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Foreword

Welcome to the fourth edition of the year 2012. The bi-monthly Iranian EFL Journal has provided an opportunity for its readers to access to more articles. The number of our readers and the authors who send articles to us is increasing day by day. The Iranian EFL Journal has attracted many readers not only from the Middle East but also from different parts of the world. The journal has had strong growth over the last few years with a monthly readership now exceeding 2500 readers. For a journal examining the topic of EFL/ESL, Literature and Translation studies, the growth and readership has been pleasing. The journal has also received numerous numbers of articles in the areas of translation studies and English literature. Statistically, readers are coming from almost 80 countries. In this edition, our readers can also find articles from the above mentioned domains. In the fourth issue of volume eight we present twenty articles for your reading. In the first article, Mansoor Fahim and Saeedeh Erfan Rad present developing critical thinking in Iranian EFL students’ argumentative essays through Shor's Problem-Posing pedagogy. In the second article of the issue, an evaluation of the effects of art on vocabulary learning through multisensory modalities is done by Elham Barazandeh, Bahman Gorjian and Majid Hayat. In the third article of the issue, Rahim Najjari presents task-based language instruction: implications for EFL pedagogy in general and for Iran context in particular. In the next article, the effect of learning styles and lexical difficulty on the C-Test is presented by Soheila Veisi. In the fifth article of the issue, Gholam-Reza Abbasian and Nasibeh Minagar present PI-based vs. DG-oriented instruction in developing grammar ability and motivation of EFL learners. The next article which is about the relationship between Iranian graduate students’ pattern of strategy use and gender, age, discipline, and self-rated proficiency level is done by Farid Naserieh. Afsaneh Hezarjaribi Ghassab in the seventh article of the issue presents the power of color in Toni Morrison's Beloved a Foucauldian perspective. In the eight article of the issue, a comparative study of academic articles written by Iranian scholars and English native scholars based on textual cohesion is presented by Aram Reza Sadeghi and Amineh Danaee. In the next article, the relationship between emotional empathy
and self-efficacy among Iranian EFL institute teachers is presented by Shole Hajghani, Mohammad Hasan Razmi and Mahtab Mohammadi Ghavam. In the tenth article of the issue Kamal Heidari Soroushjani and Parisa Riahipour present the effect of gender on EFL achievement test in pre-university schools. In the next article of the issue, the comparative effect of using critical thinking, constructivist learning, and a combination of the two techniques on EFL learners’ writing is presented by Hamid Marashi and Roya Jafari. In the next article of the issue, self-efficacy components in relation with the metacognitive listening strategies Iranian EFL learners use is studied by Mohammad Hasan Razmi, Mina Rastegar and Sholeh Hajghani. In the thirteenth article Sajad Davoudi Mobarak and Hossein Khani Arani present textbook evaluation: a comparative study between Iranian and Turkish high school English textbooks. In the next article of the issue, investigating the degree of correspondence between topics of reading passages in general English course books and students’ interest is presented by Hafez Shatery and Maryam Azargoon. In the next article of the issue, the impact of Langston Hughes’ poetry on Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye: an Afro-American critical reading is studied by Hassan Shahabi and Ali Asghar Emami Pour. The sixteenth article of the issue is about cohesive devices in Iranian research papers across social sciences and medical sciences: the case of conjunctives in papers on biomedicine and applied linguistics, and is done by Javad Gholami, Roghayeh Ilghami, Hassan Molla Hossein and Farzaneh Tahoori. Iranian foreign language learners’ multiple intelligences and their use of oral communication strategies is the seventeenth article and is presented by Nasim Shangarffam and Akram Zand. In the eighteenth article of the issue the importance of input in language acquisition is studied by Mehry Haddad Narafshan. In the nineteenth article of the issue sociocultural identity in EFL textbooks of Iranian high schools: an attempt to fill in the gap is presented by Fatemeh Poorebrahimi. In the last article of the issue Seyed Jalal Abdolmanafi (Rokni) has presented cross-linguistic influence in Iranian EFL learners: the case of relative clauses.

We hope you enjoy this edition and look forward to your readership.
Title
Developing Critical Thinking in Iranian EFL Students’ Argumentative Essays through Shor's Problem-Posing Pedagogy

Authors
Mansoor Fahim (Ph.D.)
Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, College of Foreign Languages and Literature, English Department

Saeedeh Erfan Rad (Ph.D. Candidate)
Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, College of Foreign Languages and Literature, English Department

Biodata
Mansoor Fahim is an associate professor of TEFL at Allameh Tabataba'I University, Tehran, Iran from 1981 to 2008. At present, he runs Research methods, psycholinguistics, Applied Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, and seminar classes at M.A. level. Also, First Language Acquisition, Psycholinguistics, and discourse Analysis at Ph.D. level. He has published several articles and books mostly in the field of TEFL and has translated some books into Persian.

Saeedeh Erfan Rad is a Ph.D. student of TEFL at Islamic Azad University, Science and Research Branch, Tehran, Iran. Her fields of interest include intercultural studies, second language writing, and CALL.

Abstract
Any Iranian EFL teacher has most probably witnessed the malfunction of students in writing, particularly argumentative essays. The essays are typically short, not well-organized, bearing scattered ideas, full of grammatical or spelling mistakes, and usually
lacking an attractive start or a convincing end. Borrowing ideas from Shor's problem-posing pedagogy, the current study attempts to tackle some of these problems through practicing a dialogic sort of writing between the teacher and students. Twenty female university students and graduates with intermediate level of English proficiency participated in the study. Each participant first filled out a questionnaire on her writing history and beliefs about writing. Then she produced two argumentative essays on given topics at the beginning and end of the study, and 10 journal entries each of which received teacher's comments and questions. Finally, the students were interviewed to express their feelings toward the practice. The results obtained from the analysis of the data revealed that the students could produce longer, more organized essays at the end of the study mainly because of the sort of critical thinking they developed through the problem-posing technique in dialogic form. This practice also proved to be efficient in creating a positive attitude toward writing in students.

**Keywords:** Critical thinking, Argumentative essay, Problem-posing pedagogy, FL writing.

1. Introduction

Any Iranian English as a foreign language (EFL) teacher with some years of teaching experience in institutes or universities has most probably witnessed the failure of students in writing, particularly argumentative essays. The essays are typically short, not well-organized, bearing scattered ideas, full of grammatical or spelling mistakes, and usually lacking an alluring start and a convincing end. Having different purposes in mind, English teachers assign various types of tasks and make use of different techniques to tackle this issue; however, the result seems to be the same: the majority of the students do not demonstrate acceptable improvement, if any.

To the researcher's best knowledge, few, if any, studies have attempted to address this problem in an Iranian context, while it seems to be one of the major challenges that Iranian EFL student-writers face in writing. The students often complain about running short of ideas and that they cannot express their beliefs well enough in their essays. Perhaps, one of the reasons for this kind of problem can be traced back to the inability of the students to analyze, evaluate and organize their thoughts and this, in turn, seems to be directly related to the lack of critical thinking in them.
Yet, the problem does not seem to be limited to the Iranian context. Having faced the same problem, Ira Shor (1992) describes his experience in a writing class in his book titled 'Empowering Education: Critical Teaching for Social Change'. Shor (1992, p. 3) depicts how he moved his unmotivated class toward "generative themes" and accomplishing the course test. Accordingly, this article seeks to first shed more light on the major issues regarding Shor's policy which are by themselves influenced by Paulo Freire's ideas. Subsequently, evidence from practicing the same policy in an Iranian context is provided to demonstrate if the same guidelines are efficient in such a context.

2. Review of the Related Literature

As Buffington and Moneyhun (1997) maintain, Shor's name is typically linked with discussions on liberatory pedagogy and "many liberatory pedagogues trace their philosophy to the immense influence of Paulo Freire, especially his Pedagogy of the Oppressed, and Freire is an acknowledged influence on Shor's thought" (p. 1). Shor and Freire's (1987) conversations in A Pedagogy for Liberation confirm this fact. As Buffington and Moneyhun (1997) assert:

Freire's basic contention is that education can function either to stabilize or destabilize the status quo. If the status quo is oppressive, it is the clear duty of the teacher to educate for freedom and for the creation of a new social, political, and economic order. This is done not through lectures and patented lessons, but through a Socratic questioning method that leads students to an awareness of their oppressive life situation. (pp. 1-2)

The Socratic method is in fact a type of questioning technique in which a series of probing questions are posed mainly in order to shed more light on the dark aspects of the problem and to bring about insightful understanding of the issue. Since Socrates’ mother was a midwife, he believed that just like his mother who helped a woman to give birth to her child, he helped people generate new ideas. Thus, this skill is known as the midwifery skill (Wang, Tsai, Chiang, Lai & Lin, 2008).

According to Newcombe and Uttal (2006), Socrates was famous for eliciting sophisticated concepts from an untutored slave boy through patient questioning. This fact can largely enlighten the significance of questioning in the act of teaching. Gunter, Estes & Mintz (2007) argue that the job of the teacher, according to Socrates, is to help the learner collect his or
her thoughts to build new understanding from prior knowledge. Thus, Socratic method is learning by inquiry, the process of asking and answering questions.

According to Wang, et al (2008), Socrates first guided the students to recognize their ignorance, and then kept their minds surrounded by questions until they could not stop thinking about them, and then helped to provide a good and spontaneous learning process similar to the processes by which we learn from our own painful experiences (midwifery skill). As opposed to the traditional lecture approach to teaching, this is a specific characteristic of the more recent Problem-Based Learning (PBL) approach. Sullivan, Smith, and Matusov (2009) assert that Socrates does not remain above many of the dialogues, but often uses his own life as personal example.

By the same token, this study attempts to practice a dialogic problem-posing technique as teacher feedback on the written texts is offered through comments and questions on the presented ideas, rather than feedback on grammatical and lexical errors. In other words, the content is the focus of attention, not the form. Tassoni (1996) elaborates on the term "dialogic" as the sites in which words, languages or cultures are relativized and understood as part of a greater whole. According to him:

As opposed to concepts of knowledge propagated in classrooms and writing centers where teachers and tutors harbor "secret meanings" or prescribe the content and direction of discussions, knowledge in dialogic environments appears open-ended in process. Students and tutors in these environments, describes in details by educators like Paulo Freire, Ira Shor, and Henry Giroux, function as co-learners as they examine the interests and concerns they bring to writing and reading against the broader cultural contexts that situate them as subjects, and they act as vital citizens engaged in dialogues committed to moral regulation and cultural production. (pp. 197-8)

As Tassoni (1996) contends in environments such as this, participants can experience writing and reading as something other than static means; they can experience them as the products and processes of cultural forces of which students and teachers are crucial components. Furthermore, in such a context, students can engage more genuinely with the issues pertinent to their papers. In practices as such, the teachers learn to share the power with their learners and they, in turn, develop the sort of critical thinking ability they need to demonstrate in argumentations and discussions.
Various scholars and research studies have long placed a great deal of emphasis on the significance of developing critical thinking skills in students (Schafersman, 1991; Terenzini, 1993; to name a few). According to Terenzini (1993), since content material is quite susceptible to forgetfulness, we need to develop those skills in students that are likely to be enduring and one of them is that of critical thinking skills. This critical pedagogy is what Shor (1992) calls "empowering education" which "approaches individual growth as an active, cooperative, and social process, because the self and society create each other" (p. 15). One way to achieve this type of empowering education, as Shor maintains, is through developing critical thinking skills in a problem-posing pedagogy and in this regard he (1987, 1992) presents an agenda of nine values which underlie his classroom practice. These values, known as the Agenda for Critical Training on which this study is also founded, will be explained later but in short they account for the values that Shor assumes should be observed in order to create a critical thinking atmosphere in any educational setting.

Considering the aforementioned literature and the problems depicted above, attempts were made in this study to address the following questions:

1. How is the problem-posing pedagogy applicable in improving critical thinking, and consequentially, the argumentative essays produced by Iranian EFL learners?

2. What are the participants' attitudes and perceptions toward this type of practice?

3. Method

3.1. Participants
Twenty Persian native speaker adults (all females) were selected from among the 24 research volunteers. The participants’ age ranged from 19 to 28. To ensure that the participants had acceptable knowledge and skills in writing, only participants who held at least a B.A. degree or were currently studying at the university in non-English language majors were chosen. The participants were all chosen from among the pre-intermediate and intermediate level classes of the institute they were studying at, thus, they constituted a fairly homogeneous group in terms of language proficiency. The data obtained through the questionnaires revealed that they constituted an almost homogeneous group in terms of their knowledge and experience in English and in English writing, as well. As for writing instruction in Persian, all of them shared the same background because they had all gone through the same educational system in Iran. Moreover,
none of them had received any special kind of instruction in writing in English. Due to ethical considerations, pseudonyms are used instead of the real names of the participants.

3.2. Instrumentation

The nature of the questions addressed in this study required a qualitative study, therefore, triangulation of data collection methods was applied in order to reduce the risk that the conclusions will reflect "only the systematic biases or limitations of a specific source or method" (Maxwell, 2005, p. 58) and to allow the researcher to gain a broader and more in-depth and secure understanding of the issues under investigation. The data were collected through three data sources: a) a background questionnaire about the writing instruction history of the participants, b) essays including two argumentative essays and 10 journal entries for each participant, and c) stimulated recall interviews to find more about the participants' attitudes. Each data source is elaborated below:

a) **Background Questionnaire:** A non-linear questionnaire (please see appendix) was given to the participants mainly to obtain information about the students’ Persian and English writing background and to set up a context for the explanation of findings. The questionnaire was devised by adjusting and combining the questionnaire used in Uysal (2008) and the questions proposed in Shor's (1992) book. It was then translated into Persian to enable all participants to better understand the questions.

b) **Essays:** A total number of 240 essays were produced by the learners. Each participant wrote one argumentative essay at the beginning of the study and one at the end. Meanwhile, each participant kept a journal in which she produced 10 essays which were all followed by the teacher's comments in a dialogic form. That is to say that, the teacher did not attempt to correct any grammatical or lexical error, rather, she used her own personal beliefs and ideas to provide comments and more importantly pose questions on the written texts. In this way, not only the teacher produced comments on the produced essays but also she made them think more deeply, and in a sense more critically, on what they had written in their journal entries. While the journal essays were basically used as the treatment, the two argumentative essays were applied to represent the line of possible change the students were going through in writing argumentative essays.
c) Audio-taped Retrospective Interviews: Each participant was interviewed at the end of the study in order to find more about the attitudes and perceptions of the learners and how they developed their argumentative essays. The interview was carried out individually and in at most 30-minute periods. The interviews were administered within two days after the final argumentative essay was produced.

3.3. Procedure
The data were collected within three phases over a period of three months. In the first phase, the participants answered the questionnaires. The following phase which consisted of the essays commenced by writing one argumentative essay on a given topic in order to represent the initial level of their writing at the beginning of the study. Next, the participants started their journal writing within four days. At this stage, each participant produced one essay on free topics which were mainly about the students themselves. Each time they delivered their notebooks to the teacher, the teacher wrote commentaries and posed questions on the essays and returned the notebooks within two days. The next essay produced by the student which for the most part included answers to the teacher's questions, was handed in to the teacher within three days. Four days after the tenth delivery of the teacher's comments, the students were asked to write another argumentative essay on a given topic. The final phase, which contained the interviews, was administered within two days after the production of the second argumentative essay.

3.4. Data Analysis Framework: Agenda for Critical Training: A Nine-Point Program
In offering students thinking problems in learning and civic contexts, Shor (1987, 1992) presents an agenda of nine values which underlie his classroom practice. Shor asserts that these practices and values are an adaptation of Paulo Freire's problem-posing education, basically a student-centered dialogue format for critical study. These values are summarized below:

1. Participatory: According to Shor, critical education should be participatory. From the start of a course, students should immediately be cognitively active using language for reading, speaking, writing, etc. They should interact and work on problems together and with the teacher, not sit and listen to him/her lecturing. For doing so, the teacher begins by posing various problems for writing and discussion. Whatever emerges from the classroom dialogue, s/he re-presents to students as a critical problem for further reflection. They hear their own thoughts and receive cues about the teacher's serious
interest in their words. This invites them to participate. It also signals that they have the intelligence to be critical citizens in the society, no less than in the classroom.

2. Affective: As Shor argues, participation involves affective as well as cognitive development. Empowering education and critical learning in this model is emotional as well as rational. Critical thought is simultaneously a cognitive and affective activity. The difference between empowering and traditional pedagogy has to do with the positive or negative feelings students may develop for the learning process.

3. Critical: The next value on Shor's agenda is the critical nature of classroom learning. The class material presents problems for critical inquiry. The teacher encourages in students a critical attitude towards social issues and towards the course itself. Students are not cast as passive recipients of official knowledge. They are asked to be critical actors who make meaning.

4. Situated: this pedagogy is situated. What the teacher tries to do in the classroom is a student-centered curriculum, not a teacher-centered one. The teacher learns from the students' speech and writing the issues that matter to them, and then use those themes to develop the problems for his/her training together. The course is also situated in the languages, statements, issues and knowledge students bring to class. Their cognitive and social situations are the starting points, not his ways of speaking about the world.

5. Dialogic: This teaching is dialogic, a mutual exchange between teacher and students. To be dialogic means that students engage in critical inquiry together. Generally, we are born as curious, inquisitive, enterprising, cooperative and communicative beings, with special competencies to use tools like language. We were not born as passive, silent, depressed, alienated people. Socially, many develop into alienated people who respond to work and civic life with cynicism or monosyllabic disregard.

6. Desocializing and deconditioning: This pedagogy is desocializing, to transform passivity into involvement. We can desocialize not only the passive-aggressive way people behave in classrooms, but also the agenda of negative values absorbed from mass culture, such as racism, sexism, love of the rich and powerful, obsession with communism, excessive consumerism, and authority-dependence, to name a few. The teacher raises awareness
about these values because they are impediments to critical thought, to taking yourself seriously as a thinking citizen and worker. Deconditioning is another kind of desocializing in which the teacher tries to change his classroom behaviors, conditioned in school over years. Specifically, he wants to decondition students from their roles as passive learners who do such things as 'playing dumb' and 'getting by'. The teacher also wants to desocialize himself from the habit of didactic lecturing which includes always having the 'last word'.

7. Democratic: This approach is democratic. Democracy is the way we relate in the classroom and is the goal of our intellectual work. But 'democracy' is not an absolute value or an abstract lecture. Democracy is practiced in the classroom, not lectured about or read about. Teachers and students who practice cultural democracy through dialogue begin and end in different places, not as equals. The teacher takes the lead in directing the process. But, the course is open to student interventions, criticisms, subjectivity, voices, and themes. Democracy means that authentic and critical student voices are spoken, and that students assert their role in making the course with me.

8. Interdisciplinary: The course is interdisciplinary. The teacher may need to bring in materials from Labor History or Psychology or Nursing into a writing course. S/he does not accept academic limits from the name of the course or the departmental affiliation. S/he teaches the course as an informed generalist who has a specialty in writing, media and literature.

9. Activist: The final course value is its activist orientation. When possible, the teacher orients student attention to political activity in society where human beings are now addressing the issues they discuss, where organized groups are trying to effect social change. The teacher does not harangue students or lecture them on a 'correct line'. A course is not a rally or a political meeting. It is a dialogue where the problem of acting on our knowledge can only be raised as a question.
4. Results and Discussion

The nine principles of Shor's agenda for critical thinking were used to analyze the data obtained from the three sources. In other words, it was attempted to find out whether these principles were applicable and found in this sort of practice, and if yes, how they were or they were not effective.

1. **Participatory**: This principle seems to be actively involved in this practice because of its very dialogic nature. It inevitably takes two to form a dialogue. Thus, when a question is asked on the part of the teacher, the student is unavoidably involved when she attempts to provide the answer. Moreover, the questions posed do not normally require anything more than personal beliefs and perceptions of the students, thus, as Shor refers to it, the participants in this study were cognitively active, and this, in turn, seems to make them more critically aware of what they write. This point was directly or indirectly referred to in the interviews. Thirteen students referred to this fact that they liked their active participation in the written discussions. Zahra, for instance, mentioned to this point in the following way:

   *At the beginning, I never thought I could write so much. But when I started writing, I did my best to answer the questions. At times, I spent the whole day thinking about what I wanted to say. Finally, when I finished writing, I was surprised at the length of the text I had produced.*

2. **Affective**: Not only were the students' enthusiasm and positive feelings obviously perceived during the implementation of the practice in the classroom, but also it was directly pointed out in the interviews. Most of the participants compared this type of writing with the traditional type they practiced at school and expressed their negative feeling toward the old and their positive feeling toward the new technique. Shiva, for instance, mentioned this difference in the following way:

   *I personally had no writing experience other than the one we had at school. At school, we were given a topic on which we had to write a composition, but we never received any kind of comment or instruction. We read out the essay in class and the teacher just said 'good' or 'not very good' and gave us a score and we sat down. I hated it, you know. I was never good at composition. I always asked others to write for me... But I liked the technique you used in our class. Actually, at first, I thought it is going to be something*
like we had at school, so I didn't really like it, but then I found out that it was completely different. I enjoyed reading the comments and I was happy that I could have the chance to reply.

3. Critical: This value in Shor's agenda was also obviously perceived in this practice since this form of dialogic writing presents problems for critical inquiry. By posing questions that required second though and reconsideration on the part of the student, the teacher encouraged in students a critical attitude toward what they produced. The students were actively involved in negotiation of meaning, this making the practice a meaningful one for the students. Moreover, since the students were repeatedly questioned on their writings, a sense of critical thinking seemed to be developed in the students. Almost all the students referred to this fact in their interviews. For instance, Sara mentioned that:

_After the third or fourth essay, I recognized that the teacher repeatedly questions what I write about. Thus, I decided to predict her questions and provide enough details, reasons and explanations, whatever that I felt might be later questioned or criticized by the teacher._

4. Situated: Based on Shor's definition, this sort of practice is situated and student-centered. The teacher strived to identify the issues that matter to the students in their writings, and then used the same themes to develop the problems and questions. Furthermore, as Shor refers to, this technique is situated in the languages, statements, issues and knowledge students bring to class. It is the cognitive and social situations of the students that are the starting points, not the teacher's ways of speaking about the world.

5. Dialogic: This practice is basically dialogic. In Shor's words, it is a mutual exchange between teacher and students. The students are actively and by large engaged in critical inquiry. This sort of performance makes use of the innate sense of curiosity and communication in students as humans with special competencies to use tools like language. Maryam was one of the students who referred to this feature as one of the advantages of the practice:

_I liked the way it happened. I mean the way we exchanged our ideas. Each time you gave me back my notebook, I was impatient to see what you have written to me. It was just like_
a conversation, but the good point about it was that I had enough time to think about what you had said and then replied back.

6. Desocializing and deconditioning: This practice was in a sense desocializing and deconditioning, since as some of the participants pointed out, they were given the opportunity to transform their passivity into involvement. In other words, more reticent and taciturn students enjoyed their involvement in a context where there were no raised eyebrows or hidden laughter! The participants also admitted that they had never experienced writing like this. The data obtained from the questionnaires also revealed that the students had rarely gone beyond writing compositions on given topics at school. As Sara and Fatemeh mentioned, they felt more at ease to express their ideas. Moreover, the teacher raised questions that, as some pointed out, 'vexed' their minds. In this regard, Mina said:

*Sometimes you raised questions that seemed strange to me. I mean I never thought someone would ever question them... I thought everyone would know that they are right, you know. So it was really hard for me to find an answer to your questions. I remember once I had written that I was upset with my friend because she had lied to me and you wrote why I was upset. I wrote back because as we all know lying is not good. And you brought up the issue of white lie and whether I thought it was acceptable or not. It was quite perplexing, you know. I had never thought about the issue like that. It even made me discuss the issue with my family.*

7. Democratic: The term democracy in the sense that Shor has elaborated on in his pedagogy seems to be applicable in this type of practice. In fact, democracy takes a practical form through this technique. As it is in the definition of Shor, in this technique, the teacher took the lead in directing the process. However, the process involved student comments, subjectivity, voices, and themes. The participants seemed to enjoy their role in directing the process forward.

8. Interdisciplinary: Although in the course of action undertaken in this study the teacher did not make use of any extra sources and references, but it appears to be quite feasible to exploit any other kind of material to better guide the students in this regard.
9. *Activist:* It can be said that in this course of study this final principle mainly pivoted around the social and ethical issues in the society. That is to say that no political movement or action was encouraged in the discussions, however, some of the issues discussed in the texts were directly or indirectly related to the recent concerns of the society. For instance, whether women should work, whether having children is an obstacle for occupational and academic improvement in one's life, and whether the high school students are qualified enough to make the final decisions for their future life. Although it is not easy to recognize whether this sort of practice could be effectively influential on the lives of the participants, it can be inferred that it could at least make them think critically about some of the issues that they had otherwise taken for granted.

As it was discussed above, all the nine principles of Shor's pedagogy were applicable in the conducted practice in this study. Moreover, as it was briefly discussed in each principle, the underlying tenets of this agenda are effectively helpful in developing critical thinking, sense of involvement and cooperation in the participants. Yet, part of the first question addressed in this study concerned the development of the participants' argumentative essays. The main problem which actually led the researcher toward conducting this study was the fact that the students normally produced short, unorganized essays that lacked effective ideas. It was hoped that through this practice, the students would become more critical thinkers so that they would not 'run short of ideas', as one of the participants described in the questionnaire as one of the problems she always faced when writing an essay. On the one hand, the analysis of the interview database revealed that at the end of the practice, the majority of participants developed a better sense of analysis and argumentation in discussions. On the other hand, the length of the essays was an indicator of this achievement. At the beginning of the practice, the average number of words in the initial argumentative essays was that of nearly 200 words, but at the end of the practice this number increased by about 380 words in the final argumentative essays. Moreover, the analysis of the texts revealed that the participants produced more organized and well-developed texts and developed the line of argumentation in a more effective way. Although few in number, some participants (seven) mentioned that in the discussions, they also learned about some techniques and patterns for organizing the texts, including collection (numerating the ideas), explanation and comparison. In general, all the participants directly expressed their positive attitude toward the practice and mentioned that they liked how it went on. However,
they also referred to this fact that since the practice was carried out in summer, they were free enough to spend enough time for writing the essays and journal keeping. Yet, some of them were still keen on continuing the practice through email.

