>4.4889</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistical values concerning IELTS exam are presented in table 2. According to the table, mathematics and Humanities groups to some extent outperformed natural sciences. Moreover, in the IELTS reading comprehension test, the participants’ scores are more homogenous in natural sciences and humanities than those of mathematics group.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for IELTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field of study</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>std. division</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As presented in table 1 and table 2, the difference between mean scores of the groups is not so significant. However, the value of the mean (56.17) and the standard deviation (4.5957) specify a wider distribution of scores than what was detected for the IELTS reading. The lower standard deviation of the IELTS test can be clarified by the fact that the exam scores are specified on band scales (from 0 to 9). Moreover, most of the scores clusters are almost within one standard deviation from the mean. For better comparison of the participants’ performance in these two proficiency tests, in the table 3 we calculated IELTS reading test score based on TOEFL (iBT) band score. The results indicate that the test takers’ performance in these two proficiency tests were not significantly different.

Table 3. Equivalence of IELTS score to TOEFL (iBT)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean (IELTS reading score)</th>
<th>std. division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities 48.63</td>
<td>3.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural sciences 46.97</td>
<td>1.0534</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics 54.49</td>
<td>2.2346</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With regard to the first question null hypothesis, we investigated the correlation coefficient between independent variables, three academic groups, and the dependent variable, test takers’ scores. The output shows that the correlation coefficient for TOEFL (iBT) score equals 0.583 (R=0.583). Also, the common variance between three academic background groups and the TOEFL (iBT) reading comprehension scores is 0.339. This refers to the fact that only 39.9% of test takers’ score on the reading comprehension section of the TOEFL (iBT) can be rooted in their academic background knowledge.

Table 4. Correlation analysis related to the TOEFL (iBT) reading comprehension score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOEFL (iBT) reading comprehension score</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.583(a)</td>
<td>.339</td>
<td>.246</td>
<td>2.568</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘a’ Predictors: (Constant) humanities, natural science, and mathematics

Correlational analysis between the academic knowledge and the scores on the reading section of ILELS is indicated that there is some degree of correlation between three
academic background group and IELTS scores (R=0.486). The common variance between three academic background groups and IELTS scores is 0.236. The outcome implies that almost a quarter (25.7%) of the score on the reading section of IELTS can be attributed to examinees’ academic knowledge; consequently the hypothesis of no academic background relationship is got indefensible.

Table 5. Correlation analyses related to the IELTS reading comprehension score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IELTS reading comprehension score</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R square</th>
<th>adjusted R square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.486(a)</td>
<td>.236</td>
<td>.152</td>
<td>.44639</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the next step we investigated the second research question; the relative contribution of each of the three academic groups on the reliability of the scores, statistically speaking the assumption behind the second question is the null hypothesis. To investigate the hypothesis first of all, the researcher did correlation analysis for the TOEFL (iBT) test and then IELTS test. The result can be seen in the following table (table 6).

Table 6. Partial and part correlation for TOEFL (iBT) reading score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic background group</th>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zero-order</td>
<td>partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>-.124</td>
<td>-.167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural science</td>
<td>.366</td>
<td>.349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>.328</td>
<td>.251</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data indicate that the performance of natural science and mathematics groups were significantly correlated with the dependent variable, on the other hand, the humanities group performance was negatively correlate with the TOEFL reading score, however its’ movement toward statistical significance is noticeable. In the last step of the analysis, the relative effect of each of the academic group was determined. The output of the analysis represented in table 7.
Table 7. The relative effect for natural science, mathematics and humanities group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic group Estimate</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.366 (a)</td>
<td>.133</td>
<td>.147</td>
<td>2.763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.439 (b)</td>
<td>.192</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td>2.607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.492 (c)</td>
<td>.242</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>2.582</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Predictors: (Constant), natural science group
b Predictors: (Constant), natural science group, mathematics group
c Predictors: (Constant), natural science group, mathematics group, humanities group.

Table 8 exhibited partial correlations between each of the three academic background group and the IELTS reading comprehension score together with the Zero-order correlations and the level of significance. It can be seen in the table that mathematics and humanities group considerably link with the dependent variable. This relation means that mathematics and humanities group can positively correlated with the reading comprehension score of IELTS.

Table 8. Partial and part correlation for IELTS reading score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic background group</th>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zero-order</td>
<td>Partial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>.314</td>
<td>.263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural sciences</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td>-.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>.321</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the last stage of the analysis, we investigated the relative effect of each these two groups of academic background. The output provided in the following table 9:

Table 9. The relative effect of mathematics and humanities group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic group Estimate</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.356(a)</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>.57871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.438(b)</td>
<td>.191</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.5569</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Predictors: (Constant), mathematics group
b Predictors: (Constant), mathematics group, humanities group
To examine the third study question and investigate the relative influences of persons, test items, and subtests and their relations, five pair of G-studies were distinctively done for each reading proficiency test: three separate studies for each of the academic background group each and one comprehensive G-study conducted for each of the group including all participants. It should be mention that, all of them have the same design, a mixed design in which two facets, the test items and the subtests, are fixed and person is random.