5. Conclusion

In general, it was proven that this sort of practice is quite effective in developing critical thinking and a positive attitude toward writing in students. Unfortunately, due to lack of quality instruction in writing educational background of Iranian students, since writing instruction has been largely absent in the educational life of Iranian students, an implication has formed among them that one cannot learn or even be helped to write well. In other words, one either has the inborn and innate talent to write well or does not. Therefore, those who write well are those who are gifted with the ability to write and this in turn has resulted in a negative feeling toward writing. The participants in this study were no exception and this attitude toward writing was demonstrated both in questionnaires and interviews. When it comes to writing in a second language and with a not very high level of proficiency, the problems double. Yet, one very obvious result of this kind of practice was developing a positive attitude toward FL writing in participants. The majority of the participants expressed their interest in the activity, but it should be borne in mind that the students were not under any kind of pressure, their essays were not graded and no significant decision was made based on their writings. Yet, it cannot be denied that the students themselves had noticed the change in their attitudes toward English writing. The second major result of the study was that of developing a sense of argumentation and the ability to critically evaluate one's own writing which was already discussed.

This study and the results obtained at the end of this practice revealed that this sort of pedagogy can be quite useful in developing the type of critical thinking needed for argumentation and writing a persuasive essay. Moreover, the participants' essays increased in length and organization, however, there was not much evidence perceived in the quality of the essays in terms of grammar and the choice of vocabulary. One probable reason can be that there was no direct focus-on-form or consciousness-raising instruction involved. Perhaps this type of practice is more effective for higher levels where fewer grammatical mistakes are likely to occur in essays. Or it can be used as a technique for developing ideas in student-writers which can be accompanied by consciousness-raising tasks that can promote the grammaticality of texts as
well. One other limitation of the study, which has to be taken into account when practicing such a technique, was the long hours it took the teacher to provide the students with comments and questions. Further research with various groups and in different contexts is needed to better evaluate the effects of this pedagogy from different points of view.

References


**Appendix (Questionnaire: Persian Version)**

1. پایدارگری مهارت "نوشتند" به فارسی

2. این زیان اخبار به عنوان اول در کلاس دبیری آورده علیه می‌باشد؟ (1= ناپذیر، 10= پذیر)

3. در هر سال تحصیل و در هر کلاس چه مقدار نگارش به زبان فارسی داشته اید؟ (اطفا توضیح دهد.)

4. گونه‌های نگارشی ای را که به عنوان بخشی از آموزش به زبان فارسی داشته اید را از لیست زیر انتخاب نموده و

   - داستان
   - انشا
   - نگارش مباحثه ای
   - گزارش توضیحی
   - شعر
   - خاطره توضیحی
   - جواب کوتاه در امتحانات
   - خلاصه توضیحی
   - دانخورست یا احساس اداری
   - مقاله تحقیقاتی
   - غیره (اطفا مشخص نمایید).

5. کدام سه نوع از گونه‌های بالا از بینی را باید خوانند؟ به ترتیب میزان راهبردی نمایید.

6. ایا یک نمونه از موضوعات که بیشتر از همه برای نگارش به شما داده می‌شود را ذکر نمایید.

7. به گونه‌ای آموزگاران زبان فارسی شما، راههای اصولی در نگارش برای متقاضیان مخاطبانی کدامند؟
۹. به‌گفته آموزگاران زبان فارسی شما، چگونه با پایستی یک متن را سازمان پیشنهادی؟ (طبقاً با جزئیات توضیح دهد).
۱۰. در طی حمایت پایگاه‌نگاران، عوامل آموزگاران بیشتر روزی چه جنبه‌هایی از نگارش زبان فارسی تأکید می‌کرده‌اند؟ (تمام موارد را که شما رونده علامت‌بندی نمایید.)

۱. دستور زبان درست
۲. أملای درست کلمات
۳. روش‌های ایشی

۱. مقدم موضوع اصلی در هر پاراگراف
۲. نظر اصلی نویسندگان
۳. استفاده از زبان زبان

۱. بیان احساسات خود به طور صادقانه
۲. مقایسه کردن خوانندگان
۳. سازمان‌دهی عقاید
۴. طول نوشته

۱. تمیزی مرتبت بودن و داشتن خط زبان
۲. ابزار و تحقیق
۳. تقلیل از زیگار و افراد مهم و استفاده از دیگر منابع
۴. استفاده از مثال و جزئیات برای شرح و توضیح ایشی

۱. محیا
۲. رعایت همبستگی در سطح پاراگراف
۳. میزان

۱. غیره (طبق مشخص نمایید).

کام سه مورد از موارد بالا بیشتر تأکید می‌شند؟ به ترتیب اهمیت نام ببرید.

واژه‌های نوشتاری به انگلیسی

۱. بادگیری مهارت "نوشتار" به انگلیسی
۲. به‌طور عمقی نگارش خود بر زبان انگلیسی در مقیاس ۱ تا ۵ ده چه رتبه ای می‌دهید؟ (۱=حداکثر، ۱۰=حداقل)
۳. این یکا که کننده به دست آمده در زبان انگلیسی بیشتری ای چه در آن به طور خاص اصول زبان به زبان انگلیسی را امروزه باشند؟ (امروزه زبان نوشتاری به زبان انگلیسی شامل افعالیت‌های نوشتاری برای گرامر و لغت جدید نیشوند.)
۴. اگر پایه شما به انواع شماره ۱ مثبت است، لطفاً به سوال‌های زیر پاسخ دهید.

۱. در هر کلاس به‌طور چه مقدار نگارش به زبان انگلیسی داشته‌اید؟ (طبقاً توضیح دهد).

۴. گویند های نگارشی ای را که به عنوان بخشی از آموزش به زبان انگلیسی داشته‌اید و مورد انتخاب نموده و
5. کدام مورد زبان ایالات متحده را بیشتر راهبردی بودن؟ به ترتیب میزان راهبردی بودن ذکر نمایید.

6. آیا بار استانداردی که مانند سایر از همه برای فرد خاصی به شما داده می‌شود؟

7. سه موردی که بهتر از همه برای فرد خاصی به شما داده می‌شود؟

8. آیا شما نگارش انگلیسی خود را با ترکیب دو زبان تغییر می‌دهید؟

9. به گفته نمودگر زبان انگلیسی شما، راه‌های اقتصادی در زبان انگلیسی را متداول گفته کنید.

10. به‌طور کلی، به گفته نمودگر زبان انگلیسی شما، چگونه بایستی یک مقاله در سازمان خوش‌خیم بیان کنید (اطلاعی برای جهت توضیح دردها)?

11. در طول تجربه با گروه هیجان‌انگیز، عموماً نمودگر زبان برای روی چه جنبه‌هایی از زبان انگلیسی تاکید می‌کرده؟ (تکمیل)

12. چه کمکی می‌تواند از نمودگر زبان انگلیسی اینترنتی به شما بدهد؟ به ترتیب اهمیت نام بردید.

اولین:
گرایشات شخصی در مورد نگارش

1. من از نوشتن دلتن سپریم
کاملا موافق

2. به طور کلی کدام را ترجیح می‌دهید: نوشتن به زبان فارسی و یا انگلیسی
از نظر شما معمولی‌ترین شرط لازم برای خوب نوشتن کدام است؟

3. اگر لازم باشد اموزش خوب، همه قادرند خوب برویند؟

4. آیا از نظر شما فیلم‌های انگلیسی سیاه و سفید؟

5. آیا از نظر شما نیازی به یادگیری از زبان انگلیسی است؟ یا اگر بله، یوزگرینی یا یوزگرینی است؟

6. از نظر شما چگونه می‌توان به یک نویسنده خوب تبدیل شد؟

7. از نظر شما چگونه می‌توان به یک نویسنده خوب تبدیل شد؟

8. از نظر شما سخن‌گویندگان و آسان‌ترین کارها برای نگارش یک نوشته بینی نمی‌کنند؟

سطح زبان انگلیسی

1. در طول تحصیل در مدرسه چند سال اموزش زبان انگلیسی دیده اید؟

2. به طور متوسط چند ساعت در هفته اموزش زبان انگلیسی داشته اید؟

3. اگر هرگز انگلیسی، ابراز (زبان) اموزش شما در مدرسه یا دانشگاه بوده است؟

4. اگر هرگز در خارج از کشور زندگی یا یا تحصیل کرده اید؟ یا اگر بله، برای چند سال؟

اطلاعات شخصی

1. سن:

2. مقطع تحصیلی فعلي:

3. اخیرین مدرک تحصیلی دریافت شده:

4. رشته دانشگاهی:

5. از همکاری شما صمیماته سپاسگزارم.
Title

An Evaluation of the Effects of Art on Vocabulary Learning through
Multisensory Modalities

Authors

Elham Barazandeh (M.A.)
Payam noor university, Bandar Imam Khomeini, Iran

Bahman Gorjian (Ph.D.)
Department of TEFL, Abadan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Abadan, Iran

Majid Hayati (Ph.D.)
Shahid Chamran University, Ahvaz, Iran

Biodata

Elham Barazandeh is an instructor of TEFL in the English Department of Payam noor university, Bandar Imam Khomeini, Iran.

Bahman Gorjian is assistant professor in the English Department of Islamic Azad University, Abadan Branch, Iran. His main research interests are language teaching methodology and CALL research in EFL contexts.

Majid Hayati is a Ph.D. in Linguistics and teaches in Shahid Chamran University, Ahvaz, Iran. He has published and presented in the area of English language.

Abstract

The purpose of this experimental study is to investigate the effects of arts on vocabulary acquisition through multisensory modalities in English as foreign language (EFL) context. This study investigates how students acquire language through multisensory modalities. The art modalities were used in this study was visuals, tactile, music (auditory) and kinetics. In doing the research, 60 primary students of Bandar Imam Khomeini public school were selected. Data collect through the student interest survey and three experimental pre-tests and post-tests for about three months. T-tests analyses were used and findings of t-test analysis revealed that there was a significant relationship between teaching English through visual and tactile modalities and development of
language learners at the beginner level. T-test analysis for second question showed that there was a significant relationship between teaching English through kinetics with music and development of language learner at the beginner level. The Chi square analysis was administered for vocabulary acquisition with and without visual and Tactile Stimulus. The result showed that the teaching English can be affected through visual and tactile modalities. Chi-square analysis of the Kinetics Questionnaire with music revealed that there was a relationship between teaching English through kinetics with music and development of language learner at the beginner level.

**Keywords:** Art, Multisensory modality, Vocabulary acquisition, English as Foreign Language

1. Introduction

Arts support the skeleton of language acquisition that is the tasks of reading, speaking, writing, and listening (Gardner, 2000). According to Gardner (2006), the sensory part of the arts ease the activities of discussing, planning, and reading aloud as artistic elements helping the acquisition of language. Thus, with the teachers’ use of movement and drama in the classroom, experiencing stories contextually and vividly consolidate students' idea about the vocabulary and themes in literature with non-fictional and fictional genres.

According to Vazquez (2000), language and art can complete and support each other. When a concept is not clear in its written form, the visual form can help the learner to comprehend, and at the same time, when the visual form is confusing and unclear, the written form can aid understanding. Through the ages art has been a means of visual expression used to express a wide spectrum of concrete and abstract ideas. Art can take the viewer into different times and into different worlds. It can also be used to present different levels of vocabulary to learners of a second language.

Students’ reflections show that art/language integration provided motive throughout the creative process. The language learning experiences became. Art can often be applied as a means to an end, a way of expressing aspects of the world. Vasquez (2000) acknowledges that “To use art in the language classroom does not mean to teach art, but to teach language through art” (p.1). This type of art/language integration enables students to consolidate vocabulary learned and make sense of grammatical features of the language.
Art/language integration provided opportunities whereby students created sentences in the target language to describe their art work, thus reinforcing the language concepts in authentic and purposeful situations. Students were able to revise grammatical rules, such as noun adjective agreement, numbers, verb conjugations, formulaic questions and expressions (Popplewell & Johnstone, 2009, p.2).

Participation in visual arts programs generally provides students with chances to further promote their knowledge, skills and understanding in making artworks. Language integration gives literacy opportunities to use the language in an authentic way. Students are motivated to investigate the world as subject matter and make use of expressive forms using the target language. Throughout the duration of the project students considered the audience response to their works based on cultural sensitivity. Students promoted knowledge, skills and understanding in appreciating their own art works and those of others, recognizing some relationships between artists, art works, audiences and the way in which the world is interpreted through a cultural lens (Popplewell & Johnstone, 2009).

The review of literature showed that art make context more meaningful and real. The arts offer student immediate, sensory input and personal choice. Textbook that used in school are narrow in scope to give students this type of practice, appreciation, criticism, and cultural knowledge. Students can use authentic materials in the classroom, emphasizing the contextual and sensory feedback (Krashen, 2004). Most of EFL learner in Iran fail to learn English because of sensory support and contextual activation.

The arts are indispensable parts of the human experience; they are useful (Boyer, 2002). It is discovered that human being not only communicates with words but also through dance, and the visual arts. Boyer (2002) (cited in Dickinson, 1996) discovered that art are ignored in schools. Therefore, courses in the arts were the last to come and the first to go. In all of the school there are students with different cultural, social, and economic backgrounds that result in very different ways of thinking, learning, and behaving. Children with different competence and talent are in the same classrooms. Children from poor families study with more rich students. School systems that rely on teaching chiefly through the spoken and written word merely do not reach all these kinds of students. Even students with the same backgrounds comprehend and process information differently (Dickinson, 2002).
In short, we can use the arts integrated language learning in Iran to present particularly useful tools to ease learning for those who mainly visual and facilitate learning for those who are principally visual and kinesthetic, in addition to making it possible for all students to learn more, retain what they have learned, know how to apply what they have learned in a different contexts, and feel more positive about learning.

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of the art on vocabulary acquisition through multisensory modalities at the beginner level. Multisensory modality is a technique that uses different sense to teach English. This study includes tactile, visual, and kinetic. The researchers discuss the role of sensory modalities of art in language acquisition among EFL beginners in Iran. This study may give contribution to beginners learning EFL in Iranian context. When young people are thought through the arts, something changes in their lives. We have often seen the rapt expressions on the faces of such young people. Those who support using arts in class arts show photographs of smiling faces to document the experience. This study may facilitate learning vocabulary among EFL beginners through their engagement with the arts. The results of this study show that those students who use multisensory modality were outperformed than control groups.

According to Gardner (2000), it is crucial to develop different intelligent in schools via art. In Iran teachers didn’t use art to teach languages. Thus, an effort was made to integrate art to language learning classes in primary school.

Based on the above argument, this study addresses the following research questions:

Q1. What is the effect of visual and tactile modalities on EFL Learners’ vocabulary acquisition of language at the beginner level?

Q2. What is the effect of kinetics with music and song modalities on EFL Learners’ vocabulary acquisition of language at the beginner level of English learning?

1.2. Research Null Hypotheses

To answer the above research questions, the following null hypothesis were formulated:

HO1: Visual and tactile modalities do not affect EFL Learners’ vocabulary acquisition of language at the beginner level.

HO2: Kinetic with music and song modalities do not affect EFL Learners’ vocabulary acquisition of language at the beginner level.
2. Review of literature

Gardner (2006) has indicated that “schools and school systems which welcome the arts are a rare commodity on the contemporary American scene” (p.163). Vygotsky explained learning as “the acquisition of many [italics added] specialized abilities for thinking” (p. 83). In *The Psychology of Art*, Vygotsky try to include indirect proof and not just direct “scientific” proof, giving same weight to artistic. Instrumental and artistic thinking should be considered as important forms of intellect that use different kinds of semiotic mediation to actualize meaning (Urso, 2006).

Gardner (2000) and the staff at Harvard’s Project Zero have concluded that the visual arts and music are contained in the function of symbol creation and usage, as is language development. Platt (1977, p. 262) found a direct correspondence between the drawn symbol and the written symbol. Platt’s study demonstrated how graphic images provide a concrete foundation for developing sound–image relationships in addition to aiding the abstract reading of symbols, increasing motivation, and enhancing vocabulary.

In addition, because the arts shows different road for children to state themselves and find their internal thoughts, understanding and communication are less dependent on linguistic ability. It seems to be antinomy; to express information through a nonverbal system facilitates and strengthens verbal understanding. The procedure of shifting information from one system of communication to another, for example from visual imagery to language and language to visual imagery, motivate learners to process meaning in ways that deepen their understanding. Drama, for example, has been shown to urge higher-order thinking, problem solving, and psychological integration as children use their voices and their bodies as ways of communicating (Fiske, 1999). As children convert their knowledge into movement and sound, it becomes easier to convert that knowledge into linguistic form (Hoyt, 1992).

Integrating curriculum with the arts is beneficial for students. It establishes instruction that is often drawn from life experiences, empower students to question and encourage in real-life issues. It helps to combine subject areas, not to separate them. Students learn and use skills from all disciplines and across disciplines to become knowledgeable about personal and global issues and it improve skills and applying knowledge in more than one area of study.

Howard Gardner’s (2000, 2006) multiple intelligences theory has been offered teachers with a structure for integrating the arts in the education classroom. Gardner’s list of intelligences, including logical-mathematical, linguistic, musical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, and
intrapersonal, offer teachers with a planning tool for the purposes of arts integration. The multiple intelligences approach goes beyond the arts and design whole schools around approaches that address students’ capacities. Spina (2006) assess whether authentic arts-based curricula facilitate the acquisition of English as a second language (ESL) without sacrificing proficiency in the first language (Spanish). This question was tested theoretically and empirically. This study compare two classes of ESL 5th graders. The first class was taught through an arts-based curriculum. The second class was taught using traditional ESL methods. The result showed that an “arts-based curriculum provides significant cognitive advantages to ESL students by building on the cognitive strengths inherent in bilingualism. The semiotic richness of the arts echoes the semiotic abundance available to speakers of more than one language, nurturing an ability to approach symbolization in a creative, nuanced way. Whereas traditional ESL programs treat students’ 1st languages almost as obstacles to learning (because the educational goal is narrowly defined as proficiency in English), an authentic arts-based curriculum allows students to embrace diverse modes of expression with the result that their expressive abilities grow in a global way” (p.1) (Urso, 2006).

The Art Program, developed by Popplewell and Johnstone “in association with the Quality Teaching Framework, has been designed to engage student learning and promote creativity.”(p.1). during project, students were motivated to create individual and unique artworks that help them to think on values and attitudes towards language and culture. Students understand the processes that were needed to made art pieces and knowledge about art appreciation. In addition, students showed a significant awareness and understanding of language and cultural identity through the learning experiences presented.

The integrated art/language program, developed in association with the NSW (New South Wales, Australia) Quality Teaching Framework (2003), increase student involvement in language learning while raising creativity in the arts (Johnstone & Popplewell, 2009).

Liu (2009) used “Integrating Thinking, Art and Language” (ITAL) to develop multiple intelligent in four-year-old children at a preschool in China. He selected 67 beginner Chinese students. They were educated in school ecology. He tested ITAL technique. The study was conducted over eight months. Results indicated that the students showed “significant growth in art as well as other subjects, oral language expression and social interpersonal skills through producing and communicating about their artwork”. (p.1).
Authentic arts-based curricula (AABC) involves students in multicultural artistic endeavors that seek to raise intellectual growth across different disciplines. Such a curriculum integrates the standard educational content areas through the visual arts, literature, drama, music, and dance. An authentic arts-based approach emphasizes cognitive development and content, not English language instruction, as the primary objects of instruction. This suggests that AABC would facilitate L2 acquisition without sacrificing higher-order cognitive development as an emphasis on content area vocabulary and decontextualized structural skills would (Spina, 2006) (P.4).

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants
The research sample includes 40 students learning EFL selected in a public primary school and a private language institute in Bandar Imam Khomeini. The research was limited to one school. Their ages were ranged from eight to twelve. The constraints of time, number of schools available, and the student population required non-random judgment sampling selection of participants. Thus 60 students were divided into experimental and control groups randomly. Each group included learners as they were assumed to be at the beginner level judge by their scores on the pre-test administration. Experimental group received multi-sensory modalities, which the control group taught through some placeboes.

3.2. Instrumentation

3.2.1. Interest survey
Measurement for arts and language acquisition was developed by Renzulli's (1977, 1983). The student interest survey (see Appendix A) reveals the students' modalities, interests, and artistic practices that promote learning English. It contained five item and each items have sub-items with the reliability coefficient($r = .647.$) calculated through Kudor Richardson, KR-21 formula. The student interest survey includes a list of interests in the different arts, literature, school trip preferences, and their preference for inviting guest speakers at the schools (Renzulli, 1977, 1983). The inventory scales change within the instrument, demanding ranges in preferences about the arts that helped them in learning.

The list of interest items starts with place that student prefers for field trips. The second question (Gall et al., 2007) investigate about if students want to write a book which title and genre they prefer to select for that book. There was space for the student to answer question.
(based on Renzulli, 1977, 1983). The fourth question ask student to put name of the person that they like to spend day in career day and what kind of people they like to invite when it is career day. The fifth question contains 15 choices about student interest to do artistic activity and what kind of activity they prefer to do. The lists include artistic, scientific, mechanical, and dramatic types of activities on a Liker-type scale of agreement level.

3.2.2. Pre-test and Post-test
Three self-report type questionnaires were created based on the two research questions and Craffy (2009). Each survey consisted of 14 to 15 items (Appendixes A, B, and C). They were translated in to Persian. Self-report types of surveys would permit students to write their opinions and viewpoints about their own understanding. Three pre-test and post-test was made by the researcher for the experimental part of the study. Cronbach's Alpha for the Brown Bear was .679. Cronbach's alpha for Caterpillar story was .744. Cronbach's Alpha for Music and kinetics test for experimental group was .617. Cronbach's Alpha for Music and kinetics test for control group was .765.

4. Procedure
The present study investigated the effect of multisensory modalities on learners’ vocabulary acquisition. This study consists of one experimental and one-control group. The researcher handed parent consent to the students to the student. The number of the student ranged from 10 to 15 in the private language institution and 20 to 25 in the schools. Data collection contained observations, audio presentations, and interviews. The research was done over three months. It was conducted each week on Sunday morning. It takes 45 minute for each group in makeup session. To answer question one, student fill the pretest silently. The experimental group taught through multisensory modalities. They received visual and tactile modalities. The control group did not receive visual or tactile modalities. All of the questionnaires translated in Persian and they were simplified for young learner. Experimental groups used tactile modalities. They can touch, feel. Then both groups completed the posttest.

To answer research question two, all students saw a film. They read lyrics to a song. The experimental groups heard the song. They do in kinetic activities related to the film and song, saw a power point presentation. Teacher explained each verse of the song. The control group only saw the film and read the lyrics. Four weeks later, both groups take the posttest. After the
experimental part of the research, the interview with a few selected students was made. The entire interview was in Persian to obtain what kind of modality they used in project. The interview was based on each of the three research questions of the study.

5. Results

Student interest asked students different questions about student interest in art activity. It also asked about activity that students wanted to do but they did not have time for doing it. The students have five choices: 1 (Never), 2 (Maybe), 3 (Do not care), 4 (Possibly), and 5 (Definitely).

Table 4.1. Frequency and Percentage of five-point Likert scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question number</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>Definitely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The experiment involves two situations: (a) the use of visuals and manipulative, (b) the use of Kinetics, music and language (Appendix B, C).

4.4. Visual and Manipulative Modalities

The first question was about the role of visual and manipulative in language learning. The question was: What is the effect of visual and tactile modality on vocabulary acquisition of
language at the beginner level of English learning? The pretest and posttest consist of 14 question and five choices (Appendix B): 1 (Totally disagree), 2 (Somewhat disagree), 3 (No opinion) 4 (Somewhat agree), and 5 (Totally agree). Twenty five students receive treatment and control group consist of 15 students. Table below showed mean and standard deviation for each question. Then t-test was calculated. If a student rated the question higher on the posttest than on the pretest, the difference score was positive, and if a student rated the question lower on the posttest than on the pretest, the difference score was negative. Chi-square was calculated for the Questions in the Visuals and Manipulative Questionnaires. The results are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Chi-square of Visuals and Manipulative Questionnaires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi-Square&lt;sup&gt;a,b,c&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>87.565</th>
<th>85.220</th>
<th>123.384</th>
<th>83.682</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig.</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.027</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.029</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square analysis revealed that $X^2 = (87.555, 85.220, 123.364, 83.682)$ was greater than $X^2 = (81.36, 81.36, 81.36, 80.23)$; therefore, null hypothesis number one was rejected. It showed that teaching English can be affected through visual and tactile modalities which develop of language learners at the beginner level. T-test was calculated to showed the difference between each group mean in the use of visual and manipulative modalities between experimental and control groups. The results are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Paired samples $t$-test of control group: Brown Bear Story

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>POSKHERS</th>
<th>PREKHERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$t$</td>
<td>23.219</td>
<td>17.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$df$</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Difference</td>
<td>8.06250</td>
<td>6.37500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</td>
<td>7.3224</td>
<td>5.5757</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POSKHERS</td>
<td>7.3224</td>
<td>8.8026</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREKHERS</td>
<td>5.5757</td>
<td>7.1743</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of $t$-test showed a significant difference between the two means pre and post-tests. According to Table 4.4, observed $t$ was greater than than $T_c$. In the pre-test of the control group, $T_o$ was greater than $T_c$ ($T_o = 17 > T_c = 2.13$). Thus the null hypothesis number one was rejected. In the post-test of the control group the observed $t$ value was greater than critical $t$ value ($T_o = 23.219 > T_c = 2.13$). T-test analysis showed that there that there was relationship between teaching English through visual and tactile modalities and development of language.
learners at the beginner level. T-test was calculated to compare pre-test and post-test of the experimental group. The results are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5. Paired Samples $t$-test of experimental groups: Brown Bear Story

| POSKHERS | 11.633 | 16 | .000 | 5.94118 | 4.8585 | 7.0238 |

According to Table 4.5, the observed $t$ value (21.321) was greater than $T_c$ (2.12). Thus the null hypothesis number one was rejected. In pre-test of experimental group, $T_o$ was greater than $T_c$ ($T_o = 11.633 > T_c = 2.12$); therefore, the null hypothesis number one was rejected. T-test analysis revealed that there was a significant difference between the means of groups taught through English through visual and tactile modalities and development of language learners at the beginner level.

Table 4.6. Paired Samples $t$-test Experimental group: Caterpillar Story

| POSKERM | 12.824 | 16 | .000 | 8.76471 | 7.3158 | 10.2136 |
| POSKERM | 11.662 | 16 | .000 | 4.00000 | 3.2729 | 4.7271 |

According to Table 4.6, observed $t$ value (12.824) was greater than $T_c$ (2.12). Thus the null hypothesis number one was rejected. In the pre-test of the experimental group, $T_o$ was greater than $T_c$ ($T_o = 11.662 > T_c = 2.12$), therefore, null hypothesis number one was rejected. T-test analysis revealed that there was relationship between teaching English through visual and tactile modalities and development of language learners at the beginner level. T-test was calculated for the difference between pre-test and post-test of the control group. The results are shown in table 4.7.

Table 4.7. Paired Sample $t$-test control group: Caterpillar Story
T-observed \((7.376)\) was greater than \(t\)-critical \((2.11)\) in the Caterpillar story, so null hypothesis number one was rejected. There was a significant difference between teaching English through visual and tactile modalities in developing language learners’ vocabulary at the beginner level of in primary public school.

### 4.5 Music and Kinetics Modalities

The pre-test and post-test (Appendix C) were used to measure the effect of these variables on language learning. It consisted of 15 questions and 5 choices as: 1 (Totally disagree), 2 (Somewhat disagree), 3 (No opinion), 4 (Somewhat agree), and 5 (Totally agree). Fifty students from experimental group and fifty students from control group complete pre and posttest. Fifty students in experimental groups received treatment. The control group consisted of 15 students. Cronbach's Alpha for Music and kinetics test for experimental group was .617. Cronbach's Alpha for Music and kinetics test for control group was .765.

The mean, standard deviation and the difference between pre and post-test was calculated for each question. The sample sizes change from the previous section because some students have other make up classes like computer, robotic. Some session in this part of research was administered instead of exercised classes. The results are shown in Table 4.8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Test Value = 0</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(t)</td>
<td>(df)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREKERM</td>
<td>7.376</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POSKERM</td>
<td>9.727</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square analysis revealed that \(\chi^2(114.728, 86.905, 103.265, 86.060)\) was greater than \(\chi^2(66.34, 74.47, 76.78, \text{and } 73.31)\); therefore, null hypothesis number two was rejected. So, there was a significant difference between teaching English through kinetics with music in developing language learners’ vocabulary at the beginner level. T-Test was calculated to show the difference in the use of Music and kinetics between experimental and control group.
Table 4.9. Paired Samples t-test Experimental group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POSFILM</td>
<td>34.556</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>8.41176</td>
<td>7.8957 - 8.9278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREFILM</td>
<td>11.633</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>5.94118</td>
<td>4.8585 - 7.0238</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to table 4.9, $T_o$ was greater than $Tc$ ($T_o = 34.556 > T_c = 2.12$). Thus the null hypothesis number 2 was rejected. In the pre-test of the experimental group, $T_o$ was greater than $Tc$ ($T_o = 11.633 > T_c = 2.12$); therefore, the null hypothesis number two was rejected. T-test analysis showed that there was a significant difference between teaching English through kinetics with music in developing language learners’ vocabulary at the beginner level.

Table 4.10. Paired Samples t-test Control group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>POSFILM</td>
<td>32.742</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>8.43750</td>
<td>7.8882 - 8.9888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PREFILM</td>
<td>17.000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>6.37500</td>
<td>5.5757 - 7.1743</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to table 4.10, $T_o$ was greater than $Tc$ ($T_o = 32.742 > T_c = 2.13$). Thus the null hypothesis number 2 was rejected. In the pre-test of the control group was greater than $Tc$ ($T_o = 17 > T_c = 2.13$); therefore, null hypothesis number 2 was rejected. T-critical was smaller than t-observe therefore null hypothesis was rejected. So, there was relationship between teaching English through kinetics with music and development of language learner at the beginner level of English learning in primary school.

Since the Paired Sample t-test may not indicate the differences between the independent groups including the control and multisensory (i.e., the experimental) groups, an Independent Samples t-test was run to reveal the probable significant differences between the groups under investigation at the pre-test and post-test exams. The results of descriptive and inferential statistics were appeared in Tables 4. 11 to 4. 13 as follows:

Table 4.11. Descriptive Statistics of the control and experimental group
Data analysis at the pre-test stage showed that there was not any significant difference between the control and experimental group before the treatment period (p<.05). Statistics after the treatment period of using multisensory variables are presented in Tables 4.14 and 4.15.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multisensory variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post test-CoEx</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6.2667</td>
<td>1.79911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8.4815</td>
<td>.84900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.15. Independent Samples t-test of groups (post-test of control and experimental groups)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multisensory variables</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-.138</td>
<td>.891</td>
<td>-.0667</td>
<td>.48296</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Equal variances assumed

| PRETES | Equal variances assumed | .007 | .934 | -.138 | 55 | .891 | -.0667 | .48238 | -1.03338 | .90005 |
|        | Equal variances not assumed | -.138 | 54.091 | .891 | -.0667 | .48296 | -1.03490 | .90157 |
Results showed that there was a significant difference between the control and experimental group after the treatment period (p<.05). In other words, using multisensory techniques is effective in teaching vocabulary among the EFL beginners. The above results will be discussed in the following chapter.

5. Discussion

The research questions will be brought up again here and based on the results obtained the main issues will be discussed thoroughly.

Q1. What is the effect of visual and tactile modalities on EFL learners’ vocabulary acquisition of language at the beginner level?

Students were in the small office with a table and chair in the classroom. The site had space limitations. The students ranked their pretest and posttest responses on the 5-point Likert scale with 1 (Totally disagree), 2 (Somewhat disagree), 3 (No opinion), 4 (Somewhat agree), and 5 (Totally agree). The tests were administered to the control and experimental groups every Saturdays for four month. Nineteen students in experimental group finished the pretest. Nineteen students received the visual and manipulative intervention. The students saw the computer presentations, worked with the tactile material, and read the story. Sixteen Students in control group read the story without the interventions. The first posttest was the same as the pretest, but they were administered three weeks apart. Then they completed the posttest. Finding showed that t-observed was greater than t-critical in both stories, so null hypothesis was rejected. There was relationship between teaching English through visual and tactile modalities and development of language learners at the beginner level of primary school in Iran.

Carre (1996) claims that because visual art offered another aspect to facilitate teaching ESL. Different activities are involved including painting, literature, and writing is presented. Three literary elements that involved are: point of view, figurative language, and
characterization. Within these areas, uses of visual art to facilitate language learning aspects are considered to be beneficial. Visual art assist the student to understand more easily. It helps them to see more clearly, and to have better eye for details. Working with something that is concrete such as art to something abstract such as language encourage student to link their own experiences.

According to the frequency of the survey that students filled, in the pre and post-test of the control group seeing the picture and touching story object were the highest sensory modalities. Hearing the story and touching a story object, seeing the picture, seeing the printed word, knowing the printed words and oral reading were important modalities. In the post-test painting the word picture and knowing the word meaning were the highest sensory modalities. In the experimental group, knowing the words meaning, seeing and drawing the words, Seeing the print and pictures were the highest modalities in the experimental group and seeing a picture of the vocabulary, draw and hear about the vocabulary, hearing the picture and seeing the picture were important in the pre-test of the experimental group. In the post-test of the experimental group, touching an object about the story, knowing the words, seeing and drawing the vocabulary, seeing the printed words and pictures of the vocabulary were the highest sensory modalities. Seeing a picture of the vocabulary, touching the story objects, seeing the printed words, hearing the story and seeing the pictures, hear the story and touch a story objects were very important for the experimental group.

**Q2: What was the effect of visual and kinetic modalities with music on EFL Learners’ vocabulary acquisition of language at beginner level?**

For the second pre-test at the first site, all of the students in the experimental group agreed to see the kinetic moves. They watch an actor moving and seeing the dancer while listening to the music. Results showed that T-critical was smaller than t-observed; therefore, the null hypothesis number was rejected. So, there was a significant relationship between teaching English through kinetics with music and development of language learner’ vocabulary at the beginner level of English learning in public school.

In the review of literature section, a number of studies support the results of the study. Haynes and Smallwood (2008) showed that using a song as the text could combine advantage of singing and reading aloud with English language learners at the beginner levels. Singing also promotes learners’ phonemic awareness and enhances vocabulary retention. They discuss “This digest has
introduced singable books as a simple yet effective classroom method to engage students in active English language learning. Singing in unison allows children to comfortably participate as part of a group” (pp. 2-3).

When young children come to school, they feel safe about moving in space and do kinetic activity. “They have not necessarily developed total body awareness, coordination, or rhythmic competence (ability to hear and move to the beat in music). But they respond excitedly to activity-oriented experiences.” It is Chinese proverb that is said “I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand” (Nadon-Gabrion, 2001) (p.1).

Language and movement skills incorporate the right amount of effort and intent with precise timing (Block, 2001). Hannaford (1995) reminds people that the human qualities we associate with the mind can never exist separate from the body (p. 11) because movement is an indispensable part of learning and thinking as well as an integral part of mental processing.

Block (2001) found movement in physical education classes enhances native English language acquisition significantly than without physical education, including examining of literary works. Block's discovery seems to disagree the researcher's findings about the kinetic modality as unhelpful to the high-functioning students. Neverthless, it is possible that the students who were interviewed did not regard physical education as a kinetic experience.

6. Conclusion

The interventions consist of visual and tactile manipulative. The second variable was the use of kinetics with music and language performed by using music, language, and film. The quasi-experimental study included a qualitative part. It contained interviews and classroom observations. The students express their learning preferences, ideas, and viewpoint through the student surveys, the three pre-test and post-test questionnaires, interviews, and observations.

Traditionally, art integration has played an important role in the process of the language program. Student reflections show that art/language integration enhances encouragement throughout the creative process. Students have purpose in learning language and language learning experience has purpose. Art show the way to an end, a way of expressing aspects of the world. Vasquez (2000) acknowledges that “To use art in the language classroom does not mean to teach art, but to teach language through art” (p.1). This type of art/language integration
enables students to strengthen vocabulary learned and enhance grammatical features of the language.

Previous literature supported the arts as a means for learning and presented the theoretical structure for the study of the arts and language acquisition. The arts increase and enhance cognition and language progress, showing another ways of knowing or the expression of multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 2000, 2006; Gardner & Lazar, 1995).

The interviews of four students who received the intervention gave important information. The students typically made use of all the modalities included in the research and found all modalities generally helpful. For example, in research question one; the visual and manipulative modalities were helpful to students in understanding the meaning of the text.

Dickinson (2002) showed that 45% of students in a standard classroom test were kinesthetic or "haptic" or sense of touch (p. 3) learners and approximately 40% of students were visual learners. However, students use multiple learning styles. The current research indicates that the more modalities used, the better the students' understanding, especially for elementary language learners.

In the educational setting, educations exclude movement. At the first session because of the cultural and educational setting students were reluctant to do kinetic movement. But after two sessions, they like kinetic movement. In the interview with some students, they said, it is useful and it did not distracting us. It helps student to understand the meaning. Kids like kinetics, they said that it was not distracting for them, but educational policy didn’t allow the use of kinetic modality in instruction.

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*From ProQuest database.*


Renzulli, J. (1977, 1983). *The interest-a-lyzer* (1st and 2nd ed.). Storrs, CT: University of


Appendix A: Student Interest Inventory
Student Interest Inventory: Do the Arts or Other Activities Help Me with My Learning Skills?

The purpose of these questions is to ask about our art experiences and language learning. Answer the questions as you believe. What things do you like to do and how do these things help you to learn? Think about what helps you to learn language and communicate well.

1. What art forms help me to learn to communicate the best? Number your first, second, third choices. List them as 1, 2, 3, and continue until the blanks are numbered.
   .....actor or actress
   .....design costumes or clothing
   .....make costumes or clothing
   .....build and paint scenery
   .....playwright
   .....Singer
   .....Photographer
   .....design advertisement
   .....film or production director
   .....design scenery
   .....business manager
   .....multimedia production
   .....Musician
   .....Light or sound production
   .....Software design

2. What are your favorite books and which help you to learn and communicate better? If you wrote a book, what subject or topic would it be? Some book types are science, history, autobiography, biography, poetry, fiction literature, fashion, math, geography and travel, politics, and economy and businesses.
Type of Book........................................
My book is About................................................................................................................

What is the title of your book?

Why would writing a book help you to learn and communicate better?

What class trip would help you to learn and communicate better? Number the list below with your first, second, and third choices etc. List them 1, 2, 3, and so on.

Art museum
Science museum
television studio
computer lab or center
4. Whom would you ask to visit the school on career day to help you learn and communicate better? Who would be the person in your or other communities whom you would like to spend this day? Put the career and then the name of the person.
First..............................................
Second...........................................
Third.............................................

5. The following is a list of activities you always wanted to do, but you never had the right situation or time to do them.

1. Write a fictional story, play, or poem. 1 2 3 4 5
2. Draw and write a comic strip. 1 2 3 4 5
3. Produce a newspaper. 1 2 3 4 5
4. Draw or paint people, places, or objects. 1 2 3 4 5
5. Play and learn an instrument (music). 1 2 3 4 5
6. Compose music, opera, or other music. 1 2 3 4 5
7. Create puppets and put on a show for peers. 1 2 3 4 5
8. Learn to sew or weave clothing. 1 2 3 4 5
9. Make jewelry or make a handicraft such as furniture. 1 2 3 4 5
10. Contact a public official or newspaper editor. 1 2 3 4 5
11. Repair a machine, toy, or other object. 1 2 3 4 5
12. Do a science project. 1 2 3 4 5
13. Create computer soft or hard ware. 1 2 3 4 5

Please list anything else you can think of, especially in art, which helps you to learn and communicate well........................................

Thank you for completely filling out this form.
Source (Renzulli, 1977, 1983).
Appendix B: Survey I
Pretest and Post-test: vocabulary acquisition with or Without Visual and Tactile Stimulus
Circle the following number after reading the questions:
1. totally disagree 2. somewhat disagree 3. no opinion 4. somewhat agree 5. totally agree.
1. I can understand vocabulary when I can see a picture.
2. I can understand the vocabulary when I can draw something.
3. I can understand the vocabulary when I can touch an object about the story.
4. I can only understand the sentences if I know the words.
5. I can understand the vocabulary when I see the printed words.
6. I can understand the vocabulary when I hear it read.
7. When I hear the vocabulary and see the printed words, I understand the most.
8. When I hear the vocabulary and see the picture, I understand the most.
9. When I hear the vocabulary and touch a story object, I understand the most.
10. When I draw what I read and hear about the vocabulary, I understand the most.
11. Seeing and touching pictures and objects helps me learn the most.
12. Seeing and drawing helps me learn the most.
13. Seeing and looking at pictures and print helps me learn the most.
14. Seeing the print and pictures help me learn while I hear the vocabulary read.
Thank you for completely filling out this form.
Source (Craffey-2009)

Appendix C: Survey II
Pre-test and Post-test: How Kinetics, Musicality, and Languages are interconnected to vocabulary acquisition.
Circle the following number after reading the questions:
1. I understand better, when I read the text first.
2. I understand better after I write about vocabulary.
3. I understand better from my reading the sentence and an oral reading at the same time.
4. I understand better, when the sentence has music with it.
5. I understand when I see the visual prompts. Then, I read and write vocabulary.
6. I understand when I hear the oral prompts. Then, I read and write vocabulary.
7. I understand when I move in response to the prompts. Then, I read and write vocabulary.
8. I understand better, when the sentence is sung. Then, I read and write vocabulary.
9. I understand better, when I see and hear prompts. Then, I read and write vocabulary.
10. I understand better after I read, hear, and discuss the sentence. Then, I read and write vocabulary.
11. I understand better, when I discuss the sentence. Then, I read, move, and write vocabulary.
12. I understand better, when I hear the sentence and then I write vocabulary.
13. Moving is easy way to solve understanding the sentence and write vocabulary.
14. Hearing music with the sentence is an easy way to understand and write.
15. Visual clues make vocabulary acquisition easier.
Thank you for completely filling out this form.
Source (Craffey, 2009)
Title

Task-based Language Instruction: Implications for EFL Pedagogy in General and for Iran Context in Particular

Author

Rahim Najjari (M.A. in TEFL)
Miandoab Branch, Islamic Azad University, Miandoab, Iran

Biodata

Rahim Najjari is an English teacher at the Ministry of Education. He also teaches English at the department of foreign languages at Islamic Azad University, Payem-e-Noor University. His research interest in includes teaching and curriculum development.

Abstract

This paper intends to provide a brief and concise explanation for task-based language instruction (TBLI) and its implications for language pedagogy. TBLI, sometimes as an equivalent to or as a realization of the strong version of communicative language teaching (CLT), is gaining currency over previous language methods seeking to prepare learners for communication through already-practiced-linguistic repertoires. In TBLI, communication is not learned explicitly in advance for upcoming use but is picked up simultaneously through the use of language for negotiation of meaning in an interactive procedure. In order to understand the nature of TBLI and its implications for language pedagogy, psycholinguistic and sociocultural perspectives on TBLI as well as its close relationship with the strong version of CLT are taken into account. Implications of TBLI in language pedagogy with reference to theoretical accounts are also discussed by comparing the methodology of TLBI (pre-task, during task, and post-task) with PPP methodology (presentation, practice, production) of previous methods. It is also argued that TBLI can be methodologically utilized in Iran’s language curriculum.

Keywords: Communicative language teaching (CLT), PPP methodology, Language pedagogy, Task-based language instruction (TBLI).
1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been considerable growth in task-based language instruction (TBLI hereafter) (Bruton, 1998, 2002a, 2002b, 2007; Ellis, 2000, 2004, 2006; Furuta, 2002; Littlewood, 2004; Long & Crooks, 1992; Nunan, 2004, 2006; Nunan, R. 2006; Oxford, 2006; Skehan, 2002; Willis, 1996). Originally developed in second language acquisition (SLA) research as a means of clinically eliciting samples of learners’ language for purposes of research (Corder, 1981), tasks have achieved prominence over the traditionally product-oriented presentation-practice-production (PPP) lesson paradigm. Tasks as a central component in the language pedagogy and as a device for organizing the content and methodology of language teaching (Prabhu, 1987) lay claim to provide better contexts for learners’ acquisition process through involving learners as language users in undertaking ‘message-focus’ communicative interaction; therefore, TBLI works on a theory of language learning (not on a theory of language structure) in which learners communicate to learn not learn to communicate. Most teachers facing with its ambitious claims in language pedagogy and with endless marketing bombardment on TBLI textbooks and materials are being willingly and widely informed by its theoretically-claimed underpinnings.

In what follows I introduce TBLI and its implications for language pedagogy especially in our country. The article begins with a brief history of language pedagogy towards communication. There then follows a repertoire of task definitions, a distinction between a task and an exercise, and rationale for TBLI. TBLI key characteristics on the basis of psycholinguistic and sociocultural viewpoints and on the basis of its close relationship with communicative language teaching (CLT) are treated. And finally its implications for language pedagogy are discussed by examining TBLI methodology and PPP methodology.

2. A Brief History of Language Pedagogy: A Move toward TBLI

Language pedagogy has undergone many changes during its lifetime which is accordingly concurrent with each era’s new demands on language pedagogy and with developments in psychology and linguistics. The early attempts to include language into the curriculum trace back when learning Latin and Greek was justified as an intellectual discipline, underlying on the assumption that language like other school subjects is capable of making students enjoy the same intellectual power as other subjects do in schools. Later language pedagogy takes other subsidiary roles including “the key to the great literature and philosophy of another language”
These considerations and orientations were echoed in Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) lacking any theoretical scientific underpinnings behind it. In the 20th century, the first steps towards scientific teaching of language were developed by introducing the notion of ‘method’. According to Rodger (2001), the period from the 1950s to the 1980s has often been referred to as ‘The Age of Methods’, during which a number of quite detailed prescriptions for language teaching were proposed. Situational Language Teaching (SLT) evolved in the United Kingdom while a parallel method, Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), emerged in the United States. In the middle-methods period, a variety of methods were proclaimed as successors to the then prevailing SLT and ALM. These alternatives were promoted under such titles as Silent Way, Suggestopedia, Community Language Learning, and Total Physical Response.

Salmani-Nodoushan (2006) believes that middle-methods are based on personal philosophies on how an individual’s potential can be maximized, while theories of psychology, linguistics, and sociolinguistics lend support to the theoretical foundations of SLT and ALM. After GTM and during World War I and II, needs of societies for communication made radical changes in language pedagogy. To communicate ably in foreign languages has become the main preoccupations of language learners and teachers and syllabus designers. Therefore, two trends emerge: product-oriented syllabus and process-oriented syllabus (Nunan, 1988).

At the one end of dichotomy exist syllabuses emphasizing on ‘what of communication’ and at the other end of it there are syllabuses emphasizing on ‘how of communication’. This dichotomy is analogous to White’s (1988) ‘Type A syllabus’ and ‘Type B syllabus’, Wilkins’(1976) ‘synthetic’ and ‘analytic’ syllabus respectively, and it is also reflected in Bruton’s (1998) ‘learning-to-communicate’ and ‘communicate-to-learn’ distinctions. ALM, SLT, and functional-notional syllabuses consider communication as the end result of language learning, while process-based syllabuses, more emphasis on task-based syllabuses, are directed at improving students’ abilities to use the target language rather than making them get new linguistic skills. To give a comprehensive idea of the trends in language pedagogy, especially TBLI, White and Wilkins’ dichotomies are taken into account. White (1988, p.44) defines both ‘Type A’ and ‘Type B’ syllabuses as follows:

‘Type A’ syllabuses focus on what is to be learned: the L2. They are interventionist.
Someone preselects and predigests the language to be taught, dividing it up into small pieces, and determining learning objectives in advance of any consideration of who the learners may be or of how languages are learned. Type A syllabuses, White (1988) points out, are thus external to the learner, other-directed, determined by authority, set the teacher as decision maker, treat the subject matter of instruction as important, and assess success and failure in terms of achievement or mastery.

Type B syllabuses, on the other hand, focus on how the language is to be learned. They are noninterventionist. They involve no artificial preselection or arrangement of items and allow objectives to be determined by a process of negotiation between teacher and learners after they meet, as a course evolves. They are thus internal to the learner, negotiated between learners and teachers as joint decision makers, emphasize the process of learning rather than the subject matter, and assess accomplishment in relationship to learners’ criteria for success.

In a relatively similar vein, according to Wilkins 1976, in synthetic syllabus, language is segmented into discrete linguistic items so that learning a language is gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up and learners’ role is to integrate, or synthesize, the pieces when the time comes to use them for communicative purposes. Lexical, structural, notional, and functional syllabuses are synthetic.

"Analytic approaches ... are organised in terms of the purposes for which people are learning language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes" (Wilkins 1976, p.13). Thus analytic syllabuses are those which present the target language whole chunks at a time, without linguistic interference or control.

Task-based syllabuses, an offspring of process-based syllabus, serve two main goals, i.e. communicative effectiveness and language acquisition. Most proponents of TBLI are for the communicative effectiveness (Willis, 1996).

This orientation towards communication is seconded by the relationship between TBLI and CLT; for example, Nunan (2001) claims that task-based syllabuses represent a particular realization of CLT. Instead of beginning the design process with lists of grammatical, functional-notional, and other items, the designer conducts a needs analysis which yields a list of the target tasks that the targeted learners will need to carry out in the ‘real-world’ outside the classroom.
3. Defining Task

According to Crooks (1986), definition of task is problematic since neither in research nor in language pedagogy is there complete agreement on what constitute a task. This is due the fact that the study and description of task have been approached from different perspectives and for different purposes. Some definitions for ‘task’ are provided here:

A task is a piece of classroom work that involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is focused on mobilizing their grammatical knowledge in order to express meaning, and in which the intention is to convey meaning rather than to manipulate form. The task should also have a sense of completeness, being able to stand alone as a communicative act in its own right with a beginning, a middle and an end (Nunan, 2006, p. 17).

All the tasks illustrated have a specific objective that must be achieved . . . They are goal-oriented . . . the emphasis is on understanding and conveying meanings in order to complete the task successfully (Willis, 1996).

A task is an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective’ (Bygate, Skehan, & Swain, 2001).

An activity which required [sic] learners to arrive at an outcome, from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate the process, was regarded as a "task"(Prabhu, 1987).

A piece of work undertaken for oneself or others, freely or for some reward. In other words, by 'task' is meant the hundred and one things people do in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between. Tasks are the things people will tell you to do if you ask them and they are not applied linguists (Long, 1985, p. 89).

Littlewood (2004) categorizes definition of ‘task’ into three groups along a continuum according to the extent to which they insist on communicative purposes as an essential criterion. They briefly include:

1. Some authors like Williams and Burden (2002, p.168) define a task as ‘any activity that learners engage into the further process of learning a language’; in this definition communicative purpose is not included;
2. Some writers think of tasks primarily involving communication. Stern (1992) associates tasks with realistic language use when he writes that communicative exercise...provides opportunities for relatively realistic language use, focusing learners’ attention on a task, problem, activity, or topic, and not on a particular language point;

3. Moving further along this continuum, many writers see the category of task as comprising only activities that involve communication. Ellis (2000) believes that this communicative definition now represents ‘a broad consensus among researchers and educators.’

Skehan (1998), drawing on the number of writers, puts forward five key characteristics of a task:

1. Meaning is primary.
2. Learners are not given other people’s meaning to regurgitate.
3. There is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities.
4. Task completion has some priority.
5. The assessment of task is in term of outcome.

Some scholars also draw a distinction between a task and exercise. Widdowson (1998), for instance, argues that what distinguishes task from an exercise is not ‘form’ as opposed to ‘meaning’ but rather the kind of meaning involved. Whereas a task is concerned with ‘pragmatic meaning’, i.e. the use of language in context, an exercise is concerned with ‘semantic meaning’, i.e. the systematic meanings that specific form can convey irrespective of context. And Nunan (2001) states that a task has a non-linguistic outcome while an exercise has a language related outcome.

4. Rationale for TBLI

The growth of the process approach and the emergence and popularity of the 'language-task’ as an important unit of process syllabus design and classroom use can be attributed in part to dissatisfaction on the part of EFL/ESL teachers with various method-based approaches. Long and Crooks (1992) state that the basic rationale for TBLT derives from SLA research, particularly descriptive and experimental studies comparing tutored and naturalistic learning. They (1992, pp.30-31) argue that linguistic syllabuses are “flawed because they assume a model of language
acquisition unsupported by research findings on language learning in and out of classrooms, and because they attempt to elicit immediate target-like mastery of these forms’.

Ellis (2004) has concluded that the rationale for task-based syllabuses, which have been advanced by SLA researchers and educationalists, draws on a variety of arguments. First and the foremost, it is premised on the theoretical view that the instruction needs to be compatible with the cognitive process involved in L2 acquisition. Second, as in the case of Prabhu, the importance of learner ’engagement’ is emphasized; tasks, as long as they provide a ‘reasonable challenge’, will be cognitively involving and motivating. Third, tasks serve as a suitable unit for specifying learners’ need and thus for designing specific course purposes.

5. Theoretical Accounts of Task-based Language Use and Learning

The research into task-based language learning and teaching is widely carried out from both psycholinguistic perspectives and sociocultural perspectives (Ellis, 2000). The comparison that Ellis (2000) makes between the two perspectives reveals that the psycholinguistic approach is beneficial for planning and designing tasks. In contrast, the sociocultural approach is able to provide the insight into the learners’ adaptation of tasks, and the process of learning through scaffoldings.