Table 10. TOEFL (iBT) G-study outputs for three academic groups and one comprehensive computation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>humanities</th>
<th>natural sciences</th>
<th>mathematics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>SS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>6417.1661</td>
<td>0.17413</td>
<td>63.6</td>
<td>2133.2571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>339.746</td>
<td>0.00121</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>146.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I:S</td>
<td>2671.95246</td>
<td>0.02217</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>854.3008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>1337.06705</td>
<td>0.00693</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>406.8268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1:S</td>
<td>3257.87848</td>
<td>0.03462</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>1126.50183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14023.80869</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>4667.10613</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coef_G relative</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coef_G absolute</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>0.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative SE</td>
<td>0.04310</td>
<td>0.04303</td>
<td>0.04304</td>
<td>0.04307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute SE</td>
<td>0.04638</td>
<td>0.04644</td>
<td>0.04647</td>
<td>0.04650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relative Error V</td>
<td>0.00193</td>
<td>0.00186</td>
<td>0.00179</td>
<td>0.00182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute Error V</td>
<td>0.00275</td>
<td>0.00269</td>
<td>0.00277</td>
<td>0.00270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ss: sum of square
VS: Variance square

Similarly, the low variance associated with the I:S indicates that although there are some non-systematic errors in the test, it occupies nearly 13 percent of the entire variance.
In addition the tests’ items were internally consistent and of the same difficulty level for examinees. Furthermore, the low variance component for persons and subtests, P:S, is represented that the participants’ performances comparatively varied across the three subtests. While the components of variance are not entirely constant in the different groups, it shouldn’t be forgotten that they are alike. This show the minor dissimilarities in the spreading of variance components cannot be so important issue.

As it is represented in the table 10, the highest variance component is associated with examinees. This result reveals that the examinees’ ability differences have the greatest significant role. With regard to the error variances which is nearly the similar in the different groups, the greatest generalizability coefficients in the mathematics group is possibly related to the great variance component for examinees in the mentioned group. Also, the outcome of investigation reveals that the constituents of variance in test items nested within subtests, I: S, range from 9.5 for natural sciences, 7.8 for humanities and 6.1 for mathematics. On the other hand, the interface between the persons and test items nested within subtests is not very significant. This variance component is combined with all unknown variation sources and error.

Table 11. IELTS G-study outputs for three academic groups and one comprehensive computation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement facets</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>humanities</th>
<th>natural sciences</th>
<th>mathematics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>VS</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>VS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VS %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person(P)</td>
<td>1750.1398</td>
<td>0.0435</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>536.9023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>subtest(S)</td>
<td>548.9249</td>
<td>0.00314</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>194.6048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I:S</td>
<td>2765.0823</td>
<td>0.07413</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>925.953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>1598.5396</td>
<td>0.0156</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>487.5432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P1:S</td>
<td>7009.2524</td>
<td>0.25087</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>2389.5321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48321.80942</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16744.19837</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coef_G relative</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the table 11, the major component of variance in all G-analysis is the interface of examinees and items nested within subtests, p × (i:s). The maximum variance goes to humanities group, 73.1, and the lowest one belongs to natural science group 70.5, the same is true for G-coefficient results. The second great component of variance is related to the I:S, test items nested within subtests. These data reveals that the test items were not in the equal level of difficulty. Finally, the third variance component goes to persons which is signified how much the examinees are scattered in the IELTS reading test.

In addition, the same as TOEFL results the variance component for persons and subtests, ps, is relatively small. So it can be concluded that the participants’ performances slightly differed across the three subtests. After all, while the variance components are not completely constant in the different groups, they are no tangibly difference among them. Meanwhile, the same as TOEFL (iBT) the direction of the components is the alike in the identified groups. This fact denotes that the
subtle dissimilarities in the variance components distribution might not be of very important.

To answer the second part of the third question two generalizability study made up all of the study facets in one joined manner $p: f \times i: s$ were done. The results of two combined G-analysis of variance are demonstrated in table 12 for TOEFL (iBT) and table 13 for IELTS.

Table 12. Combined G-study for TOEFL (iBT) test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement facets</th>
<th>Sum of square</th>
<th>$\sigma^2$</th>
<th>$\sigma^2_p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field of study (f)</td>
<td>326.4029</td>
<td>0.00186</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$p:f$</td>
<td>8596.8972</td>
<td>0.0657</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$P:F$</td>
<td>339.746</td>
<td>0.00227</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtest (s)</td>
<td>1671.9524</td>
<td>0.02217</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$I:S$</td>
<td>348.5942</td>
<td>0.00216</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F:S$</td>
<td>8.7605</td>
<td>0.00001</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$FI:S$</td>
<td>2954.3787</td>
<td>0.00734</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$PS:F$</td>
<td>8635.8754</td>
<td>0.1256</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>22882.60736</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the table, the main variance component is related to the relation of persons, test items, subtests, fields of study and also other undiscerned variance causes and or random variance. This signifies that individuals performed differently for different reading items.