5.1. Psycholinguistic Perspective

It views a task as a device that guides learners to engage in certain types of information-processing that are believed to be important for effective language use and/or for language acquisition from some theoretical standpoint. Ellis (2000) mentions three different psycholinguistic models: (a) Long’s interaction hypothesis, (b) Skehan’s cognitive approach, and (c) Yule’s framework of communicative efficiency.

The essence of Long’s hypothesis (1983) is that how meaning negotiation can attribute to L2 acquisition through the feedback that learners receive on their own productions when they attempt to communicate and through the modified output that arises when learners are pushed to reformulate their productions to make them comprehensible. According to Ellis(2000), certain task dimensions are hypothesized to promote meaning negotiation which are tasks that have a required information exchange, involve a two-way (as opposed to one-way) exchange of information, and have a closed outcome .And other dimensions include tasks that are not familiar to the interactants , involve a human/ethical type problem and a narrative discourse mode, and
Skehan’s cognitive approach is based on the way in which learners are believed to represent (produce) L2 knowledge. Skehan (1998) distinguishes three aspects of production: (1) fluency (2) accuracy and (3) complexity. He suggests that language users vary in the extent to which they emphasize on fluency, accuracy or complexity, with some tasks predisposing them to focus on fluency, others on accuracy and yet others on complexity. These different aspects of production hinge on different systems of language; fluency requires learners to draw on their memory-based system, while accuracy and, in particular, complexity are achieved by learners drawing on their rule-based system and thus require syntactic processing.

While previous models are oriented towards identifying those task features that result in learner production of potential importance for L2 acquisition, Yule’s approach (1997) has been directed at examining task-processes that contribute to communicative effectiveness, i.e. how task design and implementation impact on the skillfulness of L2 learners’ performance as opposed to their competence. He distinguishes two broad dimensions of communicative effectiveness: (1) the identification-of-referent dimension which is about the encoding and identifying referents from one another and (2) the role-taking dimension which results in intersubjectivity through making one’s inferences about other speakers’ perspectives and through tailoring one’s output according to inferences and feedbacks. Skills required in the role-taking dimension are as much as social and cognitive as they are linguistics. They underlie learners’ use of interactional strategies, both for negotiating meaning and for communicating problematic concepts.

5.2. **Sociocultural Theory**

Sociocultural theory (SCT) is based primarily on the work of a Soviet cultural-historical psychologist, L. S. Vygotsky (Lantolf, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky, along with Feuerstein, key figures in the social interactionist movement, took the issue with Piagetian view that from time of the birth children learn independently by exploring their environment, and with the behaviorist view that adults are entirely responsible for shaping children’s learning by judicious use of rewards and punishments. For social interactionists, children are born into a social world, and learning occurs through interaction with other people. From the time we are born we interact with others in our-day-to-day lives, and through these interactions we make our sense of the
world. Theorists in this field emphasize the point that development is not as much as a matter of taking in and possession of knowledge but rather of the taking part in social activity. Ellis (2004) concludes that in this view of learning the distinction between ‘use’ of the L2 and ‘knowledge’ of L2 becomes blurred because knowledge is ‘use’ and ‘use’ creates knowledge. In reaction to Chomsky definition of LAD, Artigal states that LAD is located in the interaction that takes place between speakers rather than inside their head. Thus acquisition occurs in interaction rather than as a result of interaction. (as cited in Ellis, 2004, pp. 176-177).

Nunn, B., (2001) mentions three points which TBLI and SCT share: (a) an attempt to re-contextualize the classroom, (b) the focus of activity or tasks as a place for studying and developing language, (c) and a focus on meaning. SCT has a few core tenets including the concept of (1) mediation which refers to the part played by other significant people in the learners’ lives, who enhance their learning by selecting and shaping the learning experience presented to them, (2)scaffolding is the assistance that a tutor can provide to a tutee during a task involvement, and (3) the zone of proximal development (ZPD), advanced by Vygotsky, is related to the individual’s learning potential which can be accessed by receiving assistance from someone who is more capable than the learner, such as the teacher or more capable peers or some other means of mediation (Lantolf, 2000).

6. TBLI and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)

CLT, marking the beginning of a major paradigm shift in language pedagogy, derives from a multidisciplinary perspective that includes, at the least, linguistics, psychology, philosophy, sociology, and educational research. The focus has been the elaboration and implementation of programs and methodologies that promote the development of functional language ability through learners’ participation in communicative events. The goal of CLT is similar to previous methods, but it is based on a very different model of language. Widdowson (1978) believes that methods before CLT focused on usage, i.e. the ability to use language correctly, while CLT is directed at use, i.e. the ability to use language meaningfully and appropriately in the construction of discourse. The central theoretical concept in CLT is ‘communicative competence’, a term introduced into discussions of language use and second or foreign language learning in the early 1970s (Hymes, 1971). In reaction to Chomsky’s characterization of the linguistic competence of the ideal native speaker, Hymes (1971) proposed the term ‘communicative competence’ to
represent the ability to use.

Richards (2007) in his booklet titled ‘Communicative Language Teaching Today’ groups trends in language teaching in the last 50 years into three phases:

Phase 1: Traditional approaches (up to the late 1960s)
Phase 2: Classic communicative language teaching (1970s to 1990s)
Phase 3: Current communicative language teaching (late 1990s to the present)

He cites Audiolingualism (in north America) (also known as the Aural-Oral Method), and the Structural-Situational Approach in the UK (also known as Situational Language Teaching) as examples of phase 1 language teaching trends which have syllabuses consisted of word lists and grammar lists, and graded across levels. In a typical lesson according to this trend, a three-phase sequence, known as the PPP cycle, is often employed: Presentation, Practice, and Production.

It seems that Richards’ classic CLT and current CLT division is analog to Howatt’s (1984) distinction between the weak versions of CLT and the strong versions of CLT. The weak version stresses the importance of providing learners with opportunities to use English for communicative purposes; it, therefore, attempts to incorporate communicative activities into the program of language teaching. Ellis (2004) claims that weak version of CLT doesn’t involve a radical departure from earlier methods as it reflects ‘Type A’ approach to language teaching. Functional and notional syllabuses developed by Willkins (1976) and Van Ek (1976) are manifestation of the weak version of CLT. As different from this, the stronger version of CLT claims that language can be acquired only through communication. This would mean that teaching involves not just ‘activating an existing knowledge of the language’, but ‘stimulating the development of the language system itself’ (Howatt, 1984, p. 279). The strong version of CLT bears a close resemblance to White’s (1988) ‘Type B’ approach to language teaching. Krashen and Terrell’s (1983) Natural Approach and TBLI are examples of the strong version of CLT.

Ellis (2004) proposes two approaches for using task in language pedagogy: a) task-supported language teaching, and b) task-based language teaching. His distinction also bears resemblance to the weak and strong version of CLT division. The weak version views tasks as a way of providing communicative practice for language items that have been introduced in more
traditional way. They constitute a necessary but not a sufficient basis for language curriculum, whereas the strong version sees tasks as a means of enabling learners to learn a language by experiencing how it is used in communication. In the strong version, tasks are both necessary and sufficient for learning.

Bruton (2007) states that sometimes task-supported language teaching is referred to as weak version of TBLI and Lochana and Deb (2006) state that the weak version of CLT is being practiced in Asian countries.

Klapper (2003) concludes that communicative interaction characteristic of task-based work can be seen as an offshoot from or a development of CLT, especially from the ‘strong’ version, asserting that language learning depends on learners being involved in real communication in which they use language in a meaningful way.

7. Task-supported Language Teaching and PPP Methodology

Tasks–supported language teaching employs PPP teaching paradigm in its typical classes which follows:

**Presentation:** The new grammar structure is presented, often by means of a conversation or short text. The purpose of the presentation stage is “to help the learners acquire new linguistic knowledge or to restructure knowledge that has been wrongly represented”, says Ellis (1988, pp. 21). The belief is that the students’ interlanguage will instantly develop as new language is explained to them. In subsequent lessons, new language will ‘build’ on top of what was taught previously, or as Skehan (1996, pp.17) says; “There is a belief that learners will learn what is taught in the order in which it is taught”.

**Practice:** It is typically divided into two sections, controlled practice and freer practice. In controlled practice the students are involved in mechanical production, simply repeating the target, without needing to think about when to use it. In freer practice they decide how the target language is used and may be required to manipulate the form. The assumption here is that learners understand the forms of the target language, but need practice to internalize the structure. This is a behavioristic view of learning that practice leads to mastery. Ellis (2004) calls the first section of practice as ‘exercises’.

**Production:** Students practice using the new structure in different contexts often using their own
content or information, in order to develop fluency with the new pattern. It is a question of great debate whether this part of the class is communicative, but to the PPP teacher this stage of the lesson should illustrate if students have learnt the ‘language item’ by using it in a ‘natural’ context or activity. Ellis (2004) believes that tasks are used in the production stage.

8. Task-based Language Teaching and Task Methodology

TBLI represents the strong version of CLT. Tasks can function as a useful device for planning a communicative curriculum, particularly in contexts where they are few opportunities for more authentic communicative experiences like many EFL situations. In TBLI, methodology plays a main role, i.e. how to learn not what to learn. It is typically put into practice in three stages, usually called pre-task, task, and post-task stages. Typical terminologies used to name the three stages vary slightly by proponents of TBLI. Ellis (2006, 2004) and Skehan (1996) calls them ‘pre-task’, ‘during task’, and ‘post-task’ and Willis (1986.p.2) uses ‘pre-task’, ‘task cycle’, and ‘language focuses’.

1. **Pre-task phase:** In the pre-task phase, the teacher explores the topic with the class, highlights useful words and phrases and helps learners prepare for the task. Learners may hear a recording of others doing a similar task (but not so similar to act as a model for exact copying). There may be a brainstorming session on the topic or a pre-task exercise (e.g. odd-word-out exercise), but the teacher does not pre-teach new linguistic forms. The purpose of pre-task is whetting students’ appetite to perform a task and reducing the cognitive or linguistic load on the learner. Lochana and Deb (2006, p. 144) believe that learners get exposure at the pre-task stage, and an opportunity to recall things they know. Ellis (2006, p. 22) puts forward that the teacher, as an expert, uses the pre-task to scaffold learners’ performance of the task with the expectancy that this ‘other-regulation’ facilitates the ‘self-regulation’ learners will need to perform the main task on their own.

2. **Task cycle phase:** It is divided into three parts, i.e. task, planning, and report. First, in ‘Task’, learners perform the task in pairs or small groups. This may be in response to reading a text or listening to a recording. The teacher monitors from a distance but does not intervene to correct errors. The key thing is that learners focus on meaning in this phase, use language to exchange meanings for a real purpose, employing whatever
language they choose or are capable of. The privacy of a small group is intended to build confidence. Willis believes that in this stage students use language in private. In ‘Planning’, learners prepare to report to the whole class, either orally or in writing, how they performed the task, what they decided or discovered, how they resolved the problem, etc. The idea here is that we tend to use different language depending on the circumstances of communication. In preparing for a public presentation, learners will focus on organizing their material, on clarity and accuracy, as opposed to the sole emphasis on fluency of the task phase. The teacher’s role is to circulate and help learners polish their language. This phase may also involve use of dictionaries and reference works. In this phase of task cycle student have opportunities to use language in public so they strive for accuracy of form and meaning. In ‘Report’, some groups present their reports to the class or exchange and compare written reports. The polished report might be recorded on audio or video for later playback, placed on a website or displayed in some other way (e.g. as a poster). The rest of the class listens or reads with a purpose (e.g. in order to fill in a questionnaire or to start a survey of some sort). The teacher chairs the session, commenting on reports and encouraging students. The idea is that learners gain practice in public, ‘prestige’ language use and that all learners are further exposed to spoken or written language. At the end of the ‘Report’ phase, learners might listen to a recording of a native speaker doing the same task so they can compare both their findings and their linguistic performance with that of proficient speakers.

3. **Language focus phase**: It consists of two parts, i.e. **analysis** and **practice**. In ‘Analysis’, the teacher sets language focused tasks, an activity that has all qualities of a task but has been designed to induce learners’ incidental attention to some specific linguistic form when processing either input or output (Ellis, 2004, p. 342), based on the texts which students have read or on transcripts of what they have heard. For example: highlight all the verbs in the perfect tense and decide why each was used; identify all the adjectives and classify the endings according to some criterion (e.g. agreement, case); underline all instances of a word type (e.g. modal verbs) and compare and contrast usage with a view to developing a hypothesis of how they are used. During ‘Practice’, the teacher practices new words, phrases or patterns that occur in the data analyzed. The idea is not that students will gain immediate command of these features but that by noticing them, they
will recognize them when they meet them again in other texts.

We can say that focus on form (attending to language requirement) occurs in two phases in the TBLI: (1) in the planning stage, and (2) in language analysis activities. The planning stage promotes close attention to the language form as learners strive for accuracy; they try to organize their reports clearly and check words and patterns they are not sure of. In the final component, language analysis activities also provide a focus on form through consciousness-raising processes. Learners notice and reflect on language features, recycle the task language, go back over the text or recording and investigate new items, and practice pronouncing useful phrases.

9. Implications of TBLI Methodology in Comparison with PPP Methodology

PPP and TBLI methodologies, belonging to two schools of language learning methodology, mostly reflect the distinctions made of White’ (1998) Type A and B syllabuses, Wilkins’ (1976) synthetic and analytic syllabuses, and finally Nunan’s (1988) product and process syllabuses respectively. In addition to the distinctions made by the scholars, there are some interesting points in TBLI in comparison with PPP methodology which are believed to help learners to be communicatively competent and at the same time to learn language. Some are:

1. TBLI is based on ‘learning and how to learn’, while PPP methodology is based on ‘teaching and how to teach.’ It is claimed that TBLI provides a rich opportunity context for learning, and ‘how to learn’ takes precedence to ‘what to learn’ since in TBLI, learning is a lifelong activity. ‘What to learn’ in TBLI is determined by learners’ needs analysis not by teachers’ language analysis. It is learner-centered since in both syllabus design (what to learn) and methodology (how to learn) learners’ priorities are included. Syllabuses are designed according to learners’ target language needs and the process of achieving this aim is through involvement of learners in learning.

In PPP methodology, the syllabus is determined beforehand in terms of linguistic content; teachers or educational experts’ preferences in the syllabus design are included. In the implementation of PPP methodology, learning process is also controlled by teacher since learners are believed to get what their teachers offer them. It is supposed that students intake what teachers offer them as input and in most cases intake and input doesn’t correspond, while in TBLI input and intake happen concurrently and intake determines the kind of input through output or feedbacks that learners provide for their peers or teachers. Therefore, intake in TBLI
doesn’t occur in a linear fashion but through a process which fits learners’ ‘built-in-syllabuses’.

2. Task methodology is performance-based while PPP methodology is competence –based. In TBLI, learning arises out of performance and learners are active participants who learn language by doing tasks, i.e. by engaging in meaning-oriented activities. Performance leads to competence; in other words, through the process of using language, learners get the usage of language. In fact, using language yields knowledge.

In PPP, however, learning arises out of competence and learners are passive observers who learn language by doing exercise, i.e. practicing form-oriented exercises. Competence leads to performance; in other words, it is believed that through the process of practicing language, learners get the use of language. In fact, knowing about a language is considered as a prerequisite for using it.

3. The process of task methodology is ‘communicate to learn’, while the process of PPP methodology is ‘learn to communicate’. In TBLI, learning evolves out of socially constructed discourse through interlocutors’ mutual active negotiating of meaning in order to get to intersubjectivity and to communicate in action takes priority over preparing learners for communication through the artificial practice of language system. Through communication, learners learn about the language; therefore, the orientation of learning, arising out of social activity through pair and group works, is moving from social dimension of learning toward psychological dimension, i.e. moving from intermental to intramental dimension. As Ellis (2006, p.31) eloquently expresses that “in effect, task-based teaching calls for the classroom participants to forget where they are and why they are there and to act in the belief that they can learn the language indirectly through communicating in it rather than directly through studying it.”

Conversely, the process of PPP methodology is ‘learn to communicate’. Learning language components (grammar, phonology, semantics, vocabulary, functions, notions and so on) is as a prerequisite of being able to communicate. Language pedagogy which makes learners master and accumulate language in a linear fashion considers learning as a product (saving) for interactionally unpredicted situations; immediate mastery of language repertories is considered essential for learners to communicate. Language pedagogy in this camp is moving from psychological dimension of learning toward social use of language.

Bruton’s (1998) dichotomy of ‘learn to communicate’ and ‘communicate to learn’
corresponds with Widdowson’s ‘usage and use distinction’ or ‘knowing and doing distinction’. While PPP methodology is based on assumptions that some preparatory measures (getting usage of language) should be taken for doing an activity, TBLI works on assumptions that the use of language determines the kind of usage you need not the usage of language determines the kind of use.

4. Tasks in TBLI frame, reframe or unframe language needs or behavior, while in the PPP methodology language mastery determines or frames the kind of language use or behavior. In PPP methodology, usage frames the kind of language behavior, i.e. learners communicate accordingly to the language usage they have mastered. In TBLI, use (doing a task) frames, reframes or unframes language usage. First of all, using language in action for communicative purposes demands a pertinent and context-specific kind of usage (language requirements). After accomplishing a task and encountering a new task, language demands for doing a task may be reframed and sometimes unframed. If we consider a task as a ‘content’ of doing a thing and language as a ‘tool’ of doing, we conclude that content determines the kind of tools and sometimes this tool should be modified or replaced to fit in with different contents. In PPP methodology, on the contrary, we handle situations with tools (language requirement) that are not finely tuned to specified contents and contexts; in other words, language mastered doesn’t satisfy language requirement of different tasks in the real world. Ellis (2006, p.29) states that in a task-based pedagogy, language is treated as a tool for communicating and the teacher and students function primarily as ‘language users’.

5. In TBLI authenticity is both the result of ‘real life language use’ and ‘interactional ability’, while PPP lacks the latter. Authenticity on the basis of ‘real life language use’ can be considered as a product which is already worked out and provided for the class setting and it can be done by textbook writers or by teachers. Authenticity from this perspective, takes into account original materials that are not written for educational purposes; therefore, it can be attributed to the originality of (real-life) materials being taught.

In TBLI, both kinds of authenticity are included. The first sense of authenticity can be provided through tasks, materials, situations and so on, while the second sense of authenticity is accessible through meaningful interaction between tasks, context, and interlocutors. Here ‘how to authenticate the process of doing a task’ takes priority over simply choosing original
materials. It places the burden of authentication process on the teachers and learners.

6. In TBLI both language and learners are contextualized. Language in TBLI is used in social interaction (pair and group works) which leads in purposeful and unpredictable meaningful interaction of both linguistic and nonlinguistic factors (discourse, participants and …). The emphasis is on pragmatic meaning which is only accessible through interlocutors’ mutual active involvement by providing feedbacks and modifying their outputs to sustain getting meaning in a contextualized setting. Since greater attention is on the social nature of learning, learners are not as separate and decontextualized individuals as they are in PPP methodology. Social nature of learning, importantly scaffolding the process of mediation, makes learners contextualized individuals who take part in a purposefully-oriented language event, as Jacobs and Farrell (2003, p. 12) state that

Knowledge and ideas do not come to us as individuals. Instead, in a way similar to that in which no subatomic particle exists without interacting with other particles, students learn via interacting with their environment, and the key features of that environment are the people with whom they come into contact. These people include not just those such as teachers who are generally more knowledgeable about course content. Students can also learn from peers, as well as by teaching those who know less than they do.

10. How to Implement TBLI in Iran Language Pedagogy

In a language curriculum, syllabus design is concerned with ‘what of teaching’ and methodology is concerned with ‘how of teaching’. In PPP methodology, ‘what of teaching’ is previously chosen on the basis of linguistic content through breaking language into discrete points which means students are needed to synthesize language elements together. In TBLI, however, ‘what of teaching’, which is based on the target needs analysis (learners’ language needs and specification of the kind of language needed for doing a task), is applied and implemented through message-focused activities.

In implementing ‘what of teaching’ whether on the basis of PPP methodology or on the basis of TBLI methodology in Iran’s language curriculum, target needs analysis is carried out by curriculum developers. The kind of English language prescribed for the Iranian students in schools and at universities is Iran-specific English, i.e. a kind of English pidgin which is
sometimes ironically labeled as ‘Persian English’. Language curriculum in Iran is primarily based on the reading skill and other skills have a subordinate importance. It is supposed that Iranian students will get enough experience in the reading skill so as to be able to read and comprehend English written texts (books, magazines, articles, and so on). Comparatively important, high stakes nation-wide university examinations create a backwash effect that tends to pull teaching towards the traditional approaches, even though teachers are striving to practice with new trends. This factor also, in turn, has made teachers and learners develop a parochial and contextualized view of English learning both in schools and at universities. At universities, it is supposed that students take ESP (English for special purposes) courses which are namely translation classes; both in high schools and at universities in Iran, learners are inclined towards consulting a dictionary to find relatively acceptable equivalent Farsi words for unknown target language words in reading classes irrespective of specific context of words and reading strategies. This word-by-word finding bilingual equivalent words has overshadowed other skills. Oddly enough, in ‘pronunciation practice section’ which involves learners to practice vowel and consonant phonetic alphabets, literal meanings of practice words are overemphasized while mastering the pronunciation of words gets secondary importance.

With this orientation in Iranian language pedagogy which displays a kind of idiosyncratic English courses developed by Iranian textbook writers (Readers are referred to Jahangard (2007) and Razmjoo (2007) for some shortcomings of EFL books developed by Iranian material developers), there will be a pressing need to change the current condition to be tuned to the new developments in applied linguistics. ‘What of teaching’ in Iran should be kept up with the new orientation of language pedagogy across the globe. The writer doesn’t deny or dismiss the inclusion of curriculum developers’ preferences on language pedagogy which manifests the ideology of each society as Hadley (1998) puts this kind of syllabus (Type A syllabi) in Asia down to the fact that it may fit closer with the internal syllabus and philosophical nexus of influential educators, and, ultimately, the society. He also claims that the curriculum emerging from such a syllabus design will require students to prove their obedience [my emphasis] to the institution through test performance. (ibid, p.58) With this account, the writer voices his concern that the imbalance in orientation between each country’s language policy and language pedagogy in general should be redressed or minimized so that language pedagogy may bear more universally plausible characteristics across the globe.
Kumaravadievelu (1993, pp.73) argues that “methodology becomes the central tenet of task-based pedagogy” since the goal is to allow learners to navigate their own paths and routes to learning and Widdowson (1990, pp.129) states that “methodology can always find some room for maneuver”. Following these citations, the writer believes that on ‘what of teaching’, we, EFL teachers, are restricted to implement what has been already selected but on ‘how of teaching’, i.e. methodology, teachers in Iran can do their share to cope globally with new orientations in language pedagogy especially in the case of TBLI.

A linguistically–oriented text which is written merely for practicing grammar can be methodologically utilized in a way that it will become a communicative practice, or a message-focused task, on the contrary, can be utilized as a grammar practice. Bruton (2007 ) refers to a point made by Widdowson (1990) on the communicativeness of syllabuses that there is no such thing as a communicative syllabus, because there is nothing inherently communicative about a syllabus. It is only the type of interaction in the classroom that will make the syllabus communicative, whether it is based on structures, functions, or even presumably tasks. Since methodology is utilized by teachers, the writer believes that even Iran-specific developed English syllabi can be methodologically utilized to warrant TBLI principles. In the case of reading-based language courses in Iran, for instance, the following can be done as suggestions in a task cycle:

For pre-task, teachers , on the basis of sociocultural perspective ,can involve students by raising some interactionally-based questions which provoke students to interact with their classmates or teachers.

After reading the text aloud, for during-task activity, teachers can ask students to read the text in pairs and groups. Students have to be well-advised to read for contextual meaning so as to get something from the text. Teachers as scaffolders can help learners to get the meaning of unknown words both through promoting interactive activities among learners and through making them pay close attention to the context of unknown words. In other words, socially contextualized learners get the meaning of unknown words or the whole text through doing an activity on the contextualized language use. Teachers’ role can be mediators who help learners’ ZPD in reading to be reconstructed both by their or the other learners’ interactive actions which will yield a contextually negotiated meaning.

Teachers can implicitly provide learners with some grammatical points to make them unlock
the text where grammatical complexity hinders decoding the text and to help learners in the planning phase where they have difficulties in manipulating structure accurately to report their understanding or summaries.

For post-task activity, teachers can explain some difficult grammatical points hindering understanding the text which are gone unnoticed by learners. In our high school books this phase can be used to make students prepare for grammar points (in Iran textbooks, ‘structure presentation’ follows reading comprehension section).

Word study, language functions, writing activities, and even structure presentation in high school books can be methodologically used to meet CLT criteria. Teachers, as soft-ware engineers, can methodologically deal with them so that they will get authenticated by ‘how of teaching’ rather than by ‘what of teaching’.

11. Conclusion

TBLI, as a realization of the strong version of CLT, relying on psycholinguistic and sociocultural perspectives lays claim that it provides learners a rich learning opportunity to negotiate meaning in a linguistically-contextualized language event with socially-oriented language learning setting. In TBLI, learners are participants who take part in an interactionally designed social activity to use language as a tool for doing target tasks rather than as an end like PPP methodology. Through cooperative and collaborative learning, teachers or competent learners scaffold weak learners in the process of learning. Competence is accessible when learners perform message-focused tasks in which attending to language form becomes importantly subsidiary. TBLI is methodologically applicable to our country since methodology is concerned with ‘how of teaching’ and teachers having a main role in methodology can implement it in EFL classes.

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The Effect of Learning Styles and Lexical Difficulty on the C-Test

Soheila Veisi (M.A.)
University for Teacher Education, Tehran, Iran

Biodata
Soheila Veisi, a lecturer at Payame Noor University, Kermanshah, Iran from 2007 to present and Jahad Daneshgahi University from 2010.

Abstract
Research on C-testing has given us few accounts of the relationship between test characteristics and test takers characteristics in the C-test completion. The present investigation set out to contribute to this line of research. The purpose of the study was two-fold: First, it attempted to explore lexical difficulty as a factor by which the difficulty of the C-test can be monitored; second, it intended to investigate whether there is a relationship between test takers learning styles and their performance on the C-test. To this end, two tests (TOEFL and the C-test) and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Form M) were administered to sixty eight English major BA students. The analysis of data indicated that Extroversion /Introversion, Sensing/Intuitive and Thinking/Feeling dimensions showed a significant impact across the C-test performance. In this study, Introverts, Intuitives, and Thinkers outperformed Extroverts, Sensors and Feelers, respectively. But there was not any marked relationship between Judgers and Perceivers in terms of their performance on the C-test. Moreover, the analyses revealed that employing lexically difficult texts can, in fact, result in more difficult test tasks. All of test takers, regardless of their style preferences, had better performance on lexically easy texts. The findings can have implications for the text selection stage of various text-dependent reduced redundancy tests.