Table 13. Combined G-study for IELTS test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measurement facets</th>
<th>Sum of square</th>
<th>$\sigma^2$</th>
<th>$\sigma^2_p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field of study (f)</td>
<td>68.78351</td>
<td>0.00077</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$P:F$</td>
<td>3526.7952</td>
<td>0.01249</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtest (s)</td>
<td>524.1249</td>
<td>0.00314</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$I:S$</td>
<td>2765.0823</td>
<td>0.07413</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F:S$</td>
<td>.5647</td>
<td>0.00001</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As it was represented in the table 13, the second noticeable section is the great variance component for the items’ influence, I:S. This great variance component implies that the test items are not of the same level of difficulty. As it was mentioned by Shavelson and Web (1991) a large variance made it difficult to generalize from examinees’ observed score on the tests to their universe score and it is also added to absolute measurement error.

Comparing both tables some similarities was existed. First of all in both table the major impact of subtests is not zero. Once more, this result shows that in both tests subtests were not in the same level of difficulty. The second point is that interaction between academic knowledge and subtests which are almost zero in both tables. This fact notifies that the comparative subtests difficulty level remains fix across different groups of examinees in both reading test.

Regarding the objective of study, the relative influences of the different facets was presented in this way $p : f \times i:s$ and also their relations with absolute and relative error variance as well as absolute and relative generalizability coefficients for both reading proficiency tests are provided in table 14 and 15.

**Table 14. Dependability of TOEFL (iBT) reading test score**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variance</th>
<th>Differentiation Variance</th>
<th>Source of variance</th>
<th>Relative error Variance</th>
<th>Relative percentage</th>
<th>Relative error variance</th>
<th>% absolute variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>0.00186</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$P:F$</td>
<td>0.0657</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$S$</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$I:S$</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0001</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$FS$</td>
<td>0.00019</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.00019</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The estimated relative and absolute generalizability coefficient for TOEFL (iBT) is respectively 0.83 and 0.79 and for IELTS reading is 0.86 and 0.83. These outputs are nearly higher than the accepted standard level. In the current study, although the provided coefficients are according to the analysis of a reduced number of the tests’ items and may
not truly reflect the complete tests’ coefficient, still the value beyond the minimum standard number. It is clear that the TOEFL (iBT) and IELTS have a high level of dependability. Therefore, it can be concluded that the TOEFL and IELTS test is safe for humanities, natural sciences and mathematics groups.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the investigation revealed that academic knowledge do not have significant role on performance in the reading section of TOEFL (iBT) and IELTS. This finding is also confirmed by Liu, Schedl, and Jeannee (2009) and Hill and Lio (2012) about the interaction between background knowledge and TOEFL (iBT) reading performance.

The study also examined the effect of subtest, test items and test takers background knowledge on the dependability of TOEFL (iBT) and IELTS reading score. The results showed that the facts did not have much significant role on the dependability of TOEFL (iBT) and IELTS reading score and also both tests enjoy a satisfactory reliability level. This outcome is also supported by Karimi (2012). He investigated the relative impact of discipline-related knowledge on the dependability of the scores of the Tehran University English proficiency test and the result displayed that background knowledge did not lead to bias in this test. He utilized G-theory, however he focused on the whole test and didn’t control participants’ proficiency level.

In both reading tests, the G coefficients were higher than 0.8 in almost all generalizability-studies. This outcome is parallel to what Brown (1999) found. Brown (1999) analyzed the effects of items, subtests, persons and language differences on the paper-based TOEFL using generalizability theory. Of course his study focus on another version of TOEFL and considered the whole test.

The results of questionnaire for TOEFL (iBT) reveled that almost 64 percent of test takers find the reading test moderately difficult. And almost 71 percent of them declared they were familiar with the text content. In addition, in the IELTS test similar results were obtained; in this test more than 75 percent of examinees believed that the test was moderately difficult and almost 60 of them stated they were familiar with the text content.

All in all, two conclusions, with some caveats described below, can be drawn from this study; first of all there weren’t any systematic relationship between academic knowledge and participants’ performance on TOEFL (iBT) and IELTS. In other words, TOEFL (iBT) and IELTS questions did not differentially favor mathematics, humanities and natural science
groups and were not discriminating for test takers of the groups. Hence, the TOEFL (iBT) and IELTS test developers could be confident that the tests were not biased and a construct irrelevant factor such as academic knowledge didn’t harm the tests’ validity. The findings in this research also improve our understanding of the effect of background knowledge in reading comprehension, specifically, the understanding gained in Liu, Schedl, & Jeannee (2009) study. Both studies found no passage-level differential functioning.