Key words: Learning style, Lexical difficulty, C-test performance.
1. Introduction

The C-test was developed in 1981 by Klein-Braley and Raatz as an alternative to the cloze test procedure. Based on the principle of the cloze procedure, the C-test is claimed to have “several advantages over the classical cloze test” (Raatz & Klein-Braley, 1981, p. 113). The procedure to develop a C-test is that in some short authentic texts, the second half of every second word, beginning from word two in sentence two, is deleted. If the word has an odd number of letters, then the larger ‘half’ is deleted. And one-letter words are ignored in the counting (Klein-Braley, 1997, p. 64).

Although less investigated than the cloze, the C-test has been put into test from different perspectives (see, e.g., Klein-Braley & Raatz, 1984; Cohen et al., 1985; Grotjahn, 1986, 1987, 2002; Feldmann & Stemmer, 1987; Cleary, 1988; Chappelle & Abraham, 1990; Hood, 1990; Dornyei & Katona, 1992; Kamimoto, 1992, 1993; Jafarpur, 1995, 1999; Sigott & Kobrel, 1996; Klein-Braley, 1997; Ikeguchi, 1998; Babaii & Ansary, 2001; and Babaii & Jalali Moghaddam, 2006). These studies have illuminated some merits and demerits of the C-test, the discussion of which is beyond the scope of this paper.

One of the problems with the C-test, which is mentioned by different investigators, is that the C-test as a measure of language proficiency is too easy (Cleary, 1988; Kamimoto, 1993; Sigott & Kobrel, 1996; Jafarpur, 1999). Considered from the psychometric point of view, a considerably easy test task produces poor item difficulty, and consequently, poor item discrimination indices. Taken from the psycholinguistic perspective, as it has been pointed out by Green (1998, p. 25), “when the task is too easy for the examinees, performance becomes more automated and less subject to conscious control”, which is not desirable if test takers are supposed to employ both micro-level and macro-level processes while they are taking tests (Babaii & Jalali Moghaddam, 2006). This issue was raised by Babaii and Ansary (2001) when they suggested that “for the C-test to encourage macro-level processing, the text should be challenging to the target test takers. To do this, the difficulty level of the texts can be adjusted or, right from scratch, genuinely difficult texts can be selected”.

Cleary (1988) proposes left-hand deletion rather than customary right-hand deletion to enhance discrimination. Caldicott (1989) investigated the problem of advanced prediction of text difficulty in C-tests. She drew the tentative conclusion that pretesting on parallel groups of students might proved to be the most reliable predictor of difficulty. Kamimoto (1993) developed
two versions of a C-test: one by mutilating the second half of every other world, beginning with the second word of the fourth sentence; she called this version the “original” C-test. Another version, labeled the “tailored” C-test, was developed by tailoring on the basis of item analysis on the original C-test. After administering the two C-tests, the tailored C-test proved to be better than the original C-test in terms of item facility and item discrimination. As another proposal, Sigott and Koberl (1996) maintain that the tester may increase the difficulty level of texts in two respects: (a) increasing redundancy reduction by deleting 2/3 rather than 1/2 of the words or, leaving only the first letter; (b) changing deletion pattern by deleting the first half of the word–left-hand deletion in Cleary (1988) terms (cf. Babaii & Jalali Moghaddam, 2006).

In an attempt to identify the sources of the C-test item difficulty, Sigott (1995) specified two groups of factors as determiners of the C-test difficulty: format factors and content factors. In the first group, he examined three factors to change the C-test difficulty, i.e., word frequency, word class, and constituent types in the sentence. He showed that, through increasing the percentage of letters deleted, deleting the first rather than the second half of the words, and changing the onset of deletions, one can increase the C-test difficulty. Sigott further stipulates that content factors which refer to the linguistic and textual characteristics of a text, if carefully examined, may lead us to a better understanding of what a C-test actually measures. In other words, he suggests that testers may establish “construct identification” in terms of the linguistic characteristics of words, clauses, etc., individually and in relation to one another. This is also supported by Jafarpur (1995) who investigated the deletion rate and its impact on test difficulty and by Cleary (1988) and Sigott and Koberl (1996) who examined various deletion patterns.

On the other hand, the relevance of an individual’s learning style to that person’s performance in a range of learning situations has been explored by many authors over the years. Much empirical research signals that learning styles can enhance academic performance in several respects. By identifying the students’ learning style preferences and talking about test performance, the teacher is able to help students identify the cause of poor performance on academic tests. While there have apparently been large amounts of research performed on the various learning styles, few studies have been identified that have the same characteristics, or problem, of this study, i.e. reporting any relationship between learners’ styles and their C-test performance.
Considering research into the C-test as a probable lexical elicitation instrument (see, for example, Singleton & Little, 1991; Chapelle, 1994; Singleton, 1999; Singleton & Singleton, 2002) and the fact that the effect of lexical difficulty as a predictor of the C-test difficulty has not been considered before, the present study examines this factor. On the other hand, research on the C-test has given us few accounts of the relationship between text characteristics and test takers’ learning styles. It seems that the effect of learning styles, as one of the most studied test taker characteristics (e.g. Laurillard, 1979, 1993; Kolb, 1985; Etter-Lewis & Singer, 1986; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989, 1990, 1995; Riding, 1991, 1997; Honey & Mumford, 1992; Schroeder, 1993; O’Brien et al., 1998; Riding & Al-Sanabani, 1998; Riding & Grimley, 1999; Sadler-Smith & Riding, 1999; Bailey et al., 2000; Drysdale et al., 2001; Vermunt, 2005) has not been studied in relation to the C-test performance. The present investigation aims at bridging these gaps by exploring the effect of learning styles on the C-tests with high and low degrees of lexical difficulty and attempts to answer the following hypotheses:

(1) Lexical difficulty has no effect on EFL learners’ performance on the C-Test.
(2) Learning styles have no effect on EFL learners’ performance on easy vs. difficult C-Tests.
(3) The interaction of lexical difficulty and learning styles has no effect on EFL learners' performance on the C-test.

2. Method

2.1 Participants

Seventy five male and female students studying TEFL at Azad University of Kermanshah participated in this study. Since seven of the subjects were absent for one of the tests or did not complete one part of it, the researcher took into consideration just sixty eight participants who took part in all tests. These students were Persian native speakers and their age ranged between 19 and 25.

2.2 Instrumentations

To answer the research questions, the following instruments were employed:

The TOEFL

TOEFL consisting of 150 items was used as a criterion to validate the newly developed C-test. The test consisted of three sections of listening comprehension with 50 items, structure and
written expressions with 40 items, and reading comprehension with 50 items. The reliability of
the test, as estimated against KR-21 measure of internal consistency, turned out as .83.

ADA (ADELEX ANALYSER)

ADA is a new online tool for the measurement of textual difficulty. It has been designed by
the research group ADELEX within a project entitled ADELEX: Assessing and Developing Lexis
through the Internet, developed at the University of Granada and devoted to the development of
L2 students’ lexical competence by means of digital tools. ADA comes with a database of the
7,125 most frequent words of the English language, a lemmatized frequency list compiled by
using the information provided by the most reliable updated corpora: British National Corpus,
Bank of English and Longman Corpus Network (Moreno Jaen, 2006). This should be considered
one of the most remarkable innovations since most of the existing software (Cobb, 2004; Nation,
2005) is based on West’s General Service List containing only 2,000. The factors taken into
account to measure lexical difficulty are lexical density and lexical frequency, two notions which
exert a very significant influence on the level of lexical difficulty of a text (Moreno Jaen, 2006).

ADA consists of two tools. One of them, Frequency and Density, offers the level of lexical
density of a given text, as well as the frequency of occurrence of every type.

The second tool in ADA, Lexical Profile, offers the marked version of the text, where colors
enable the user to get a rough idea of the frequency of the vocabulary in a text without
necessarily examining the quantitative data subsequently offered in the output. This
identification of the frequency level every word belongs to is made possible by the fact that,
immediately after the marked text, ADA presents each of its base lists with their respective
colors as well as the total number and percentage of tokens and types in each base list.

2.3 The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (Form M)

MBTI Form M (1998) is a 93-item, paper-and-pencil inventory. There are two options for each
item. Individuals are classified on the basis of their self-reported preferences. The Persian
version of the questionnaire was used in this study. It comprises such reliability indices, resulting
from Cronbach alpha, for the dichotomies: Extroversion/Introversion= .82, Sensing/Intuition= .65,
Thinking/Feeling= .86 and Judging/Perceiving= .84. Moreover, for estimating the construct
validity of the Persian version of the MBTI, Principal Component Analysis was used which
showed extraction of four factors on Persian version that were significantly in accordance with
the MBTI developers’ claim that the instrument measures four bipolar types of personality.
2.4 The C-test

1. Text Selection

An attempt was made in this study to monitor text difficulty of the C-test by manipulating lexical difficulty. It was decided to select and then compare the difficulty levels of texts. To select texts with different degrees of lexical difficulty, it was decided to operationalize this notion as lexical density and lexical frequency. Lexical density (LD) is defined as “the proportion of lexical (or content) words – basically nouns, full verbs, adjectives and adverbs derived from adjectives – in the text” (Read, 2000, p. 203).

Also three levels of lexical difficulty of texts were established. To this end, the threshold of 95% of textual coverage (Laufer, 1997) was considered as the minimal vocabulary level necessary to achieve general reading comprehension. Thus, if 95% words of a given text belong to the list of the 2,000 high-frequency words of the language, we consider it as a text of low difficulty and therefore intended for L2 secondary education. When the same percentage of words in a text is among the first 5,000 words we then estimate it as a reading of medium difficulty which could be implemented with university students in their first years. And finally, if more than 5% words of a text have a frequency under the level of 5,000 it is regarded as a difficult text for use with highly advanced learners (cf. Moreno Jaen, 2006). Finally texts with high lexical density and low lexical frequency were selected.

2. Development of the C-test

According to Klein-Braley and Raatz (1984) and Klein-Braley (1997) to construct the C-test one should choose a number of texts more than necessary. Considering the guidelines given by Klein-Braley (1997), a C-test was constructed using texts taken from *Practice and Progress* (Alexander, 1968), *Expanding Reading Skills* (Markstein & Hirasawa, 1982), *Developing Reading Skills* (Markstein, 1983) and *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2007). In the C-test, texts were arranged from easy to difficult and each text consisted of 25 mutilations. The early version of this test was then pretested with a sample group enjoying characteristics similar to the target group. Table 1 shows the characteristics of each text (subtests) used at the piloting phase:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Table 1 Characteristics of the C-test (early version)</th>
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The criterion for selecting the best texts for the final C-test was the estimated internal consistency measure (KR-21) of individual texts (subtests). Ultimately, of the four pairs of texts only those with higher reliability indices were selected: ‘A New House’ and ‘Love and Marriage’ as the texts with low lexical difficulty level, and ‘Painting’ and ‘Invention’ as the texts with high lexical difficulty level.

To establish the empirical validity of the C-test, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient between the final version (n= 100) and TOEFL was calculated as .73.

3. Procedure

The procedure followed can be divided into three phases:

At the first phase, TOEFL (1995 version) was administered to all the students as a criterion to validate the newly developed C-test. It must be mentioned that the estimated reliability for the TOEFL test through the KR-21 formula was .83 which indicated that it was a reliable instrument for measuring general language proficiency of the intended sample.

In the second phase of the study (a week later), all the subjects received the MBTI. Based upon the directions available in the MBTI form, the students were instructed not to spend too much time on one question if they were not sure about it. They could skip the question and return to it later. Also, they were assured that the information about their character type would be treated as confidential. Subjects were given enough time to attempt all the items.

To gather the appropriate data for detecting the role of lexical difficulty on the C-test completion, the newly developed C-test was administered to all the subjects at the final phase of
the study (a week later). As the C-test was a fairly unfamiliar test for most of the students they were provided with an example. Following Klein-Braley and Raatz’s guidelines, the time devoted to the test was 20 minutes. The exact scoring method was used in this study. Klein-Braley (1997) specifies this method of scoring as a criterion to ensure the reliability of C-test.

3.1 Design

The study has factorial design, with the lexical difficulty and learning styles (the former with two and the latter with eight levels) as independent variables and the C-test performance as the dependent variable. No treatment was provided.

4. Results

First, a summary of descriptive statistics is offered (Table 2). Tendencies in this sample are towards E, N, T, and J.

<p>| Table 2 Descriptive statistics |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEST</th>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CTEST1</td>
<td>Extrovert</td>
<td>40.02</td>
<td>5.190</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introvert</td>
<td>44.71</td>
<td>3.913</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sensing</td>
<td>38.04</td>
<td>6.004</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>43.22</td>
<td>3.884</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>37.52</td>
<td>5.465</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>43.23</td>
<td>4.156</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judging</td>
<td>41.04</td>
<td>5.225</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceiving</td>
<td>42.43</td>
<td>5.390</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTEST2</td>
<td>Extrovert</td>
<td>27.94</td>
<td>7.155</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Introvert</td>
<td>32.14</td>
<td>9.430</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sensing</td>
<td>24.52</td>
<td>7.976</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
<td>31.64</td>
<td>7.100</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>23.33</td>
<td>8.242</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>31.87</td>
<td>6.550</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Judging</td>
<td>29.13</td>
<td>6.813</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perceiving</td>
<td>29.48</td>
<td>10.614</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The majority of the participants (41%) had ENTJ preference and ESFJ students ranked second with a percentage of 11.7%. ENFPs and ISFJs had the lowest frequency, 3 percent.

In order to test the null hypotheses proposed by the researcher, the statistical technique of repeated measures ANOVA was applied to the data. Repeated measures ANOVA was run to investigate the effect of learning styles and lexical difficulty on C-test performance of EFL learners.

Hypothesis 1: Lexical difficulty has no effect on EFL learners’ performance on the C-Test.

Considering the first null hypothesis, as Table 3 shows, there is a significant difference between test takers performance on the texts with low and high degrees of lexical difficulty (p = .00 < .05). Therefore, the first hypothesis is safely rejected.

Table 3 Pairwise comparisons of the effect of lexical difficulty on C-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure: MEASURE_1</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig. a</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Difference a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(I) tests (J) tests</td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
<td>Upper Bound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>12.537*,b</td>
<td>.704</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>11.128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 1</td>
<td>-12.537*,b</td>
<td>.704</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-13.945</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on estimated marginal means

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.

Hypothesis 2: Learning styles have no effect on EFL learners’ performance on easy vs. difficult C-Tests.

Regarding the second null hypothesis, the multivariate analysis (Tables 4, 5 and 6) shows that since the significance levels for Extroversion/Introversion, Sensing/Intuitive and Thinking/Feeling are lower than .05 (p = .00), thus it can be concluded that learning styles have a significant effect on the C-test performance. On the other hand, table 8 shows that Judging/Perceiving has no effect on the examinees’ performance (p = .00 < .05). In sum, the first null hypothesis is partially rejected.

As Tables 4, 5 and 6 show introvert, intuitive and thinking test takers outperformed extroverts, sensors and feelers in both easy and difficult C-tests (p = .00 < .05).
Table 4 Pairwise comparisons of the effect of E/I on C-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>MEASURE 1</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(I) EI</td>
<td>(J) EI</td>
<td>Mean Difference (I-J)</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Sig.a</td>
<td>95% Confidence Interval for Difference² Lower Bound</td>
<td>Upper Bound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extrovert</td>
<td>introvert</td>
<td>-4.846*,b,c</td>
<td>1.200</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-7.248</td>
<td>2.445</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>introvert</td>
<td>extrovert</td>
<td>4.846*,b,c</td>
<td>1.200</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>2.445</td>
<td>7.248</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on estimated marginal means

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.
b. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (I).
c. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (J).

Table 5 Pairwise comparisons of the effect of S/N on C-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>MEASURE 1</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(I) SN</td>
<td>(J) SN</td>
<td>Mean Difference (I-J)</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Sig.a</td>
<td>95% Confidence Interval for Difference² Lower Bound</td>
<td>Upper Bound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensing</td>
<td>intuitive</td>
<td>-4.689*,b,c</td>
<td>1.200</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-7.090</td>
<td>-2.287</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intuitive</td>
<td>sensing</td>
<td>4.689*,b,c</td>
<td>1.200</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>2.287</td>
<td>7.090</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on estimated marginal means

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.
b. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (I).
c. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (J).
Table 6 Pairwise comparisons of the effect of F/T on C-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) FT</th>
<th>(J) FT</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig. a</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Difference a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>feeling</td>
<td>thinking</td>
<td>-5.289^{b,c}</td>
<td>1.200</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-7.690 to -2.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thinking</td>
<td>feeling</td>
<td>5.289^{b,c}</td>
<td>1.200</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>2.887 to 7.690</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on estimated marginal means
* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.
b. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (I).
c. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (J).

But as Table 7 shows there was no significant difference between judgers and perceivers regarding their performance on C-test (p=.943 > .00).

Table 7 Pairwise comparisons of the effect of J/P on C-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) JP</th>
<th>(J) JP</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig. a</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Difference a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>judging</td>
<td>perceiving</td>
<td>-.086^{b,c}</td>
<td>1.200</td>
<td>.943</td>
<td>-2.488 to 2.315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>perceiving</td>
<td>judging</td>
<td>.086^{b,c}</td>
<td>1.200</td>
<td>.943</td>
<td>-2.315 to 2.488</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on estimated marginal means
a. Adjustment for multiple comparisons: Bonferroni.
b. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (I).
c. An estimate of the modified population marginal mean (J).

Hypothesis 3: The interaction of lexical difficulty and learning styles has no effect on EFL learners' performance on the C-test.

Considering the third null hypothesis concerned with the interaction of lexical difficulty and learning styles, the results of multivariate ANOVA (Table 8) demonstrate that since the corresponding significance levels are higher than .05, it can be concluded that learning styles and lexical difficulty do not have any significant interaction. Thus the third null hypothesis predicting that the interaction of lexical difficulty and learning styles is not significant is supported.
Table 8 Results of repeated measures ANOVA analysis between learning styles and the c-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>tests</td>
<td>3006.461</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3006.461</td>
<td>300.866</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests * EI</td>
<td>52.721</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>52.721</td>
<td>5.276</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests * SN</td>
<td>50.245</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50.245</td>
<td>5.028</td>
<td>.029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests * FT</td>
<td>50.672</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50.672</td>
<td>5.071</td>
<td>.028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests * JP</td>
<td>10.855</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.855</td>
<td>1.086</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests * EI * SN</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests * EI * FT</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests * SN * FT</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests * EI * SN * FT</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests * EI * JP</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests * SN * JP</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests * EI * SN * JP</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests * FT * JP</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests * EI * FT * JP</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tests * SN * FT * JP</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error(tests)</td>
<td>579.577</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>9.993</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Discussion

The present study investigated the effect of lexical difficulty on C-test performance. Moreover, it intended to explore the role of difficult text utilization in exploitation of learning styles in C-test completion.

The first null hypothesis predicting that lexical difficulty has no effect on C-test performance of EFL learners was rejected. The results showed that lexical difficulty increases the C-test difficulty. As mentioned before, a number of other studies have been performed as to the difficulty of the C-test. Some researchers (e.g. Cleary, 1988; Caldicott, 1989; Kamimoto, 1993;
Koberl & Sigott, 1994; Jafarpur, 1995; Sigott & Koberl, 1996; Babaii & Jalali Moghaddam, 2006) investigated different factors affecting the C-test difficulty, including: changing deletion patterns, increasing the extent of redundancy reduction, scoring method, word frequency, word class, and constituent types in the sentence, syntactic complexity and abstraction. Continuing this line of research, the present study showed that lexical difficulty can be a reliable predictor of difficulty, too.

Regarding the second hypothesis concerning the relationship between test takers and their learning styles, as the results revealed Introverts, Intuitives and Thinkers outperformed Extroverts, Sensors and Feelers. “Extroverts may have difficulty concentrating on reading for long stretches of time. They often understand texts better if they process them orally” (Lawrence, 1993, p. 30). Furthermore, Introverts are often concentrators (Ehrman, 1989) and reflective thinkers (Grice, 2006). When confronted with a problem solving task with response uncertainty, an impulsive person tends to make “quick or gambling guess”, however a reflective person tends to make “a slower, and more calculated decision” (Brown, 2000, p. 121).

According to McCaulley (1990), “the Sensing-Intuition difference is by far the most important of the preferences in the research on the MBTI in education” (p. 538). When learning to read, Sensors may have difficulty learning the code of written language. Sometimes, they benefit from the language-experience approach; phonics instruction or other techniques that can help break the “code”. Even when mature, Sensors may focus on the facts of a text and neglect the concepts (Lawrence, 1993). On the other hand, since Intuitives tend to have a greater facility for symbols, they usually learn to read with less difficulty and tend to be more 'bookish'. Moreover, Sensors like clear and concrete information; dislike guessing when facts are “fuzzy”. But Intuitives are good at inferencing and guessing from context (Ehrman, 1989). In Intuitives, memory recall emphasizes patterns, contexts, and connections and is comfortable with ambiguous, fuzzy data and with guessing its meaning (Lawrence, 1993). Above all, as Moody (1988) notes, language is by its nature symbolic, which would tend to make it more attractive to Intuitors than to the more concrete and literal minded Sensors.

Those with a Thinking preference, rather than a Feeling preference prefer more analysis of language data and have a greater ability to see details rather than the global picture. They prefer learning strategies that dissect and analyze and find contrasts and cause-effect relationships. They are often cognitive, objective and logical (Brown, 2000). Those with a Feeling preference
see things more globally and seek holistic strategies such as guessing, predicting, paraphrasing, with avoidance of grammatical analysis.

Differences between Thinking and Feeling also seem to relate to field independence and field dependence—the degree of ability to separate insignificant detail from significant detail (Lawrence 1993; Sharp, 2003). To restore the mutilated text, learners should have a good command of relating items together. A field independent person is able to detect patterns and subpatterns, while a field dependent person tends to get lost in the totality of stimuli (Witkin et al., 1971). In performing the C-test, learners have to predict missing symbols from the context so a field dependent (Thinking) learner who is able to identify or focus on particular items and is not distracted by other items in the background or context is at advantage (Meng & Petty, 1991).

Regarding the third null hypothesis, the results indicated that most students, regardless of personality type, performed better on easy texts than on difficult ones. This is in line with Alderson and Banerjee’s view that developing lexical competence in the target language is seen as the crucial factor in language acquisition and there is general agreement that there is a threshold vocabulary below which learners are likely to struggle to decode the input they receive (2002). Regarding the C-test, the findings support Chapelle and Abraham (1990), Dornyei and Katona (1992) and Singelton and Little (1991) who concluded that the C-test was a suitable way of gaining an insight into the vocabulary knowledge of second language learners.

C-tests have been used in numerous contexts, e.g. in schools, universities and workplaces; and for various purposes, e.g. as a placement test, as an anchor test in test equating, and as a research instrument in cognitive and applied linguistics. Beyond any doubt, then, C-tests figure prominently in the field of language testing and assessment (Eckes & Grotjahn, 2006). In spite of the many advantages of C-test, it is mostly neglected as a language proficiency test in Iran.

In view of the merits of the C-test including its high reliability, empirical validity, ease of construction, administration and scoring, this test type could be one of the major players in testing language proficiency, a role it has been deprived of on most occasions. C-tests can be employed by teachers for teaching vocabulary and grammatical points in some reconstruction activities (Thornbury, 1997). As Dornyei and Katona (1992, p.206) assert, “students can easily design C-tests for each other, which could be made into a game or competition.”

In addition, the findings of this study revealed that a relationship exists between learning styles and performance on C-test. The effect of test takers personal characteristics may reduce the
effect on test performance of language abilities we want to measure and hence the interpretability of test scores. For this reason, it is important to be aware of the nature and extent of these effects, and if possible, control or minimize them so that there would be less doubt about the real performance of test takers. It is specifically important since “the facets may affect test takers’ scores resulting in bias against certain test takers” (Bachman, 1990, p.114).

References


APPENDIX

Directions: The following tests have been developed by removing the second half of every second word in a text. You are supposed to reconstruct the texts. The number of dashes represents the number of deleted letters. Example:

My Name is Tom. I’m t- - oldest ch- - - in m-family. I ha- - a sister a- - two brot- - -. Your job is to complete the text as:
My name is Tom. I’m the oldest child in my family. I have a sister and two brothers.

A New House
I had a letter from my sister yesterday. In h- - letter, s- - said th- - she wo- - - come t- England ne- - - year. I- she co- - - , she wi- - get a surp- - -. We a- - now liv- - - in a beau- - - - new ho- - -. Work o- - it h- - begun bef- - - - - my sis- - - left. The ho- - - was comp- - - - five mon- - - ago. T- - house h-- many la- - - rooms a- - there is a lovely garden . It is a very modern house, so it looks strange to some people.

Love and marriage
In many cultures, people think that love and marriage go together. They th- - - that lo- - is a nece- - - - foundation f- - marriage a- - that y- - should lo- - the per- - - you ma- - before y- - get mar- - - . In ot- - - cultures, a m- - and wo- - - may n- - even kn- - each ot- - - before th- - - wedding d- -. Love i- - not esse- - - - to marr- - - - in th- - - cultures. These peo- - - expect th- - love wi- - develop after the wedding if the marriage is a good one.

Painting
Artists express their ideas in many different ways. Sculptors cre- - - three-dimensional fig- - - - - , architects des- - - buildings, wri- - - - use wo- - - , dancers u- - - movement, a- - musicians ma- - music. Th- - - who u- - - shapes, li- - - , colors, to- - - , and text- - - - to cre- - - - pictures a- - called pain- - - - . The wo- - - that th- - produce a- - called pain- - - - . T- - paintings o- - professional art- - - are of- - - displayed i- - museums and galleries. Painting has also become a popular form of entertainment, however, and people of all ages create pictures using watercolors, oils, acrylics, and finger paints.