Secondly, the present research outcome provides evidence in the support of TOEFL (iBT) and IELTS validity, in that the texts chosen from these two proficiency tests were not biased against any knowledge group. Also, considering subtest, it compromised a slight part of the total variance components showing that the TOEFL (iBT) and IELTS subtest examining the similar objects.

The fourth and fifth related to the test takers and academic knowledge, according to the G-studies in TOEFL (iBT) person compromised the highest variance on the other hand in IELTS test the highest variance was attributed to test items. These results show that the examinees characteristics are more influential in TOEFL (iBT), however in IELTS test due to two version of the test, academic and general, such an effect decreased. In this test the highest variance component related to the facets interaction of highest level, and the second variance correspond to the items facet (I:S) component. This indicates that the test items in each subtest were of varying difficulty levels. With regard to academic knowledge as a one of the characteristics of test takers, in the TOEFL (iBT) it had the highest variance components, larger than that the one for item, on the other hand in the IELTS test for all groups, the persons facet (P:F) produced a relatively high variance component, but smaller that for the items.

These finding provided conclusive evidence to what Farhady (1982) declared about language proficiency test. He believed that language proficiency test is in critical time of evolution and a movement from using one all-purpose language proficiency test to specific and discipline-oriented test is absolutely essential.

6.1. Pedagogical Implications

With regard to the present research results, there are some potentially significant implications existed for EFL classes or IELTS and TOEFL preparation reading courses based on existing findings. Instructors of IELTS and TOEFL courses can also utilize the finding of this research in the classroom, by providing sufficient reading tasks with the different topics in the different academic area.

The researcher hope that the present study provide useful data for the candidates of IELST
and TOEFL (iBT) and also being helpful for language proficiency test developers in the selection of reading and consider candidates characteristics and design well-organized reading proficiency test and also pave the way for moving from general language proficiency test to more specific and discipline oriented tests. Besides, test developers can develop a reading comprehension test without measurable background knowledge bias through rigorous and careful content and qualitative bias control. The current study tried to remove drawbacks found in researches conducted by Liu et al. (2009) and Karimi (2012). For example, these studies didn’t control participants’ proficiency in the investigating the relationship between academic knowledge and examinees reading performance and in this way couldn’t presents an in-depth picture of the impact of background knowledge on reading test performance, which would be informative for IELST and TOEFL (iBT) test designers in the selection and examining reading comprehension text content. Moreover, the mentioned studies just focus on the one proficiency test and investigate it’s bias, however the present study investigate two type of proficiency test to see they are in favor of which academic group through using G-study and also investigate sub-test and tests’ items. Meanwhile, this study also relates to the existed theories of the impact of background knowledge on second language reading comprehension. It demands researchers’ attention to the point that when background knowledge influence reveals itself on the reading comprehension tests, its effect may vary across test items, sub-test and also different level of proficiency. Consequently, it is of crucial to comprehensively investigate the items and conditions that background knowledge affects reading test performance.

References


Acquisition of Particle infinitive in English (L2) and Arabic (L3) by Persian Speakers (L1)

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Biodata

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Abstract

The present article investigates the acquisition of particle infinitive by Arabic L3 learners while they are native speakers of Persian and are acquiring English as their L2. It tests the following possibilities: (1) L1 influences adult L3 acquisition, (2) L2 influences adult L3 acquisition while it blocks L1 transfer and is referred to as L2 status factor (Williams and Hammarberg, 1998), and (3) selective transfer of both L1 and L2 influences adult L3 acquisition, which is referred to as Cumulative Enhancement Model (Flynn et al., 2004). The data gathered using Grammaticality judgment Test and translation test proves the third hypothesis and also shows that proficiency level of the learners has no effect on their performance.

Keywords: L3 acquisition, particle infinitive, L2 status factor, L1 Factor Hypothesis, Cumulative Enhancement Model

1. Introduction

Language transfer is a very controversial phenomenon that has been explored from the early days of SLA and recently it has been focused on considering the acquisition of an additional language beyond L2. In the case of SLA, transfer occurs from only one language i.e. the
learner's mother tongue while in L3 acquisition it may occur from either the learner's mother
tongue or second language or both of these languages. So the major theories regarding these
sources of transfer are: the “L1 Factor” Hypothesis (LFH) (Håkansson et al., 2002), the
Cumulative Enhancement Model” (CEM) (Flynn et al., 2004), the “L2 Status Factor”
Hypothesis (LSFH) (Bardel and Falk, 2007).

The first theory proposed by Hakansson et al. (2002) claims that L1 should be given a
privileged position as a source of transfer in L3 acquisition. Stated by Oner Ozcelik (2009)
Full transfer Full access hypothesis (FTFA) also maintains that the L1 grammar, including L1
parameter settings, constitutes the initial state of L2 acquisition (full transfer), but that L2
learners have full access to UG at all times during the acquisition process (full access), and
thus that parameter resetting is usually possible.

Flynn et al. (2004) with the Cumulative Enhancement Model (CEM) and Leung
(2005) suggest that both L1 and L2 have an impact on L3 syntax. CEM claims that both L1
and L2 may act as a source for transfer, but L2 only supersedes L1 when the TL structure is
not present in L1. It also proposes that only positive transfer occurs from L1 and L2 to L3.

The L2 status factor hypothesis implies that L2 can supersede L1 as a source of
transfer, because of a higher degree of cognitive similarity between L2 and L3, than between
L1 and L3. Rothman and Cabrelli-Amaro (2010) argues that L2 plays a crucial role at the
mental lexicon level and morph syntactic level.

Regarding these possibilities of transfer in L3 acquisition process, this article tries to
answer the following questions:

1. Do the Persian speaking students transfer the particle infinitive from their mother
tongue while they are acquiring Arabic as their L3?
2. Do the Persian speaking students transfer the particle infinitive from their L2 English
while they are acquiring Arabic as their L3?
3. Do the Persian speaking students transfer the particle infinitive from both their mother
tongue and their L2 while they are acquiring Arabic as their L3?
4. Does the participants' English proficiency level affect their acquisition of this
structure?

2. Particle infinitive in English, Arabic, and Persian

In this study the acquisition of particle infinitive of Arabic L3 by two groups of Persian L1
speakers (beginner and elementary) is investigated while they are learning English also as
their L2. The study of this structure across these three languages has created six scenarios which are going to be explained one by one.

A) L1 equals L2:

In Persian the infinitive particle "be" is present between the two verbs when we want to convey our meaning using specific verbs such as "xastan" in Persian plus another verb. But this particle is not present when we produce structures such as "xah" plus another verb to represent future time. The same story happens in English. when a verb is added to" want", which is equivalent to "xastan" in Persian, infinitive particle "to" is needed to be placed between them. But in the case of "be going to" and "will", which are equivalent to " xah" in Persian and both represent the future time, there is no need for this particle. Example 1 shows this equivalence in Persian as our participants' L1 and English as their L2.

1. Man mixaham jomalate bishtari
   I want.present.1st person.singular sentence.plural.obj. more
   benevisam.
   infinitive particle.write.1st person.singular
   I want to write more sentences.

B) L1 does not equal L2:

The verbs such as " bayad", "shayad", and " tavanestan" in Persian do need infinitive particle "be" after them and before the second verb in the sentence. But the corresponding verbs in English that are the auxiliaries " must", "should", and " can" respectively do not need particle "to" after them when the main verb in the sentence is added to them. This is evident in example 2:

1. Man bayad be konferance beravam.
   I must to conference particle.go.1st person
   I must go to the conference.

C) L1 equals L3:

The structure "xah" plus the main verb that was explained in part A also exists in Arabic which is our participants' L3. This structure is correspondent to "sawfâ" plus the main verb in Arabic and does not need a particle after it. This structural similarity between Persian, English, and Arabic is shown in examples 3 and 4.

2. Farda be madreseh xaham raft.
   Tomorrow to school will.1st person singular go.
   I will go to school tomorrow.
3. Ana sawfa azhabu elal- madresatu qadan.
   I will 1st person singular present go to school tomorrow.
   I will go to school tomorrow.

D) L1 does not equal L3:
   The structure "xastan" plus a verb in Persian which is correspondent to "want" plus a verb in English and both need a particle between the two verbs in the sentence are presented in Arabic in this way: verb + an + verb.
   This "an" is correspondent to "that" in English. This dissimilarity in our participants' L1 and L3 is evident in examples 5 and 6.

4. Man mixaham be ketabxneh
   I present want 1st person singular to library beravam.
   particle go first person singular.
   I want to go to the library.

5. Uridu an azhaba elal-maktabah.
   1st person singular present want that go to the library.
   I want to go to the library.

E) L2 equals L3:
   In the example provided below" enna + ha" in Arabic is considered as correspondent to "that+ she" in English. The important point here is that in both structures the verb in the embedded clause contains the features of person and number in the PF.

6. Awzahat ennaha tadrusu
   Explained past 3rd person singular feminine that she present 3rd person singular feminine teach
   fi hazal-madrasah.
   in this school.
   She explained that she teaches in this school.

F) L2 does not equal L3:
   The structure in the examples provided for this scenario is the same as the one in the previous scenario with this difference that in English after the verbs such as "suggest", "recommend", "request", and " insist" the main verb is produced without the person and number features and is represented as nonfinite while in Arabic the verb after "an" is finite and contains features of person and number.
I suggest that she go.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

This study was conducted with 40 L2 English and L3 Arabic learners, 5 males (from Iranshahr high school) and 35 females (from Farhang Dehghanpour high school), whose English proficiencies were at the beginner and elementary levels.