Invention
Whenever a new method, machine, or gadget is invented, it helps humankind to live a little easier or better or longer. Bit b- - bit, inve- - - add t- - wealth, know- - - , and com- - -. Inventors wo- - - with kn- - - things a- - known princ- - - - - . They com- - - these i- - a diff- - - - way t- - make a n- - product o- - process. To- - - inventions a- - being ma- - in a- - fields. N- - machines, n- - drugs, n- - ways o- - communication, a- - new us- - - of atomic power appear. New inventions make new jobs, businesses, and industries. They bring wealth to a nation and help prepare the way for still more inventions.
Title
PI-based vs. DG-oriented Instruction in Developing Grammar Ability and Motivation of EFL Learners

Author
Gholam-Reza Abbasian (Ph.D.)
Imam Ali University & Islamic Azad University, South Tehran Branch

Nasibeh Minagar (M.A.)
Islamic Azad University, Garmesar Branch, Iran

Biodata
Gholam-Reza Abbasian, assistant professor of TEFL at Imam Ali and Islamic Azad (South Tehran Branch) universities. He has presented at a good number of both national and international conferences. He is also the author of five books and has translated at least ten others. Furthermore, he has published several scholarly articles in national and international academic journals.

Nasibeh Minagar, holds an M.A. in TEFL from Islamic Azad University, Garmsar Brach, Iran. She is an English teacher in Mazandaran Institute of Technology. She is also more interested in doing research in the areas of syllabus design and materials preparation.

Abstract
This study is an attempt to investigate the effect of Processing Instruction (PI) and Dictogloss (DG) on developing of the English grammar ability and motivation of the Iranian beginning EFL learners. To this end, two intact groups doing their general English course at university level were assigned into two groups and their respective treatments; one PI-based while the other receiving DG instruction. Their achievements were measured using teacher-made multiple-choice tests in the form of pre-test and post-test formats. The findings showed that both types of instructions were significantly effective in developing English grammar ability; however, the DG-based grammar instruction proved much more effective in enhancing the EFL learners' affective factors; motivation and attitude in this study. The findings, educationally, suggest for EFL teachers to employ innovations in language instruction, particularly apply more DG not only in teaching grammar rather as a tool in motivating their students. Meanwhile, it is justified to conduct further similar
studies; generalizing PI and DG investigation as to the other skills and components of language.

Keywords: Processing Instruction- Dictogloss-Grammar Ability-Motivation & Attitude.

1. Introduction
Nowadays, focus on form in grammar instruction composes a rich area of investigation. Spada and Lightbown (2008) point out that some of the empirical work investigating the kind of knowledge that is acquired during Form-Focused Instructions (FFI) has shown that FFI can play a role in helping classroom learners to use language forms (e.g., Spada & Lightbown, 1993; Lyster, 2004; Doughty & Varela, 1998). Whereas the earlier research was concerned with whether form-focused task worked or not, current research is directed at examining how it is successful in different settings and its consequence on second language acquisition.

Considering the mode of instruction, several studies have been done in relation to the input-based and output-based instruction. A number of studies has been conducted to compare Processing Instruction (PI) as an input-based instruction with an output-based grammar instruction such as traditional instruction (TI) (Benati, 2001; Cadierno, 1995; Cheng, 2004; VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993; VanPatten & Wong, 2004) and Meaning-Output Instruction (MOI) (e.g., Benati 2005; Farley, 2001, 2004; Morgan-Short & Bowden, 2006; Keating and Farley 2008; VanPatten, Farmer and Clady 2009). And also Marsdon (2006) carried out a study that compared PI with an input-based instruction, namely Enriched input-based Instruction (EnI).

The "Processing Instruction" suggested by Bill Van Patten in 1996 is, just one of many modern language teaching techniques represents a model in education that is suited for focus on form teaching and learning. Processing Instruction (PI) consists of pedagogical techniques which aims to help learners better process input in a second language or a foreign language. PI is an approach to teaching grammar based on Krashen’s (1981) input hypothesis. Harington (2004) considers that proponents of PI believe that acquisition of an underlying grammar is input dependent. According to VanPatten (1996), the originator of the PI approach, PI is an input-based grammar instruction which aims to affect learners' attention to input data which is in compliance with second language theories and communicative language teaching.
According to VanPatten (2004), the PI framework has three basic components: explicit grammar explanation, referential activities and affective activities. Referential and affective activities together in the framework of PI are often jointly termed 'structured input activities', as these activities have been structured purposefully, with the aim of reducing learners’ ineffective input processing (VanPatten, 2004).

As it is stated by Wong (2004), in a series of studies that have compared PI to traditional instruction (TI), overall results demonstrate that PI is superior to TI. TI typically involves giving learners explicit explanation of a form followed by controlled output practice. Based on Wong (2004), Paulston (1996) supposes that the practice activities usually begin with mechanical drills followed by meaningful and communicative drills. TI has been criticized in VanPatten (1996) and elsewhere for being an approach that does not take into consideration the crucial role that meaning bearing input plays in SLA. VanPatten believes that TI involves immediate production practice of forms then learners do not get the input that they need to construct mental representation of the structure. The first study on PI was done on Spanish object pronoun and word order by VanPatten and Cadierno (1993). This study set out to compare PI to the traditional approach to instruction described above.

Based on Cadierno's (1993) results, PI is more beneficial than TI because not only did subjects in the PI group gain in ability to interpret object pronouns, their input processing of this structure resulted in some kind of change in their system that could be accessed for production. This is an important finding because at no time during treatment did subjects on the PI group ever practice producing object pronouns. Yet on the production task, they were able to perform as well as subjects in the TI group who received lots of practice in producing this structure. The subjects in the TI group on the other hand, could not do the interpretation task. Their performance on this task was no better than those in the control group who received no instruction. Subjects in the TI group were only good at doing what they practiced doing during treatment. Based on Wong (2004), other studies that follow the same research design and have reported similar superior result for PI include Benati (2001) for the Italian future tense, Cadierno (1995) for Spanish preterit tense, and VanPatten and Wong (2004) for the French causative, Cheng (2004) for the copular verbs in Spanish. Based on Wong (2004), one of the first published studies that report different findings is DeKeyser and Sokalski (1996). The researchers argue that VanPatten and Calderon's findings are contradictory to skill theory in
that the processing group should learn only to comprehend better and that the traditional group should learn to produce better.

In an attempt to replicate the aforementioned study they compared input and output experimental groups to a control group on the acquisition of Spanish object pronouns and word order by using a comprehension test and a production test, the latter involving both translation and fill-in-the-blank tasks. Their results indicated that the input group performed better on comprehension test after treatment and they maintained their gains from the immediate posttest to delayed posttest. On the contrary, although the output group was better on the production test, this difference disappeared on a delayed posttest and even the control group was performing almost as well as the other two groups by the time the delayed posttest was administer. However, as DeKeyser and Sokalski pointed out themselves, not all the activities in their input-based instruction treatment had required learners to attend to meaning. Therefore, their study did not replicate Van Patten and Cadierno’s study.

Few studies have been done to compare PI with an output-based instruction which is similar to PI in all aspects other than practice mode. Benati (2005) and Farley (2001, 2004) have compared PI to Meaning-based Output Instruction (MOI) which includes only meaningful output-based activities without mechanical drills. However, results have been somewhat inconsistent with regard to interpretation scores. In Farley (2001) and Benati (2005), the PI groups were superior to output-based groups for interpretation, while in Farley (2001) both experimental groups performed equally. Further research is called for to disclose the efficiency of output-based instruction as compared to PI.

The studies that are outlined above compared PI with two different types of output-based instruction, TI and MOI. Apart from these, another line of research has compared the relative effects of PI with a different instructional intervention called ‘dictogloss’ (DG), which was first described by Wajnryb (1990) but has recently received attention in the focus-on-form literature.

Wajnryb (1990) states, "Dictogloss is a task-based procedure designed to help Language learning students towards a better understanding of how grammar works on a text basis" (p. 6). Dictogloss is designed to expose where their language learner shortcomings (and needs are) so, that teaching can be directed more precisely towards these areas. In this sense it is eminently learner-needs based (Wajnryb, 1990). According to Hedge (2000), at the preparation stage, the teacher works with the learners in a 'warm-up' to the topic and to prepare relevant vocabulary.
The text is read twice and, on the second reading students note down the words they catch. Working in groups, they then pool their notes to try to reconstruct the text. In doing so, they use the grammar they know and consider the possible alternatives. This means that students must justify to each other the choices they proffer.

The usefulness of dictogloss in developing second language grammar knowledge has been empirically examined in several studies. Kawal and Swain (1994, 1997) as noted by Swain (2001), have tried using dictogloss tasks in grade seven and eight immersion classes, and found that they have the sort of student talk about the language of the text they were reconstructing, that is, metatalk. They observed students noticing things they did not know or could not say to their own satisfaction, and they observed these same students formulating hypotheses and testing them out using the tools at their disposal, that is, themselves, each other, their dictionaries, their verb book, their teacher, their L1. Additionally, students ignored some of the errors they made; they often functioned at semantic level, wanting to use the right word as well as thinking about correct inflections and relationships between words, and they focused on many other points of grammar than the one Kowal, the teacher, had in mind in developing the particular dictogloss. Therefore, Swain and his colleagues felt assured that the dictogloss had created opportunities for metatalk, which these immersion students took up. As Swain (2001) states, they wanted to answer these questions, "does this metatalk support second language learning? Or, even, is the metatalk, itself, evidence of learning occurring?" (p. 53).

Two additional studies have conducted in relation to these questions by Swain and other researchers. In LaPierre’s (1994) study it was hypothesized that when L2 learners engage in a task in which they need to talk about the language they are producing (metatalk) to complete the task, that metatalk may be a source of second language learning. In other words, there is a direct relationship between correctly solved linguistic problems during DG and correctly answered items in the following tailor-made posttests. Several research on comparative effect of dictogloss with a jigsaw story construction task (Swain and Lapkin, 1998; Lapkin and Swain 2000; Tocalli-Beller and Swain, 2005) and text-reconstruction tasks (Mayo, 2002) reveal that dictogloss task was more effective than these two tasks.

As mentioned above, both PI and DG are well-researched and theoretically driven focus-on-form techniques. They are similar in prompting L2 learners to notice target linguistic features in meaningful context, and they mainly differ in the mode of instruction. So, it would
be theoretically interesting to compare their instructional effects. Qin (2008) investigated the effect of processing instruction and dictogloss tasks on acquisition of the English passive voice to assess their effects in helping beginning EFL learners acquire the simple English passive voice. The two groups' performances were similar. VanPatten, Inclezan, Salazar and Farley (2009) also compared PI and DG following VanPatten and Cadierno (1993). The researchers used Spanish object pronouns and word order as the target structure. Their findings do not support the results of a recent study, Qin (2008). In that study, DG and PI were found to be equally effective; however, they find that PI is superior overall to DG.

Different results between two studies suggests that another investigation needs to be done to see whether or not the new outcomes will perform the same results like Qin’s (2008), whether they will perform like those of VanPatten et al. (2009), or whether they will perform in some different way. Furthermore, in this study the level of two groups' motivation was measured, too. The scholars found that there is a direct relationship between the using helpful strategies in learning and improving motivation (Dekeyrel, Dernovish, Epperly and Mckay, 2000; Noels, 2001; Graham, 2004; Kiss and Nikolov, 2005; and Anmarkrud and Braten, 2009). There is a lot of interesting and challenging work going on in language motivation research. In this regard, Linnenbrink and Pintrich (2002) suggest:

Although there is certainly a need for additional research on how specific changes to the classroom context influence multiple aspects of students’ motivation in school, it is clear from what is known that the context shapes students’ motivation, engagement, strategy use, and achievement. Therefore, teachers and school psychologists are urged to focus on changes that can be made to the school or classroom environments to help all students, rather than citing lack of motivation for a particular student as a reason for lower than expected academic performance. (p. 325)

Given this trend, the present study was roughly a replication in nature; comparatively investigating the effects of PI and DG on developing grammar ability. However, it is more unique in integrating affection and cognition; as to the former EFL motivation and attitude were investigated but as to the latter one grammar ability was included. This amalgamation is rationalized on the grounds that both parameters are functions of learning and teaching strategies. These purposes were followed in the form of two respective research questions and resultant hypotheses.
2. Method

2.1. Participants

82 Iranian beginning EFL learners out of 113 ones identified as homogenized sample through the KET, who were then assigned into two experimental groups (30 subjects in each group) and pilot one (22 subjects). Furthermore, a teacher-made diagnostic grammar test to make sure of the participants grammar knowledge prior to the treatment; a teacher-made achievement test on grammar teaching points parallel to the pretest to measure the development of grammar points of two experimental groups; the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (Gardner, 2004) to measure the level of groups' motivation; Treatment materials of PI based on VanPatten (2004) and Qin's (2008) samples and also ten short readings used in DG group for treatment purpose.

To conduct the study, the KET, as a proficiency test, was administered to 113 to screen the participants. Then, those whose scores lied between one SD below and above the mean score were identified as the main participants. The teacher-made diagnostic test was prepared and piloted and then administered in two experimental groups. Of course, to make sure of the test characteristics, KR-21 formula of reliability estimation (r= 0.63 and 0.71 for the pretest and posttest, respectively) was run. Both test enjoyed reasonable reliability. Then, the treatment was given according to the following order:

2.2. Instruction for PI group:

Step 1: Metalinguistic explanations of the target grammatical feature: the teacher made an example and then explained about the grammar rule of that special grammar point. For example:

1. The thief stole the bicycle.
The teacher explained: "We can say this sentence in the following form too".

2. The bicycle was stolen by the thief.
The teacher continued: "the first example is an active sentence; we place the subject before the verb because we want to emphasize who or what performs the action. We want to emphasize the doer of the action. The second example is a passive voice sentence, we want to emphasize the action, what happened, rather than who or what performs the action. In the passive voice sentence, the subject (doer) of the active sentence is placed after the verb or is omitted entirely".
Step 2: An explicit reminder of L2 learners’ inefficient input processing strategy: the teacher reminded learners about the problematic area of that special grammatical rule. For example upon hearing a sentence such as, "John was chased by Peter", learners may interpret the sentence as "it was John who chased Peter" rather than the other way around. Since the object of an active voice becomes the subject in a passive sentence, misinterpretation of who did what to whom might arise.

Step 3: In this step, the teacher used some structured input activities. Structured input activities prompting L2 learners to make form–meaning mappings (Wong, 2004). There are two types of structured input activities: referential and affective activities (Wong, 2004).

For referential activities the following steps were taken:

- The teacher asked the participants to look at the drawings, and choose a sentence that map the meaning of each drawing. When the participants chose an incorrect sentence, the teacher gave them an implicit feedback of 'no', by doing this kind of mapping activities several times; the participants would have been expected to reorient their previously incorrect processing strategy.
- A short reading was given to the participants and then the teacher asked them to answer some questions related to the reading.
- The learners listened to a short story and then answered to some questions in relation to it.

For affective activities the following steps were taken

- The participants listened to six statements, and then the teacher checked whether they had seen these things before or not, for example, in instructing passive voice a statement like "a thief was followed by a policeman "or" a cat was chased by a dog" could be used. There was no right or wrong answers.
- The learners listened to six statements and judged whether they had experienced these things before or not, for example in instructing passive voice a statement like "you were helped by others" could be used.

2.3. To implement dictogloss technique, these steps were followed:

Step 1) Warm-up: the learners found out about the topic and do some preparatory vocabulary work.

Step 2) Dictation: the learners listened to the text read at a normal speed by the teacher and took fragmentary notes. The learners heard the text twice. The first time the teacher
read the text or played the CD, the students just listened but do not write. The second time, the students took notes.

**Step 3)** Reconstruction: the learners worked together in small groups to reconstruct a version of the text from their shared resources.

**Step 4)** Analysis and correction: students analyzed and compared their text with the reconstructions of other students and the original text and made the necessary corrections.

- The treatment was conducted one session a week, which was lasted two and a half months. Every session, either in processing instruction group or dictogloss group, was lasted one and a half hour. After the end of the tenth session a post test (teacher-made achievement test) was prepared, piloted and then administered. Finally the motivation questionnaire was distributed.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Various statistical analyses were run in order to test the hypotheses. They ranged from descriptive to inferential analyses including independent, paired sample T-tests, frequency analyses and chi-square test.

| Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of the Proficiency Test |
|------------|------------|
| N          | 113        |
| Mean       | 56.46      |
| Median     | 57.50      |
| Mode       | 60         |
| Std. Deviation | 5.189  |
| Variance   | 26.921     |
| Skewness   | -.062      |
| Std. Error of Skewness | .227 |
| Kurtosis   | -.725      |
| Std. Error of Kurtosis | .451 |
| Minimum    | 46         |
| Maximum    | 69         |

In order to probe the normality of any sets of data, the skewness and kurtosis statistics were computed. If the statistics are divided into their standard errors, the results should be within the ranges of plus and minus 1.96.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2 Normality of the Proficiency Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

As table 2 shows, the proficiency test enjoys normal distribution because the ratios of skewness and kurtosis over their respective standard errors are within plus and minus 1.96. Then, the selected participants were homogeneous in terms of their language proficiency level prior to the treatment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROFICIENCY TEST</th>
<th>Skewness Statistic</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Kurtosis Statistic</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RATIO OF STATISTIC OVER STANDARD ERROR</td>
<td>-.062</td>
<td>.227</td>
<td>-.725</td>
<td>.451</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An independent t-test was run to compare the mean scores of the DG and PI groups on the pretest of English grammar. The t-observed value is .30 (Table 3). This amount of t-value is lower than the critical t-value of 2.04. Based on these results it can be concluded that there was not any significant difference between PI and DG groups mean scores on the pretest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3 Independent t-test of DG and PI on the Pretest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.306</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of DG and PI Groups on the Pretest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As also displayed in Table 4, the mean scores for the PI and DG groups on the pretest are 21.13 and 20.76, respectively. Therefore, in terms of the grammar knowledge the groups were homogeneous.

**Table 5 Paired-Samples t-test PI on English Grammar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>POSTTEST – PRETEST</td>
<td>14.50000</td>
<td>7.42201</td>
<td>1.35507</td>
<td>11.72858</td>
<td>17.27142</td>
<td>10.701</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A paired-samples t-test was run to compare the mean scores of the PI group on the pretest and posttest of English grammar. The t-observed value is 10.70 (Table 5). This amount of t-value is higher than the critical t-value of 2.04.

**Table 6 Descriptive Statistics of PI Group on English Grammar**

<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>Posttest</td>
<td>35.6333</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>7.79250</td>
<td>1.42271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>21.1333</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.50848</td>
<td>.82313</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As table 6 shows, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the PI group on the pretest and posttest of English grammar. As displayed in Table 6, the PI group performed better on the posttest with a mean score of 35.63. Thus, it can be concluded that the null-hypothesis as PI does not have any significant effect on the improvement of the English Grammar ability is rejected. It means that PI has a considerable effect on developing English grammar ability of the participants.

**Table 7 Paired-Samples t-test of DG on English Grammar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<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>
</table>
A paired-samples t-test was run to compare the mean scores of the DG group on the pretest and posttest of English grammar. The t-observed value is 12.42 (Table 7). This amount of t-value is higher than the critical t-value of 2.04.

**Table 8  Descriptive Statistics of DG Group on English Grammar**

<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>Posttest</td>
<td>35.567</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>6.96139</td>
<td>1.27097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>20.767</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>4.77554</td>
<td>0.87189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 7 shows, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference between the DG group on the pretest and posttest of English grammar. As displayed in Table 8, the DG group performed better on the posttest with a mean score of 35.56. Thus, it can be concluded that the null-hypothesis as DG does not have any significant effect on the improvement of the English Grammar ability is rejected. It means that Dg has a significant effect on developing English grammar ability of the participants.

**Table 9  Independent t-test of PI and DG on the Posttest**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equal variances assumed</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Df</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.895</td>
<td>.348</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>.035</td>
<td>57.278</td>
<td>.972</td>
<td>.06667</td>
<td>1.90774</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An independent t-test was run to compare the mean scores of the PI and DG groups on the posttest of English Grammar. The t-observed value of .036 is lower than the critical t-value of 2 at 58 degrees of freedom.

**Table 10  Descriptive Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35.633</td>
<td>7.79250</td>
<td>1.42271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35.567</td>
<td>6.96139</td>
<td>1.27097</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As table 9 shows, it can be concluded that there was not any significant difference between the mean scores of the PI and DG groups on the posttest of grammar. Thus, the null-hypothesis as PI is not more effective than DG in developing English grammar ability is not rejected. As displayed in Table 10, the mean scores for the PI and DG groups on posttest of grammar are 35.63 and 35.56, respectively.

**Table 11** Frequencies and Percentages DG and PI the Attitude and Motivation Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUPS</th>
<th>CHOICES</th>
<th>STRONGLY AGREE</th>
<th>SOMEHOW AGREE</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
<th>SOMEHOW DISAGREE</th>
<th>STRONGLY DISAGREE</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DG</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>752</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>546</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>3120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within GROUPS</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>18.3%</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>705</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>3120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within GROUPS</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
<td>16.5%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1457</td>
<td>1087</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>1061</td>
<td>550</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>6240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within GROUPS</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>19.2%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 12** Analysis of Chi-Square of PI and Dg on Attitude and Motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>20.539 a</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 275.00.

An analysis of chi-square was run to compare the motivational levels of DG and PI students. As displayed in Table 11, the DG group show higher agreement than the PI group on selecting the "strongly agree" and "somehow agree" choices (24.1 and 18.3 % vs. 22.6 and 16.5 %). The PI group has selected the "agree" choice (21.2 %) more than DG group (17.3 %). On the other side of the scale, the DG group has selected the "disagree" and "somehow disagree" choices more than the PI group (17.5 and 9.2 % vs. 16.5 and 8.4 %). The DG group has selected the "strongly
disagree" choice less than the PI group (13.5% vs. 14.8). When the statistics (above percentages) of table 11 were converted into Chi-square test analysis, the extent of differences was explored because this amount of chi-square (20.53) is higher than the critical value of 11.07 at 5 degrees of freedom. So, it can be claimed that there is a significant difference between the PI and DG groups' motivation. Thus, the null-hypothesis is rejected. It means that the groups' motivational level was affected differently; the DG had stronger motivational effects than the PI did.

4. Conclusion

This study is one of those studies contributing to the PI literature by comparing a theoretically grounded output-based instruction to PI. The results showed that the PI group improved significantly in developing English grammar. It is to be noted that this study has furthered the PI literature by researching the effect of PI on the developing English grammar of learners whose first language is Persian. However, the result demonstrated that the DG group also improved significantly in developing English grammar as well. These two types of instructions have shown beneficial in helping beginning EFL learners to learn the target features. Although, the research hypothesis on the comparative effects of both strategies was not rejected, motivationally DG group outperformed, so it can be concluded that if the duration of teaching had been extended, the improvement of learners in DG group might have increased. The collaborative quality of DG can be a reason to create an atmosphere in which students are self-motivated and take an active role in their own learning and that of their classmates and teachers.

The benefits of both focus-on-form techniques found in the study add additional evidence to the usefulness of focus-on-form techniques in general, where learners’ attention can be drawn to target forms while they engage in meaningful activities. Furthermore, both strategies, DG and PI, were separately and comparatively effective on developing EFL learners’ grammar ability but DG was more motivational than PI was.

PI is a grammatical instructional package which aims to promote learners’ grammatical knowledge. Van Patten (1996) proposed that PI has an effect on changing L2 learners’ underlying developing system so as to effect changes in their output, and that this effect cannot be achieved by any type of output-based instruction. According to the review of previous PI-based studies, what has been verified so far is that PI is an effective grammar instructional tool for a range of target features in different languages. In addition, PI proponents have claimed that the main
causative factor for learners’ improved performance is the Structured Input Activities (i.e. components two and three) rather than explicit information provided.

The pedagogical implications of the study are that besides PI, there seems to be other options of useful instructional techniques, like DG as an output-based instruction which can help EFL learners to learn English grammatical forms. The findings of this study call for using the dynamics of dictogloss in the language classroom because it engages learners in meaningful interactions in a supportive classroom environment that is conducive to language learning. As stated by Wajnryb (1990), dictogloss can provide multiple opportunities to draw L2 learners' attention to target linguistic forms in meaningful context. Compared to other more traditional approach to teaching grammar, the significance of dictogloss is in its interactive approach to language learning. This is especially so in teaching contexts that offers limited opportunities for meaningful social interaction in the target language.

Furthermore, these findings have important pedagogical implications for foreign language teachers who teach in large-size classes where teachers can give feedback to only a limited number of students. Therefore, dictogloss done for reinforcement and practice purposes may be useful since every single student gets the chance to actively participate in this type of collaborative form-focused task, and that the feedback given in the final stage could benefit everyone since the entire class, either in pairs or small-groups, is working on the same task. In addition, though collaborative in nature, it was observed that dictogloss was one type of FonF task that can take place regularly in the context of any lesson without disturbing the flow of regular university lectures. This was a concern at the onset of the study as the researcher was afraid that the dictogloss tasks would cause too much noise, confusion, and would take up more time than scheduled. However, this was not the case; since the subjects were mature enough, they greatly helped in keeping the dictogloss procedures moving smoothly, in a timely fashion.

On the other hand, language teachers should tailor their teaching methods and techniques to maximize students' motivation in and outside the classroom and thus enhance the learning experience. This would be a more beneficial strategy, rather than citing lack of motivation for a particular student as a reason for lower than expected academic performance. It will take a great deal of effort, but motivating students is something that we can and should do wholeheartedly. If we feel that the problem is in the insufficient effort or unsuitable learning
strategies that we employed, we are more likely to give it another try. The questionnaire results then show that such a strategy like DG may increase interest and motivation, and by finding creative tasks that give students high levels of autonomy and the ability to make important decisions, students’ perceptions of their education will improve.

References


Farley, A. (2004). The relative effects of processing instruction and meaning based output


Title
The Relationship between Iranian Graduate Students’ Pattern of Strategy Use and Gender, Age, Discipline, and Self-rated Proficiency Level

Author
Farid Naserieh (M.A.)
Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran

Biodata
Farid Naserieh holds an M.A. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language from Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran. His research interests include vocabulary development through CALL and individual differences with a focus on learning styles and strategies.

Abstract
During the last three decades, there has been a shift of paradigm from teaching methodologies to learning processes and learner characteristics. Research suggested that a host of cognitive and affective variables are at work when individuals go about the task of second or foreign language learning. Among these variables are learning strategies. This study aimed at shedding some light on the relationship between learner characteristics (i.e., gender, age, discipline, self-rated English proficiency level) on the one hand, and skill-based (e.g., reading, writing) and function-based strategies (e.g., cognitive, metacognitive) on the other. The participants were 138 graduate students from six faculties at Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran. They were randomly selected based on a two-stage sampling procedure and responded to Cohen, Oxford, and Chi’s (2002) Learning Strategy Use Survey. According to the results, the participants reported using reading and compensation strategies most often; speaking, memory, and vocabulary learning strategies were used least often. In addition, age and self-rated proficiency level tended to exert an influence on the participants’ strategy use. The findings of the study will be also discussed.

Keywords: Age, Discipline, Gender, Learning strategies, Self-rated proficiency level, Skill-based strategies, Function-based strategies.
1. Introduction
Second or foreign language learning is a complicated task demanding a great deal of effort and perseverance on the learners’ part. Despite this natural difficulty, many learners gain a command of the target language quite successfully, but the extent to which this is achieved is not similar across learners. A significant part of this differential success could be ascribed to the different ways in which learners go about the task of language learning. This diversity that might determine learners’ success or otherwise has come to be known as individual differences in language learning.

To date, several aspects of learner variation have been identified. Among them, those related to affective and cognitive dimensions have been investigated most frequently (Bailey, Onwuegbuzie, & Daley, 2000). Learning strategies, as the specific activities employed to facilitate learning, have attracted researchers’ attention since the mid 1970s. Empirical research has revealed that strategy use is a function of a multitude of variables. Put another way, several individual and situational factors may play a role in the type and frequency of the strategies learners deploy. Among these factors are motivation, language proficiency level, learning style, personality type, age, gender, cultural background, and field of study (Takeuchi, Griffiths, & Coyle, 2007).

Most of descriptive studies on learning strategies to date have focused on the function of strategies (e.g., cognitive, metacognitive, social). This study probes into skill-based strategies (e.g., speaking, writing, vocabulary) and their relationship with gender, age, discipline, and self-rated proficiency level.

2. Literature Review
The research into language learning strategies, which began with Rubin’s (1975) seminal article, has offered invaluable insights into the nature of “an extremely powerful tool” learners employ so as to facilitate and maximize their language learning (O’Malley, Chamot, Stewner-Manzanares, Küpper, & Russo, 1985, p. 43). In addition, it became possible to identify strategies employed by good language learners and teach them to poor language learners so as to enhance their learning (Naiman, Fröhlich, Stern, & Todesco, 1978; Rubin, 1975).

The concept of learning strategies is “notoriously difficult to define” (Griffiths, 2008, p. 83). However, since the inception of the field in the 1970s, researchers have attempted to define...
strategies in several ways. Rubin (1975), as the pioneer of the field, defined strategies as “the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge” (p. 43). Oxford (1990) defined them as “specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations” (p. 8). Based on over thirty years of research and examining the available definitions, Griffiths offered a very concise definition. To her, learning strategies are “activities consciously chosen by learners for the purpose of regulating their own language learning” (p. 87). As simple as it seems, this definition touches some essential features of a strategy.

2.1. Function-based strategies

There are several classification systems for language learning strategies (Cohen & Weaver, 2005; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Rubin, 1987). Among all taxonomies, Oxford’s is the most comprehensive one, which classifies strategies based on the function they serve. They include memory (for storing and retrieving new information), cognitive (for comprehending and producing language), compensation (for overcoming gaps in the learners’ L2 knowledge), metacognitive (for coordination and management of learning processes), affective (for regulating learners’ feelings and emotions) and social strategies (for learning through interaction with others). Most studies exploring such function-based strategies have employed Oxford’s Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). Most of these studies showed that learners were medium strategy users overall.

In an Iranian context, Tajeddin (2001) used a modified and translated version of the 80-item SILL to measure the strategy use among 764 learners of English language. The results revealed that the participants favored metacognitive, cognitive, social, and compensation strategies, respectively. Memory and affective strategies were used least often. Likewise, Akbari and Talebinezhad (2003), surveying 128 Iranian English major university students, reported the highest use of metacognitive and the lowest use of affective strategies. In another study of 220 Iranian English major university students, Riazi and Rahimi (2005) observed that the participants reported using metacognitive strategies most frequently followed by affective, compensation, and cognitive strategies. Social and memory strategies were preferred at the lowest frequency.

In a similar vein, the most frequently reported strategies among students in other contexts were reported to be metacognitive, compensation, and cognitive while the least used were social, memory, and affective irrespective of any other learner characteristics including factors
influencing strategy use (Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Bremner, 1999; Ehrman & Oxford, 1995; Green & Oxford, 1995; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006). This indicates most learners’ natural reliance on the use of strategies for making up for deficiencies in their L2 knowledge and also strategies for regulating their own learning and giving it some organization. It also shows their lack of awareness of the great impact of strategies for controlling emotional responses to language learning, cooperating with others, and storing and retrieving the material effectively.

2.2. Skill-based strategies

Another way to categorize strategies is based on language skills or components (Cohen, 2003; Cohen & Weaver, 2005; Griffiths, 2004a, 2004b; Macaro, 2001, 2006; Oxford, 2002; Pavičić, 2008). It seems that after the researchers came to recognize strategies as an important tool in language learning, the investigation of the impact of teaching strategies in the context of different language skills (i.e., listening, speaking reading, and writing) and the areas of grammar and vocabulary gained considerable momentum. After all, one primary goal of learners’ strategy deployment is language skills development (Ehrman, Leaver, & Oxford, 2003). Nonetheless, this is not a recent interest; Naiman et al. (1978, also 1996) provided a complementary list of techniques along with general strategies for specific language skills and components. Some of these techniques, which we now refer to as *skill-based strategies*, are as follows:

- **Listening** (e.g., listening to the radio, TV, and movies and exposing oneself to different accents and registers)
- **Speaking** (e.g., making contact with native speakers, asking for corrections, memorizing dialogs, and not being afraid of making mistakes)
- **Reading** (e.g., reading something every day, reading text at the beginner’s level, and looking for meaning from context without consulting a dictionary)
- **Writing** (e.g., having pen pals, writing frequently, and frequent reading of what you expect to write)
- **Grammar** (e.g., following rules given in texts, inferring grammar rules from texts, comparing the L1 and L2, and memorizing structures)
- **Vocabulary** (learning words in context, learning words that are associated, using new words in phrases, and using a dictionary when necessary)
In one of the attempts to explore the reported skill-based strategy use of 32 learners at a private international institute in New Zealand, Griffiths (2004b) developed a 40-item questionnaire, consisting of ten items for each language skill. She also collected relevant data from semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. According to the results, listening and speaking strategies were reportedly the most frequently used strategies. In terms of individual strategies, the reading strategy of using a dictionary was the most and the writing strategy of keeping a diary as the least frequently employed strategies. The relationship between reported strategy use and end-of-course results did not prove to be statistically significant. Moreover, the interviewees regarded reading strategies as a valuable source for developing oral/aural skills and increasing vocabulary knowledge (see also Griffiths & Jordan, 2005). In this section, a very brief account of skill-based strategies will be presented. Since strategy instruction is not the focus of the current study, interested readers are referred to Cohen and Macaro (2007) for a detailed skill-wise review of the impact of strategy instruction.

2.2.1. Listening strategies. The research on listening strategies was so poor about ten years ago that Vandergrift (1997, p. 494) referred to them as “the Cinderella of communication strategies.” After over a decade, however, listening has still come to be “arguably the least understood and most overlooked of the four skills” in the classroom (Nation & Newton, 2009, p. 37). This is in striking contrast to the claim that listening should receive special attention since over 50 percent of the time learners spend functioning in a foreign language is devoted to listening, which is the primary means of acquiring the target language (Nunan, 1998).

Rost (2002) reported on five strategies that appeared to be associated with success more than other listening strategies: predicting information or ideas prior to listening, inferring from incomplete information, monitoring comprehension, asking for clarification, providing a personal response to what has been heard.

2.2.2. Speaking strategies. Often referred to as communication strategies, speaking strategies were regarded as a key interlanguage process (Selinker, 1972). Speakers use communication strategies to resolve difficulties they encounter in expressing an intended meaning. Such strategies are more common in communication between individuals lacking proficiency in the same language, probably because there are more referential difficulties in such conversations (Tarone, 2005). Studies showed that successful speakers use a host of strategies for maintaining conversational flow such as negotiation for meaning strategies (e.g., making comprehension
checks and paying attention to the listener’s reactions) and also strategies for controlling affective factors such as enjoying the conversation (Nakatani, 2006).

2.2.3. Reading strategies. Reading can serve as an invaluable source of authentic language that is “always meaningful, often in fully grammatical form, and that includes every feature of the target language but pronunciation” (Eskey, 2005, p. 563). Successful readers often employ strategies that are cognitive, metacognitive, and compensation in nature. They tend to access background knowledge related to the topic of the text, predict what comes next, guess the meaning of unknown words, reread the entire passage, identify main ideas, and monitor comprehension; they often draw on global and problem-solving strategies. Poor readers, on the other hand, tend to process text in a word-for-word fashion and focus on grammatical structure, sound-letter correspondences, individual words meaning, and text details; they might translate from English into the L1 and think about information in both English and the L1 (Hosenfeld, 1977; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001; Zhang & Wu, 2009).

2.2.4. Writing strategies. Writing in a foreign language is the most difficult of the skills in which to achieve communicative competence (Chamot, 2005). Successful language writers tend to plan the content and organization of the text, struggle to find a way to express the intended meaning, evaluate and refine their lexical and syntactic choices, and monitor the writing process throughout. They also consistently draw on their background knowledge during the writing process (Baker & Boonkit, 2004; Manchón, Roca de Larios, & Murphy, 2007).

2.2.5. Vocabulary learning strategies. Vocabulary knowledge plays a pivotal role in both receptive and productive skills, and this recognition has gained considerable momentum since the early 1990s (e.g., Coady & Huckin, 1997; Moir & Nation, 2008; Nation, 2001, 2005; Pavičić, 2008). Moir and Nation, for example, suggested that learners need to become comfortable using a few important vocabulary learning strategies including using flash cards, using word parts (i.e., knowing common affixes), using mnemonic techniques (especially the keyword technique), guessing from context, and using a dictionary. For instance, dictionary use is one of the most popular strategies reported in several studies (Baker & Boonkit 2004; Fan, 2003; Schmitt, 1997). Training in the use of dictionaries can have benefits both for receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 2005). However, few learners actually master the required skills to look up words efficiently, and learners often make the least of dictionary use.
2.2.6. **Grammar strategies.** While attending to grammatical patterns was regarded as one characteristic of good language learners (Naiman et al., 1978), the area of strategies used for developing grammatical knowledge has been the most neglected area in dire need of further research (A. D. Cohen, personal communication, July 31, 2007). This led Oxford and K. R. Lee (2007, p. 117) to call grammar strategies the “Second Cinderella,” the first being listening strategies. Likewise, Larsen-Freeman (2001) referred to *grammairing* as a fifth skill area to underscore its paramount importance.

Some grammar strategies include writing grammar rules and examples on note cards or flash cards, reviewing such cards often, making visual aids like a chart or tree to help memorize grammatical rules, repeating and memorizing new grammatical rules, and using a dictionary or grammar book to find out about a particular grammatical point. Such strategies have been often subsumed under cognitive strategies (Bade, 2008; Griffiths, 2003; Oxford & K. R. Lee, 2007).

2.2.7. **Translation strategies.** Translation strategies have been often subsumed under cognitive or compensation strategies in most taxonomies. Like grammar and vocabulary learning strategies, translation strategies cut across all four skills (Cohen & Weaver, 2005). For example, learners may translate strategically when they listen to someone talking or listen to a TV show. They may just translate certain words or phrases to help in comprehension rather than attempting to translate everything. A strategic use of translation in reading would also mean not embellishing the text with translations, but rather finding the words and phrases that must be translated for basic comprehension. Likewise, translation strategies may help in effective speaking and writing. Many students prefer to think in the target language and to translate as little as possible from their native language. In writing, the use of the L1 as a strategy is also particularly useful. In this process, the first language is often used as a compensation strategy in early stages of learning to deal with problems and to assist in producing texts in L2. The L1 may be used to translate key words or phrases or to think through L2 writing process. As proficiency in L2 writing develops, the reliance on the first language is gradually reduced (Manchón et al., 2007).

2.3. **Factors affecting strategy use**

There are a number of variables affecting strategy use including motivation, language proficiency level, learning style, age, gender, discipline, cultural background, and beliefs about language learning. Research into the influence of such factors is important in that strategy
instruction should be specifically tailored in a way to take account of language learners’ individual and situational differences (Takeuchi et al., 2007). What follows is a very brief account of factors associated with the present study.

2.3.1. Gender. Most studies have reported that females used significantly more strategies compared to males (Green & Oxford, 1995; K. O. Lee, 2003; Mochizuki, 1999; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Sheorey, 1999). Females’ superiority was notably significant in social (Dreyer & Oxford, 1996) and affective strategies (Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006). This is in line with the assertion that women generally have a greater desire for good grades, a stronger need for social approval, a greater willingness to conform to existing norms, and a verbal superiority over male learners (Oxford, Nyikos, & Ehrman, 1988). There are also a number of studies finding no significant gender-related differences in strategy use (Griffiths, 2003; Nisbet, Tindall, & Arroyo, 2005; Rong, 1999). And finally, a very few studies found that males used strategies more often than females (e.g., Tran, 1988; Wharton, 2000).

2.3.2. Age. The studies into the effect of age on learning strategies have not generated robust findings and only offered some tentative conclusions. This might be due to the methodological issues that a few studies have isolated age as a focus of investigation (Macaro, 2001). Nonetheless, there are some studies suggesting that older learners employed a greater number of strategies compared to their younger counterparts. The former also used cognitively complex strategies more often than the latter (Peacock & Ho, 2003). In contrast, in a study of 348 ESL learners in New Zealand, Griffiths (2003) found no significant difference in the participants’ strategy use by age.

2.3.3. Discipline. Discipline or university major is also regarded as an influential factor in strategy deployment. Most studies in this regard reported a higher strategy use in favor of social science/humanities students among the students in other majors (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). This difference was more notable when the sample included students majoring in English language as they might be equipped with a greater awareness of cognitive and metacognitive tools at their disposal (Mochizuki, 1999; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Rong, 1999).

2.3.4. Language proficiency. Language proficiency has been associated with strategy use far more than other independent variables. A great number of studies have suggested a positive linear relationship between proficiency and strategy use; that is, more proficient learners used
greater number of strategies than less proficient learners (Green & Oxford, 1995; Griffiths, 2003; Magogwe & Oliver, 2007; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Sheorey, 1999; Wharton, 2000). A very few studies have reported either no relationship between proficiency and strategy use (e.g., Shmais, 2003) or a curvilinear relationship with students at intermediate level reported using strategies more often than their advanced and beginning levels counterparts (e.g., Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006).

It is worth mentioning that in such studies, causality could not be claimed because it is not clear whether a higher level of language proficiency leads to a greater use of strategies or students’ higher use of strategies is partially responsible for a higher proficiency level. The answer to this “age-old chicken-and-the-egg question” may reside in conducting more longitudinal research in the field (Griffiths, 2003, p. 381).

3. Purpose of the Study

One point that singles out this study is the employment of a less frequently used questionnaire, called the Language Strategy Use Survey (LSUS, Cohen, Oxford, & Chi, 2002), that assesses language strategy use across different language skills. The rationale behind using this new questionnaire is simple: There has been an overuse of Oxford’s (1990) SILL as an instrument in learning strategy research. In other words, most of the previous studies in this area have focused on strategy categories based on functions (i.e., cognitive, metacognitive, etc.), and there appears to be a need to investigate strategy use across different language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, etc.). Viewing in this light, adopting a skill-based approach is also more learner-friendly; that is, learners can more easily think of “making summaries in the margin of the book” as a reading strategy than as a cognitive one. In sum, although the SILL is a valid and reliable instrument, there has been also a call for conducting research utilizing other measures (Cohen & Weaver, 2005; White, Schramm, & Chamot, 2007). However, in order to compare the results with those obtained in previous studies using the SILL and also to provide a clearer picture of strategy patterns, the questionnaire items will be reclassified to cover five categories of function-based strategies. Based on the purpose of the study, the following research questions were developed:

1. What is the participants’ pattern of skill-based strategies?
2. What is the participants’ pattern of function-based strategies?
3. What is the relationship between the participants’ strategy choice and their gender, age, discipline, and self-rated English proficiency level?

4. What are the participants’ five most and least frequently used strategies?

4. Methodology

4.1. Participants

The research design for this study was descriptive. The participants were 138 graduate students at Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran. They included both first and second year students, 64% and 36%, respectively. They came from six diverse faculties studying in either technical fields or social sciences. The participants were also asked to rate their English proficiency level as they perceived it. Table 1 presents their distribution based on the background variables in the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technical Fields</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Sciences</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 or below</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 or over</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sampling procedure employed for the selection of the participants was two-stage random sampling (Wallen & Fraenkel, 2001). At first, six faculties were randomly drawn from among all the faculties at the university (i.e., each faculty was treated as a cluster). At the second stage, from among each of the very six faculties, one or more departments, depending on the faculty, were randomly selected. All graduate students of the given departments were regarded as the sample in the current study.

4.2. Instrument
Developed by Cohen, Oxford, and Chi (2002), the LSUS measures skill-based strategies. It consists of 90 items covering strategies in six different areas:

- **Listening** (26 items, e.g., “I use the speaker’s tone of voice as a clue to meaning”)
- **Vocabulary** (18 items, e.g., “I sometimes use rhyming to remember new words”)
- **Speaking** (19 items, e.g., “I tend to plan out in advance what I want to say”)
- **Reading** (11 items, e.g., “I make it a point to read extensively in the target language”)
- **Writing** (10 items, e.g., “I frequently take class notes in the new language”)
- **Translation** (6 items, e.g., “I make every effort to put my native language out of my mind and think only in the target language”)

The questionnaire is based on a three-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*I use this strategy and find it useful*) to 3 (*I have never tried this strategy*). In a study conducted by Paige, Cohen, and Shively (2004, p. 264), the LSUS underwent an exploratory factor analysis with a sample of 300 students “producing a five-factor model that was a reasonable approximation of the original conceptual structure, and confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated that the model represented a fair, if not robust, fit with the data.” The proposed factors included *Learning Structure and Vocabulary, Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Asking for Clarification*. In order, their reliability coefficients were .85, .77, .83, .67, and .79.

The questionnaire was originally constructed as a practical classroom tool, rather than a research instrument, to raise students’ awareness of the strategies they use. There was, accordingly, “no attempt to have cumulative rating scales and the inventory [was] intended to serve as a checklist and index” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 184). However, as Paige et al. (2004) asserted, the LSUS is a reliable and valid measure and “can be used fruitfully in future research studies” (p. 271). In order to narrow this gap, the researcher decided to use the LSUS with the rating scale on Oxford’s (1990) SILL, as a well-known strategy assessment instrument. Oxford developed scale ranges based on mean scores for determining the degree of strategy use. Those obtaining a mean score within the range of 3.5-5.0 are considered *high*, 2.5-3.4 *medium*, and 1.0-2.4 *low* strategy users.

The questionnaire was translated into Persian by the researcher. For some of the items that were the same as those in Oxford’s (1990) SILL, the available Persian version, translated by Tajeddin (2001), was adopted. The end result was, then, checked for clarity, relevance, and
In order to further identify the problematic areas, the translated version was delivered to a convenience sample of 44 graduate students (25 males, 19 females) at Shahid Beheshti University. The respondents were also asked to mark any unclear word, phrase, or statement. After the analysis of the responses and taking account of the respondents’ comments, the researcher made changes to some items. The Cronbach’s alpha values for listening, vocabulary learning, reading, speaking, writing, and translation subscales were .88, .87, .74, .78, .70, and .41, respectively; all subscales, with the exception of translation subscale, showed that they were internally consistent and reliable. Moreover, the Cronbach’s alpha for the whole questionnaire reached a high index of .94.

Based on the analysis of the participants’ responses to the LSUS in the main study, the Cronbach’s alpha values for listening, vocabulary, reading, speaking, writing, and translation subscales were .87, .85, .75, .83, .65, and .49, respectively. In addition, the alpha value for the whole questionnaire was as high as .94. The comparison of the Cronbach’s alpha indexes in the pretesting and the main phases of the study showed that the values were rather similar, and those for the whole questionnaire were even identical (i.e., .94). The only point of concern was, however, the translation subscale whose alpha values were remarkably low, and the results of this subscale should, thus, be interpreted with caution. This is, in part, due to the nature of the items in this subscale. Put another way, employing most of the translation strategies involves a mental and subconscious element, and it comes as no surprise that the participants had difficulty self-reporting on these strategies (this point was also raised in participants’ comments).

It is worth pointing out that, in order to answer the second and third research questions, the questionnaire items were reclassified according to Oxford’s (1990) taxonomy to form function-based strategies. However, as there was no affective strategy item on the questionnaire, the reclassified version included five strategy categories of memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, and social. The results of reliability analysis on the new function-based strategy categories revealed that the resulting subscales were also internally reliable. Put statistically, the Cronbach’s alpha indexes for memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, and social strategy categories were found to be .77, .88, .80, .73, and .64, respectively. This indicated that the reclassified items correlated well with each other, and the new strategy categorization also
4.3. Data analysis

For the first two research questions, a one-way repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVAs) was applied. Moreover, comparison-based Bonferroni post hoc tests were calculated to determine the areas of significant difference. For answering the third research question, independent samples t tests were run to see whether learning strategy categories are affected by the background variables in the study (viz., gender, age, discipline, self-rated proficiency level). The significance level was set at \( p < .05 \). All the statistical analyses were completed using *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) version 15.0.

5. Results

5.1. Skill-based strategies

The analysis of the students’ responses indicated that the mean scores of all strategy categories, including overall, fell into the medium level of use (see Table 2). This means that the sample tended to use strategies moderately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Category</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note*: 2.4 or less = Low; 2.5 to 3.4 = Medium; 3.5 and above = High.

As viewed, the most preferred strategy category was reading \( (M = 3.44) \). The next three categories had very close mean scores: listening \( (M = 3.28) \), writing \( (M = 3.27) \), and translation \( (M = 3.25) \). Speaking strategies \( (M = 3.16) \) ranked the fifth, and finally, the least preferred strategies were those related to vocabulary learning \( (M = 3.14) \).

The results of a one-way repeated measures ANOVA showed that the participants used the six learning strategy categories differently, Wilks’ Lambda \( = .62, F(5, 685) = 16.28, p < .001 \). The effect size of the difference was small \( (\eta^2 = .38) \). The following Bonferroni post hoc test
indicated that the participants used reading strategies significantly more often than all other strategies (see Table 3). Furthermore, it was shown that the participants significantly employed listening and writing strategies more frequently than speaking and vocabulary strategies.

Table 3. Bonferroni Post Hoc Test for Differences in Skill-based Strategy Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th></th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th></th>
<th>Difference</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening (L)</td>
<td>R &gt; L</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td>L &gt; V</td>
<td>.01**</td>
<td>W &gt; V</td>
<td>.02*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary (V)</td>
<td>R &gt; V</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td>L &gt; V</td>
<td>.01**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading (R)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking (S)</td>
<td>R &gt; S</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td>L &gt; S</td>
<td>.03*</td>
<td>W &gt; S</td>
<td>.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing (W)</td>
<td>R &gt; W</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation (T)</td>
<td>R &gt; T</td>
<td>.00**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05. ** p < .01.

5.2. Function-based strategies

The mean scores of all function-based strategy categories fell into the medium level of use (see Table 4). In order, the preferred strategy categories were compensation ($M = 3.32$), metacognitive ($M = 3.26$), cognitive ($M = 3.23$), social ($M = 3.21$) and memory strategies ($M = 3.01$).

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Function-based Strategy Categories (N = 138)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Category</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>2.29</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. 2.4 or less = Low; 2.5 to 3.4 = Medium; 3.5 and above = High.

The results of a one-way repeated measures showed that the participants preferred strategy categories differently, Wilks’ Lambda = .75, $F(4, 548) = 11.30, p < .001$. The effect size of the difference was small ($\eta^2 = .25$). Furthermore, Bonferroni post hoc test indicated that the participants used compensation strategies significantly more often than memory, cognitive, and social strategies (see Table 5). In contrast, the participants reported using significantly less memory strategies than all other strategy categories.
Table 5. Bonferroni Post Hoc Test for Differences in Function-based Strategy Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Memory (Mem)          | Com > Mem  | .00**  
|                       | Met > Mem  | .00**  
|                       | Cog > Mem  | .00**  
|                       | Soc > Mem  | .01**  
| Cognitive (Cog)       | Com > Cog  | .02*   
| Metacognitive (Met)   |            |        
| Compensation (Com)    |            |        
| Social (So)           | Com > Soc  | .04*   

* p < .05. ** p < .01.

5.3. Factors affecting strategy use

5.3.1. Gender. The results showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the strategy use in terms of gender because all the significant values obtained were far above the significant value $p < .05$ (see Table 6).

Table 6. Independent Samples T Tests for Strategy Categories for Gender Differences (N = 138)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Category</th>
<th>Male ($n = 75$)</th>
<th>Female ($n = 63$)</th>
<th>$t(136)$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Effect Size$^a$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>-1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>-0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ Eta squared.

5.3.2. Age. With respect to age, only one significant difference was found (see Table 7). Younger learners appeared to use vocabulary learning strategies significantly more than their older counterparts, $t(136) = -2.38, p < .05$. The effect size was small.

Table 7. Independent Samples T Tests for Strategy Categories for Age Differences (N = 138)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Category</th>
<th>23 or below ($n = 34$)</th>
<th>24 or over ($n = 104$)</th>
<th>$t(136)$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
<th>Effect Size$^a$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>-1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>-0.97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.3. Discipline. As Table 8 shows, the students from different disciplines did not appear to employ strategies differently.

Table 8. Independent Samples T Tests for Strategy Categories for Discipline Differences (N = 138)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Category</th>
<th>Social Sciences (n = 78)</th>
<th>Technical Fields (n = 60)</th>
<th>t(136)</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Effect Size*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>-0.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>-0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>-0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05, two-tailed. * Eta squared.

5.3.4. Self-rated English proficiency level. For the sake of clarity, those rating their proficiency level as intermediate (n = 58) were not included in the analyses. As Table 9 reveals, the mean scores on all but one strategy category were significantly different in terms of self-rated proficiency level. In other words, those participants who perceived their proficiency level as high reported using significantly more strategies from different strategy categories. The magnitude of the effect sizes ranged from small to moderate. As for the category of speaking strategies,
although more proficient learners reported using more speaking strategies, the difference fell short of the significance level.

Table 9. Independent Samples T Tests for Strategy Categories for Proficiency Level Differences (N = 80)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Category</th>
<th>Low (n = 26)</th>
<th>High (n = 54)</th>
<th>t(78)</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Effect Sizea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>-2.85**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>-4.87***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>-3.80***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>-2.11*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>-2.55*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>0.38</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>-2.71**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>-3.41***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>-2.91**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>-1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0.34</td>
<td>-5.49***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>-2.04*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>-4.73***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05, two-tailed. ** p < .01, two-tailed. *** p < .001, two-tailed. a Eta squared.