3.2 Material

Oxford Quick Placement Test was used to determine the proficiency level of the students. To check the participants' comprehension of the infinitive particle a Grammaticality Judgment Test (see appendix A) was administered. This test comprised 46 sentences, 23 in English and 23 in Arabic, among which 6 items were distracters. The students had to determine whether the sentences were grammatical, ungrammatical, or they didn't know about their un/grammaticality. In order to check the participants' production a translation test (see appendix B) was also used comprising 4 Arabic and 4 English sentences to be translated into Persian, 2 English sentences to be translated into Arabic and 2 Arabic sentences to be translated into English.

3.3 Data collection and analysis procedure

After determining the participants' proficiency levels using Oxford Quick Placement Test, the two main tests (GJT and translation test) were administered with a one week interval. When the process of data collection was completed, the items of both GJT and Translation test were classified into six categories based on their grammatical structures (L1 equals L2, L1 does not equal L2, L1 equals L3, L1 does not equal L3, L2 equals L3, L2 does not equal L3). In order to get the effect of English proficiency level of the participants on their performance on the test and the interaction effect of them a mixed between within analysis of variance was conducted. In order to test the "Full Transfer/Full Access" hypothesis the mean for the categories "L2 does not equal L3" and "L1 does not equal L2" and its correlation with the category "L1 equals L3" were calculated. To test "L2 status factor" hypothesis the mean for "L1 does not equal L3" and "L1 does not equal L2" and its correlation with "L2 equals L3" were calculated. Finally to test "Cumulative Enhancement" hypothesis the mean for "L1 equals L3" and "L2 equals L3" and its correlation with the mean for "L1 does not equal L2"
and "L1 does not equal L3" were calculated. This procedure was done for both GJT and Translation Test.

4. Results

In this section the results obtained from the statistical analysis are presented in two sections. The first section presents the results we've got from the participants' performance on the Grammaticality Judgment Test, and the second one presents their performance on the Translation Test.

Experiment 1: Grammaticality Judgment Test

A mixed between within Analysis of variance was conducted to assess the effect of two factors (context i.e. the dis/similarity of the structure in the Persian, English, and Arabic and English proficiency level of the participants) on the participants' comprehension of the structures containing infinitive particle in English as their L2 and Arabic as their L3. There was no significant interaction between context and proficiency level, Wilks' Lambda = .866, F = (1,34), p = .405, partial eta squared = .134. There was a substantial main effect for context wilks' Lambda = .481, F = (7.34, 34), p =. 000, partial eta squared= .519 (see table 1). The main effect comparing the two English proficiency levels was not significant, F (1,38)=.19, p=.89, partial eta squared=.000 suggesting no effect for the English proficiency level of the participants in their comprehension of the structures containing infinitive particle (see table 1).

Table 1
The Effect of Context and Proficiency Level on the Participants' Comprehension of Particle Infinitive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Context</td>
<td>.481</td>
<td>7.34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficiency Level</td>
<td>.069</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.019</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context* Proficiency Level</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.405</td>
<td>.134</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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As mentioned earlier, "L1 equals L3 structures" are the structures in which infinitive particle was used in the same way in Persian and Arabic. The "FTFA negative structures" (Table 2) are the ones in which infinitive particles are not used in the same way neither in L2 and L3 nor in L1 and L2 ("L2 does not equal L3" and "L1 does not equal L2" among the six scenarios). While the correlation between the participants' comprehension of these structures in the GJT, as shown in table 2 is positive, it is not significant (p=.214).

Table 2
Correlation between L1 equals L3 and FTFA Negative Structures in GJT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L1 equals L3</th>
<th>FTFA Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig (2 tailed)</td>
<td>.214</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"L2 equals L3 structures" are the structures in which infinitive particle was used in the same way in English and Arabic. On the other hand the "L2 status negative structures" (Table 3) are the ones in which infinitive particles are not used in the same way neither in L1 and L3 nor in L1 and L2 ("L1 does not equal L3" and "L1 does not equal L2" among the six scenarios). Table 3 shows that the correlation between the participants' comprehension of these structures in the GJT is positive and significant (p=.04).

Table 3 Correlation between L2 equals L3 and L2 Status Negative in GJT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>L2 equals L3</th>
<th>L2 Status Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig (2 tailed)</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"CEH positive structures" (Table 4) are the structures in which infinitive particle was used in the same way both in L1 and L3, and L2 and L3. On the other hand the "CEH negative structures" are the ones in which infinitive particles are not used in the same way neither in L1 and L2 nor in L1 and L3. Table 4 shows that the correlation between the participants' comprehension of these structures in the GJT, as shown in Table 5 is positive and significant (p=.007). So the CEH hypothesis is confirmed for this study's participants' comprehension of the infinitive particles proving that they do transfer this structure positively from their L1 and L2 when comprehending it in their L3.

**Table 4**
*Correlation between CEH Positive and CEH Negative in GJT*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEH Positive</th>
<th>CEH Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perason Corelation</td>
<td>.417*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig (2 tailed)</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Experiment 2: Translation Test**

A mixed between within Analysis of variance was conducted to assess the effect of two factors (context i.e. the dis/similarity of the structure in the Persian, English, and Arabic and English proficiency level of the participants) on the participants' production of the structures containing infinitive particle in English as their L2 and Arabic as their L3. There was no significant interaction between context and proficiency level, Wilks' Lambda = .88, F = (.92, 34), p = .476, partial eta squared = .12. There was a substantial main effect for context wilks' Lambda = .127, F = (46, 34), p = .000, partial eta squared= .87 (see table 6). The main effect comparing the two English proficiency levels was not significant, F (1, 38) = .053, p=.819, partial eta squared=.001 suggesting no effect for the English proficiency level of the participants in their production of the structures containing infinitive particle (see Table 5).

**Table 5**
*The Effect of Context and Proficiency Level on the Participants' Production of Particle Infinitive*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context</strong></td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>46.56</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilks' Lambda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proficiency Level</strong></td>
<td>.056</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.053</td>
<td>.819</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em><em>Context</em> Proficiency Level</em>*</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.926</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.476</td>
<td>.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilks' Lambda</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 shows that the correlation of the participants' production of "L1 equals L3" and "FTFA negative" structures in the Production Test, as shown in table 8, is positive and significant (p=.03).

Table 6
**Correlation between L1 equals L3 and FTFA Negative in Translation Task**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FTFA Negative</th>
<th>L1 equals L3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FTFA Negative Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.342*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig (2 tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 shows that the correlation of the participants' production of "L2 equals L3" and "L2 status negative" structures in the Production Test is positive and significant (p=.002).

Table 7
**Correlation between L1 equals L3 and FTFA Negative in Translation Task**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>L2 Status Negative</th>
<th>L2 equals L3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L2 Status Negative Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.480*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig (2 tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8 shows that the correlation of the participants' production of "CEH positive" and "CEH negative" structures in the Production Test is positive and significant (p=.000).

Table 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CEH Positive</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>CEH Negative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig (2 tailed)</td>
<td>.573 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Transfer of the particle infinitive from L1

The extent, to which the participants' comprehend and produce "L1 equals L3" structures well, proves the acceptability of the FT/FA hypothesis. On the other hand the extent to which they produce and comprehend "FTFA negative" structures proves the non-acceptability of FT/FA hypothesis. As reported in the results the participants' comprehension of "L1 equals L3" and "FT/FA" structures was not significantly correlated (p=.214). So it can be concluded that both beginner and elementary groups of participants did not transfer this structure from their L1 when comprehending it in their L3.

On the other hand, the participants' production of "L1 equals L3" and "FTFA negative" structures was significantly correlated (p=.03). So it can be concluded that the participants do transfer this structure from their L1 when producing it in their L3.

The important point to mention here is that the scenario" L1 does not equal L2" is violated in this process. The reason behind this is that the participants focused on the underlying structure of sentences in their production process. Compare 8(a) and (b).

Surface form:
8 (a) Man bayad be konferans beravam.
     I must to conference
     I must go to the conference.

Underlying form:
8 (b) Man bayad (ke) be konferans beravam
     I must (that)to conference
* I must that I go to the conference.
5.2 Transfer of the particle infinitive from L2

The extent to which the participants' comprehend and produce "L2 equals L3" structures well shows the acceptability of the L2 status hypothesis. On the other hand, the extent to which they produce and comprehend "L2 status negative" structures proves the non-acceptability of L2 status hypothesis. As reported earlier, the participants' comprehension of these structures was significantly positive (p=.04). So the L2 status hypothesis is confirmed for this study's participants' comprehension of the infinitive particles proving that they do transfer this structure from their L2 when comprehending it in their L3. The reason behind this is that the structure which is considered as different in L1 and L3 may be used in the same way in the participants' L1 (see examples 9 and 10). So the position changes to L1=L3 and L2=L3 versus L1#L2.


*I person singular .present. want that go to the library.

I want to go to the library.

10. Man mixaham ke be ketabxneh beravam.

*I present .want. I* person singular that to library particle go first person singular.

I want to go to the library.

Use of "ke" that equals "that" in English is optional in Persian. So the participants may have this "ke" in their mind and transfer it positively to their L3.

In addition, the correlation of the participants' production of "L2 equals L3" and "L2 status negative" structures in the Production Test is significantly positive (p=.002). This also may refer to the fact previously mentioned about the participants' focus on the underlying structures not surface structures while producing sentences.

5.3 Transfer of the particle infinitive from both L1 and L2

The extent to which the participants' comprehend and produce "CEH positive" structures well shows the acceptability of the CEH hypothesis, and the extent to which they comprehend or produce "CEH negative" structures well proves the non-acceptability of CEH hypothesis. The correlation between the participants' comprehension of these structures in the GJT, as shown in Table 5 was significantly positive (p=.007). So the CEH hypothesis is confirmed for this study's participants' comprehension of the infinitive particles proving that they do transfer this structure positively from their L1 and L2 when comprehending it in their L3.

As reported previously, the participants' production of "CEH positive" and "CEH negative" structures in the Production Test was significantly positive (p=.000). So the CEH hypothesis
can be confirmed for this study's participants' production of the infinitive particles proving that they do transfer this structure positively from both their L1 and L2 when producing it in their L3.

5.4 The effect of proficiency level on the acquisition of particle infinitive

As mentioned earlier, there wasn't any significant effect for the proficiency level of the participants (beginner and elementary) on their acquisition of particle infinitive.

Appendix A

Grammaticality Judgment Test

Please read the following sentences and decide whether they are grammatical or ungrammatical. If you are not sure, choose the option "I don't know".

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Grammatical</th>
<th>Ungrammatical</th>
<th>I don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I want to write more sentences.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I must go to the conference.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>He should put all the money in his pocket.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>She will to go to the theatre tomorrow.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Mother lets you to go out every day.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>He says that he sees the building.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sarah explains she to need a new car.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I suggest that she go.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Father insists Mary continues her studies.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mina has to go to the college next year.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I am going to go to his house.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Kate can to do all her homework in a few minutes.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Mary will take an exam next week.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>They bought a new car yesterday.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>She recommends he take fewer units next term.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>I can go to the supermarket to buy some milk.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>John is going take a trip tomorrow.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>I request he reads this book.</td>
<td>صحيح</td>
<td>غلط</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
19 Karol always come to class late.
20 Jack knows he has to study.
21 He mentioned that he studied English.
22 Kathy wants to come to our party tonight.
23 We may go shopping this afternoon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numa Daem</th>
<th>غلط</th>
<th>صحیح</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>آنا سوف اذهب الى المدرسه غدا.</td>
<td>انا سوف اذهب الى المدرسه غدا.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>اريد ان اذهب الى المكتبة.</td>
<td>اريد ان اذهب الى المكتبة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>هما يضحكان هذا البيت بمن قليل.</td>
<td>هما يضحكان هذا البيت بمن قليل.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>اوصي هو بقرأ هذا الكتاب.</td>
<td>اوصي هو بقرأ هذا الكتاب.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>اومنها هي تدرس في هذا المدرسة.</td>
<td>اومنها هي تدرس في هذا المدرسة.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>اقترح ان يأكل الطعام.</td>
<td>اقترح ان يأكل الطعام.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>انتم ذهبت الى البيت فرحون.</td>
<td>انتم ذهبت الى البيت فرحون.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>هو يومين كان الله يري له.</td>
<td>هو يومين كان الله يري له.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>نحن سوف نسافر غدا.</td>
<td>نحن سوف نسافر غدا.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>يطلب بعلم الحکاية.</td>
<td>يطلب بعلم الحکاية.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>اشار الي انه درس اللغة العربية.</td>
<td>اشار الي انه درس اللغة العربية.</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>سوف ان يدرس في البيت غدا.</td>
<td>سوف ان يدرس في البيت غدا.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>يتحمل يكتب رسالته لاخته.</td>
<td>يتحمل يكتب رسالته لاخته.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>سوف ان نقرأ القرآن في المسجد.</td>
<td>سوف ان نقرأ القرآن في المسجد.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>يطلب ان يشرب هذا المشروب.</td>
<td>يطلب ان يشرب هذا المشروب.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>اصر هي تستمر دراسته.</td>
<td>اصر هي تستمر دراسته.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>هو كان سعيدا لروبي.</td>
<td>هو كان سعيدا لروبي.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>هو يعلم هي نقرأ القرآن جيدا.</td>
<td>هو يعلم هي نقرأ القرآن جيدا.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>سوف ينبه عن الحکاية في المستقبل.</td>
<td>سوف ينبه عن الحکاية في المستقبل.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>يجب ان يذهب.</td>
<td>يجب ان يذهب.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>اطلب انه يعرف عن الجدول الزمني.</td>
<td>اطلب انه يعرف عن الجدول الزمني.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>سوف ان تأتي الى الجلسه في المستقبل.</td>
<td>سوف ان تأتي الى الجلسه في المستقبل.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>نريد نقرأ هذه الكتب.</td>
<td>نريد نقرأ هذه الكتب.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B
Translation Test
لطفا جملات زیر را به فارسی ترجمه کنید:
1. تا کنون فقط درس در درس که در حال بررسی می‌باشد.
2. می‌خواهیم از این نتیجه استفاده کنیم.
3. وقتی گرفته شده که توضیحات به آن می‌رسانیم.
4. هیچ‌گاه نخواهم از آن استفاده کرده‌ام.
5. She wants to speak in English.
6. We are going to have a party tomorrow.
7. I may sleep more today.
8. She let me cook yesterday.

جملات زیر را به عربی ترجمه کنید. در صورت نیاز از مترادف‌های داده شده استفاده کنید.
1. They explained that they want a TV.
2. We suggest that she go.
3. He knows.
4. He drives.
5. We suggest.
6. I request.
7. Well.

References
Language and Cognition, 8, 39-61.