5.4. Five most and least frequently used strategies

Table 10 presents the five most frequently used strategies followed by the five least ones. As viewed, the mean scores of all top strategies fell into the high level (i.e., \( M = 3.5 \) and above). Item 55, “Using dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words,” a cognitive reading strategy, was reported most frequently by the participants. The next mostly employed strategy was item 79, “Using dictionary to find or verify the meaning or spelling of words.” This strategy is from the writing category and, like item 55, deals with referencing and using dictionaries as an aid to learning. Two strategies for paying attention to the learning material were also among the top list. In contrast, only the mean score of the least used strategy fell into the low level of use (i.e., \( M = 2.4 \) and below); the next four strategies in this table were used at a medium level (\( M = \) between 2.5 and 3.4). The least employed individual strategy was a cognitive listening strategy (i.e., item 3, “Listening to the radio in English”).
Table 10. The Five Most and Least Frequently Used Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Items (ranked in descending order of mean score)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55. Using dictionary to find the meaning of unfamiliar words (R, Cog)</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79. Using dictionary to find or verify the meaning or spelling of words (W, Cog)</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. Paying attention to the text organization (headings &amp; subheadings) (R, Cog)</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Using prior knowledge if I don’t understand what someone says (L, Com)</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Paying attention to keywords (while listening) (L, Met)</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. Trying to start conversations in English (S, Cog)</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Using flash cards in order to memorize new words (V, Mem)</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Remembering the unfamiliar sound and asking about it later (L, Soc)</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Physically acting out new words in order to memorize them (V, Mem)</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Listening to the radio in English (L, Cog)</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. R = reading; W = writing; L = listening; S = speaking; Cog = Cognitive; Com = Compensation; Met = Metacognitive; Mem = Memory; Soc = Social.

Note. Items are abbreviated.

6. Discussion

6.1. Pattern of strategy use

Participants’ moderate level of strategy use is in line with other studies conducted in EFL contexts (Akbari & Talebinezhad, 2003; Bedell & Oxford, 1996; Bremner, 1999; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006; Riazi & Rahimi, 2005; Tajeddin, 2001). This indicates that EFL learners are generally unaware of the importance of learning strategies.

Concerning skill-based strategies, reading strategies were reported to be used more frequently than other strategies. Such a piece of finding is partially in line with the results obtained in Griffiths (2004b). In that study, although the students favored speaking and listening strategies the most, they acknowledged the usefulness of reading strategies in the interview. This result was not unexpected as the participants have been accustomed to dealing with reading texts since the early years of learning English, and the amount of printed input they have received is considerable. In their graduate course, they also have to pass courses in which they read many technical texts and articles in English. Reading, as an invaluable source of authentic input, is often the first and most tangible way in which EFL learners may become familiar with English language. There are also a wealth of English stories and readers designed specifically for students at any reading ability level. On the other hand, reading comprehension questions are an
integral part of most university entrance examinations for PhD course. Another evidence for the importance of reading and, consequently, the greater use of reading strategies on the participants’ part is that most students outperform the reading section on the TOEFL examination compared to other skills.

As for function-based strategies, compensation strategies were used more often than the strategies in most other categories. This finding, as a characteristic of EFL contexts, is not dissimilar to the results of studies such as Bedell and Oxford (1996) and Bremner (1999). When learning English, Iranian learners often use compensation strategies to help them overcome limitations in existing knowledge. They may draw on prior knowledge or experience of similar situations and use such strategies as guessing the meaning of unknown words while reading or listening, using gestures in speaking to get the intended meaning across, and using synonyms in writing. This piece of finding bears evidence to Bedell and Oxford’s tentative conclusion that “the high use of compensation strategies might be typical of Asian students” (p. 58).

In contrast to greatly favored strategies, speaking, vocabulary learning, and memory strategies were reported to be used least often. The low use of speaking strategies comes as no surprise since in the EFL context of this study, there is almost no natural opportunities for the learners to practice their English orally. On the contrary, in an ESL context (e.g., Griffiths, 2004b; Griffiths & Jordan, 2005), strategies related to listening and speaking skills are usually among popular strategies due to the availability of a rich authentic aural/oral input. Moreover, in Iranian educational system, speaking often receives least attention, and its treatment is limited to mechanical repetition drills. By the same token, students feel no need to develop speaking abilities; they usually lack confidence to put their English knowledge into use by, for example, initiating conversations or related strategies. One important way to enhance speaking abilities and boost confidence is to make use of formulaic expressions. Such expressions may be memorized and used mechanically at first stages, but learners could gain flexibility and automaticity in applying them through contextualized practice (Cohen, 2008).

Vocabulary learning and memory strategies were among the least favored skill-based and function-based strategies, respectively. This is consistent with the results obtained in Bremner (1999), Green and Oxford (1995), Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006), Riazi and Rahimi (2005), and Tajeddin (2001). This finding also contradicts the stereotypical description of Asian learners as showing a strong preference for strategies involving rote memorization of language words and
rules as apposed to more communicative strategies (e.g., O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). On the other hand, Oxford (1990) regarded memory strategies as a powerful tool in language learning. The contradictory results about the Asian learners’ memory strategy use deserve further attention and remind us of Littlewood’s (2000) comment that we should not jump to conclusions when it comes to the effect of cultural background.

In terms of individual strategies, the strong preference for dictionary use replicates the results obtained in other studies (e.g., Baker & Boonkit, 2004; Fan, 2003; Griffiths, 2004b; Schmitt, 1997); however, dictionary is used least effectively most of the time. As Harvey and Yuill (1997) reported, learners use dictionaries mostly for checking on the spelling and confirming the meaning of L2 words rather than for other important reasons such as finding its collocations, or checking on its grammar. As for Iranian university students, they do not often check the pronunciation of the words they learn. They know lots of L2 words only in print; on hearing the very words, especially those without a sound-letter correspondence, they often fail to recognize them. Therefore, the instruction of such a popular strategy could help learners develop their reading abilities, resulting in a significant increase in their L2 achievement and overall proficiency.

In contrast to the popularity of dictionary use, using flashcards was disfavored by the participants. This, which is in line with the one obtained with another sample of Iranian university learners (Riazi & Rahimi, 2005), may be related to the participants’ lack of awareness of the benefits of such a strategy and/or its appropriate application. As Riazi and Rahimi aptly noted, Asian learners often use traditional rote memorization strategies that might differ from the specific memory techniques reported on the SILL or LSUS, which was employed in the current study. Some of these strategies, which the participants did not report using often, are sophisticated and need to be instructed; otherwise, it might deprive learners from the opportunity of multiple exposures to L2 words, resulting in ineffective learning (Moir & Nation, 2008).

6.2. Factors affecting strategy choice

6.2.1. Gender. In the current study, gender did not appear to be an influential factor on the students’ strategy use; a result also obtained in other studies such as Griffiths (2003), Nisbet et al. (2005), and Rong (1999). The finding is, however, inconsistent with the results of studies that found a difference in favor of females (e.g., Mochizuki, 1999; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Shoerey, 1999). Although gender-related differences do not seem to be as salient as other factors (Green &
Oxford, 1995), the absence of any such differences in this study is an issue that needs further pursuit. One explanation for this is the absence of affective strategies on the questionnaire used in the present study. Such strategies are usually favored by females; Hong-Nam and Leavell (2006) found that only affective strategies were more frequently used by females.

6.2.2. Age. Although vocabulary learning strategies were used least often by the participants as a whole group, older students reported using significantly more of such strategies than their younger counterparts (i.e., aged 23 or below). Moreover, the difference in the mean scores of most strategy categories was in favor of older students. This is in line with previous studies showing that older students usually used a greater number and a wider variety of strategies (Chamot & El-Dinary, 1999; Peacock & Ho, 2003; Vann & Abraham, 1990). It seems that older learners feel more in need of learning English, put much more effort into learning it and dealing with the materials, and, as a consequence, tend to use more strategies.

In terms of vocabulary learning strategies, older students who often decide to carry on their education are more in need of increasing their vocabulary knowledge for achieving success in PhD or TOEFL examinations. They try to memorize and learn as many words as possible to help them better deal with reading passages (e.g., academic articles), write course works or scientific papers, and understand movies in English. They also make an attempt to expand their knowledge of L2 words through memorizing synonyms of new L2 words.

6.2.3. Discipline. The participants in no one discipline felt the need to use strategies higher than those in the other disciplines included in this study. This is inconsistent with studies that found a higher strategy use among students majoring in social sciences and humanities in comparison to those in technical fields (e.g., Oxford & Nyikos, 1989; Politzer & McGroarty, 1985). Nevertheless, in the current study, the difference in the mean scores of overall strategy use was in favor of students majoring in social sciences but did not reach the threshold of significance.

6.2.4. Self-rated English proficiency level. Proficiency level affected almost all strategy categories. Such a finding indicates that more proficient students are generally well aware of their needs and look for more opportunities to practice the language in almost all skill areas. Because the measure of proficiency in this study was the participants’ self-ratings, it seems that greater strategy use is associated with perceptions of higher proficiency (Oxford & Nyikos, 1989). The finding is in line with most of studies including various measures of language proficiency as a variable (Green & Oxford, 1995; Griffiths, 2003; Hong-Nam & Leavell, 2006;
It is also in line with Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) and Zhang and Wu (2009) who found higher use of reading strategies among more proficient participants. However, it contradicts Griffiths (2004b) and Shmais (2003) who found no difference in strategy use by proficiency. On the whole, although more proficient learners were often associated with a greater strategy use, research of a longitudinal type is needed before we can make strong claims about the effect of proficiency level on strategy use.

The population of the graduate students was all from Shahid Beheshti University in central Iran; therefore, the generalizability of the results was limited. Regarding the instrument, the LSUS was a new questionnaire specifically translated and pretested for the purpose of this study. Although attempts were made to somewhat address the reliability-related issues, the questionnaire needs to be more refined for further studies. Moreover, the collected data were restricted to self-report questionnaires.

The effect of variables such as age and proficiency should be attended adequately in further research attempts. In this study, the age range was not wide enough to generate valid data. Age effect, in particular, should be explored through more expanded age ranges. Additionally, the students’ English proficiency level was reflected in their own perception of their language ability. As Mochizuki (1999) asserted, self-ratings may not be a reliable indicator of proficiency level.

8. Conclusion and Implications

The graduate participants’ frequency of the strategy use fell in the medium range. They reported using reading and compensation strategies significantly more often than other strategies. On the other hand, they favored speaking, vocabulary learning, and memory strategies less often than other strategies. Concerning the background variables, firstly, no significant difference was found in the participants’ strategy use by gender and discipline. Secondly, older students reported using more vocabulary learning strategies than their younger counterparts. Finally, the participants’ perceptions of their English proficiency level significantly affected their strategy use with more proficient learners employing more strategies in all categories including overall.

As the findings demonstrated, graduate students with differential perceptions of their English ability vary in their strategic approaches to language learning. Additionally, the fact that students
at different ages tended to use diverse strategies could greatly help producers in their way to develop suitable learning materials.

An area of concern in the results was the participants’ low use of vocabulary learning and memory strategies despite their paramount importance. Learners’ unfamiliarity with effective strategy application may be one reason for the low use of vocabulary learning strategies. In such a case, integrated and explicit strategy instruction will be of great help. Instruction of sophisticated strategies such as using flash cards and mnemonic devices could provide learners with the opportunity to learn words more efficiently yet more enjoyably (Moir & Nation, 2008). Additionally, students should be made aware that dictionary use is a last resort. They should also come to know that learning a word is not just knowing its L1 equivalent. Rather, the knowledge of other related word components such as pronunciation, grammatical points, and common collocations of the new word is as essential in order to be able to function efficiently in the L2. To this end, learning to use a monolingual dictionary effectively may help them progress in their knowledge of L2 words.

And finally, it is worth reiterating that most of the studies utilizing questionnaires for eliciting data on learners’ learning strategies are mainly designed based on function of the strategies. This study supplied the less researched field of skill-based strategy use and its relationship with a number of background variables. The pattern of skill-based strategies should be, thus, considered as an important element when constructing a theoretical model of language learning and individual differences.

References


Title

Power of Color in Toni Morrison's Beloved
A Foucauldian Perspective

Author

Afsaneh Hezarjaribi Ghassab (M.A.)
Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch, Tabriz, Iran.

Biodata

Afsaneh Hezarjaribi Ghassab holds an M.A. in English from Islamic Azad University, Tabriz Branch, Tabriz, Iran.

Abstract

This essay aims to examine one of Toni Morrison's social masterworks Beloved with the help of Foucault's ideas. Power that is the primary element of Foucault's thinking lies at the heart of the novel. Morrison is aware of the function of power mechanism, Foucauldian insight could help to reach deeper understanding of Morrison's plans rooted in her novel. Putting ahead that power relations in any society affect the total variety of people's lives, Foucault believes that power relations verify the way we see ourselves and examine the world around us. This Morrison social masterwork offers us with an exceptional chance to draw Foucault's ideas at work. In this respect, a study in the light of Foucauldian theories, regarding panopticon and resistance through the concept of power, could help to illustrate how power and color are mixed up with one another in American society. Barry (2002) claims, "state of marginality and an immoral otherness tend to occur when white Eurocentric norms are advocated and thus, everything that differs is given marginalized roles" (P.193). The primary purpose of this study is to illustrate how color affects the characters' domination or marginalization in Toni Morrison's Beloved.

Keywords: Power, Panopticon, Resistance, Racism, Toni Morrison, Michel Foucault.
1. Introduction

The essay at hand tries to explore carefully the role of American society in Morrison's novel that combines the elements of power and color to give voice to the black people who live on the boundaries of white American society. On the other hand, the essay tries to find the connections between power and color on the characters in Morrison's *Beloved*. *Beloved* is a story of slave and slavery that black people were victimized callously and brutally. This research, which focuses on Morrison's *Beloved*, illustrates the textual signifiers that indicate power of color and its components on the dynamics characters in African—American society that will be shown through the lens of Foucauldian notions.

Panopticon and resistance are the concepts, which are shown in Morrison's novel in this essay in the light of Foucault's theories of power. Michel Foucault is the first philosopher who depicts the issue of power, supplying new study of power, which constructs great contacts upon human sciences. Foucault rejects conventional ideas of power and studies the idea of power from new point of view.

In order to attain a modern society based on the system of constant supervision Foucault portrayed a society on the foundation of Panopticon. Foucault (1980) refers to Panopticon as:

A perimeter building in the form of a ring. At the center of this, a tower, pierced by large windows opening onto the inner face of the ring. The outer face of the building is divided into cells each of which traverses the whole thickness of the building. These cells have two windows, one opening to the inside, facing the windows of the central tower; the other allowing daylight to pass through the whole cell which afforded after all sort of protection (P.147).

Panopticon is a building that represents how persons can be restricted and controlled powerfully. The panopticon was intended to expand throughout society. It constructs power economic and efficient.

Chung Cheng (2004) says: According to Foucault, the supervisor's observation controls the observed individuals by the power that coexists with the supervisor's observation while the supervisor is observing the individuals; the disciplinary power he wields enters the observed bodies, working through "general visibility" (Foucault, 1979, P.171). Thus, surveillance appears in many institutions, for instance schools etc. for they produce supervision. Through
surveillance, a massive group is placed under control, for the disciplinary power pierces into their bodies to make them weak and submissive (P.3-4).

Power is disseminated through many directs and over a large number of persons kept under surveillance and being watched. Hence, it (surveillance) "alone perfectly individualized and constantly visible" (Foucault, 1979, P.200). This is for Foucault the most important effect of panopticism. The Panopticon is not a fancy building, but a plan of power decreased to its perfect form. It completes the actions of power by increasing the number of people who can be supervised, and reducing the number required to act it. Boyne (1990) states, it (the surveillance power) is a general mechanism known through its effects rather than its presence at a given point" (P.110).

Surveillance develops into a technique that aids create a disciplinary power. Shumway (1989) asserts, "We saw how the disciplinary technique could constitute the individual as an object to be judged, measured and examined" (P.146). Surveillance and the look are the key tools of power. Discipline is a series of methods by which the body’s functions can be restricted.

Foucault advises an idea of resistance in the considerations of relations of power. Resistance is always escorted with power. Foucault (1990) says, "Where there is power, there is resistance" (P.95). Resistance arrives with the exercise of power. Making resistance is one voluntary for true subjects to take. Resistance exists former to power. Resistance is always coming with power. McNay (1994) mentions that "Whenever domination is imposed, resistances will inevitably arise. There are no relations of power without resistances" (P.101). Resistance survives wherever power is applied. This resistance was all over the place and at every stage. Foucault’s (1979) examination that power is "extended" and "transmitted" by the "dominated" who "resist the grip" of the "pressure" the power holder "exert upon them" is one of the key points in his theory of power (P.26-27).

Foucault’s analytics of power proposes us to examine the system of power from the lowest situation. Foucault who refuses the notion that power is a possession of a restricted group. Foucault (1990) believes that "power comes from below” (P.94). He renounces the attitude that power works in up to- down direction or in descending manner. During (1992) explains that since in Foucault's views of power, "societies do not possess a single ideology or a single agency of domination (the bourgeoisie the state), which work in a single direction, the analyses of power are more effective when it starts from the bottom up" (P.133).
This study gains significance as findings can shed more light on black woman writer, Toni Morrison who uses the explanation of power in African-American society especially in *Beloved*. In this research different key words of power is shown based on Morrison’s novel.

2. Discussion

From the first picture of *Beloved*, the concept of Panopticon is shown in the aspects of the character's behavior. The panoptic society has acknowledged as a best form of subjugation in African society.

In *Beloved* Slaves are subjugated by the look of the white master or white people. Schreiber (1996) says *Beloved* signifies "the moment when slaves observe themselves as an object in the gaze of other" (P.5). In *Beloved*, Sethe is subjugated by the gaze of Craver's son, "when she prostitutes herself with stone Carver. She contemplates herself as object in the midst of agency" (P.6). Craver’s son is just like protector who is put in the inner watching tower to be responsible for keeping the surveillance while the object of gazer is Sethe who is independently put in a cell of external ring shaped building.

Ten minutes for seven letters. With another ten, could she have gotten Dearly too? She had not thought to ask him and it bothered her still that it might have been possible – that for twenty minutes, a half hour, say, she could have had the whole thing, every word she heard the preacher say at the funeral engraved on her baby's head stone: Dearly *Beloved*. (Morrison, 1997, P.5)

We understand that how black motherhood was observed through the look of Craver’s son. Schreiber (1996) declares "attains the gravestone his terms not on her own terms. Adding to her degradation is the remembrance of seeing herself as an object in the eyes of the craver's son" (P.6). Obviously, Sethe was collapsed under the objectifying look considered by white boy. So, "Rutting among the head stones with the engraver, his young son looking on, the anger on his face so old …Who would have thought rutting among the stones under the eyes of the engraver's son?" (Morrison, 1997, P.5).

Morrison strives in *Beloved* to provide a tone of voice to black Americans who were long inactive by the dominant white American society. Mao (2009) believes that "the dominant group referred to here in the case of American is unmistakably the dominant white Americans. It is
under the constraints of white gaze that black Americans have lost their voices about their enslaved history in America. It is wiped out legitimately from the main stream culture"(P.27).

Therefore, the events that stimulate her action in the first two episodes are the horrifying assault by Schoolteacher and his nephews when they steal her milk. Sethe tells Paul D "two boys with mossy teeth one sucking on my breast the other holding me down, their book reading teacher watching and writing it up" (Morrison, 1997, P.70). This event points out the moment when Sethe examines herself as an object in the eyes of the other.

White gaze subjugate the black one. Schoolteacher stares at Sethe and the black Slaves as an animal. Sethe tells Paul D about Schoolteacher and his nephews "they look me as a Cow" (Morrison, 1997, P.15). Slave owners’ watch slaves as their personal goods behaving them like animals due to slavery. Slaves have nothing at all. Sethe says Paul D about Schoolteacher’s nephews "After I left you, those boys came in there and took my milk. That’s what they came in there for. Held me down and took it. I told Mrs. Garner on em. She had that lump and could not speak but her eyes rolled out tears. Them boys found out I told on em. Schoolteacher looked at me says made one open up my back " (Morrison, 1997, P.16-17). They stare at Sethe as subhuman. They stands for cold racist and applied the repressive rule on the plantation. Sethe says " I am full God deman it and add my husband to it. Watching above me in the loft – hiding close by – the one place he thought no one would look for him, looking down on what I couldn’t look at at all. And not stopping them Looking and letting it happen" (Morrison, 1997, P.70).

However, the watchers are dynamic in the method of answering to power, but the watched are reasonably inactive.

When: The Four horsemen came; Sethe did not look at them ….She simply swung baby toward the wall planks, missed and tried to connect a second time, when out of nowhere- in the ticking time men spent staring at what there was to stare at the old nigger boy still mewing ran through the door behind them….She was looking at Schoolteacher now. (Morrison, 1997, P.149).

For Sethe, it turns out clearly the most powerful and effective gaze, she could control. By serious looking at Schoolteacher, Sethe impresses upon him the terrifying feeling that irritating a black woman is not the right to act. He is scared by Sethe's gaze.

For Schoolteacher and his nephews their look also spreads disciplinary rule. Slaves were inferior to the birds and behaved as animals, for this, they disregarded to see themselves as
human beings. When Paul D is detained and given the bit and collar, He observes himself in the
eyes of the rooster, Mister. "Mister, he looks so – free. Better than me. Stronger, together. Son a
bitch couldn’t even get out the shell by his self but he was still king I was…Paul D stopped and
squeezed his left hand with his right. He held it….and left him go on" (Morrison, 1997, P.72).

Therefore, each gaze upon inmates' roles as an instrument of examination each inmate's
behaviors, the sound effects of this power relation are clearly exposed to control the gaze. In
order to continue the chain- gang knowledge of living covered under ground in a box and his sub
PaulD's reminiscences verify his object position. When he is recaptured after an escape attempt,
he was " sent to Georgia… ...and he was kept in a prison. The three prisoners walked and
watched him" (Morrison, 1997, P.104-107). Their look also transmits their racist values, which
are so powerful that they frighten PaulD to passivity.

In Beloved, One who admits the rules and disciplines of the panopticon and achieves the
aim of this strategy will be praised but anyone who fails the rules and disciplines of the strategy
will be punished. For example when slaves accepted the rules and disciplines under Mr. Garner,
he gave them a praised like " letting niggers hire out their own time to buy themselves. He even
let em have guns! And he planned for them to marry" (Morrison, 1997, P.225). Schoolteacher is
a slave's master who punished slaves for their encroached. Sethe tells Paul D about a tree on her
back. She says "they (nephews) held me down and took my milk. I told Mrs. Garner, they found
out receives as a consequence whipping" (Morrison, 1997, P.16).They could not protest to their
work. They just tolerate.Schapiro (2001) says "the theft of Sethe's milk is clearly traumatizing to
her. She was rubbed of her essence of her most precious substance, which is her maternal milk"
(P.3).

In Toni Morrison's Beloved, slaves are measured, judged and examined by the white master
under the operation of disciplinary power. Another incident of no less significance in stimulating
Sethe into infanticide is School teacher's artificial scientific experiment categorizing or
examining her human characteristics and animal characteristics originally Sethe "didn’t care
nothing about the measuring string. Schoolteacher wrapped that string all over my head, cross
my nose, around my behind. Number my teeth. I thought he was a fool. And the questions he
asked was the biggest foolishness of all" (Morrison, 1997, P.191).

Schoolteacher took measurements and prepared comments of the slaves. Sethe perceived
noise that Schoolteacher informs his nephews "which one are you doing?’’ and one of the boys
said "Seth. When I heard him say, No, no. That's not the way. I told you to put her human characteristics on the left, her animal ones on the right. And don’t forget to line them up" (Morrison, 1997, P.193).

However, Slaves are just useful for the slave owners because they give birth. They are the slave owner asset. They regards at slaves as an animal. Dussere (2001) asserts that "the putting down on paper of human characteristics and animal characteristics along a line equals the double entry book keeping taken in slavery which see other human beings as a property to be bought, exchanged and recorded in the account book, the transformation of people into monetary values" (P.333).

Hence, Whites used to both engrave and impress the law upon the Africans' bodies. Cooper (1981) says, "Foucault actually describes a way in which the marks of power are inscribed directly on the body by branding, wounding, or mutilation" (P. 81). Therefore, Sethe is the most important characters in the novel that tolerate the physical scares of slavery's dreadful violence upon her violence upon her back. She has a injure on her back. She says Paul D about white people in Sweat Home, "They (nephews) took my milk and beat on my back" (Morrison, 1997, P.17). Therefore, something is growing on my back, "it is a tree. A choke cherry tree. Its red and split wide open, full of sap" (Morrison, 1997, P.79).

As we have pointed in theory, therefore, the fact that "subjects in any power relations have their own freedom cannot be over looked when the issue of resistance is concerned here" (Foucault, 1982, P.784). It is not recommended that resistance exists before power but resistance emerges with the practice of power. Making resistance is one voluntary action for the free subjects to take.

Therefore, for slaves in Beloved although the systems of white society cannot be changed, it is better for some of them to try to construct resistance to reject their positions in white society. Resistance is obvious in the novel. The black's resistance against the white's subjugation is linked with the life of acceptance of difference and coexistence for the blacks and the whites.

So, the first resistance that takes place in the Beloved is for Sethe when she confronts with Emy Denver. Amy aids her to look after, nurses her bleeding back, restores her circulation to her feet and helps with Denver's delivery. by Amy's aid, sethe gets power and subject position when she portrays how "two throw-away people... wrapping a ten-minute-old baby in the rags they wore... did it appropriately and well" (Morrison,1997,P.84-85). Instead of dying, she resists all
torment and goes on to accomplish her goal and begin her new life with her children, full of hope and with "milk enough for all" (Morrison, 1997, P.100). These moments when Sethe becomes subject, white people move toward objects as they observe themselves in Sethe's look intently. The white reader would prefer to shun the truth of Sethe's reality: Drain her mother's milk, they had already done. Divided her back …. That too. Driven her fat bullied into the woods they had done that. All news of them was not. They buttered Hall's face, Gave Paul D iron to eat, crisped Sixo, and hanged her own mother. She didn't want any more news about white folks (Morrison, 1997, P.188).

Sethe murdered his child. This is most vital resistance that occurred in this novel. This new subject positing is traumatized, however, when Sethe observes Schoolteacher approaching down the road. Again, she affirms herself by crowding her four children and taking them into the refuge for murdering. She tells to beloved in retrospect that her "plan was to take us all to other side where my own Ma'am is" (Morrison, 1997, P.203) where they would be safe. For slaves, their children don't belong to themselves they are slave owner's assets. Genovese (1988) explains that "children were the master's property. Some slave women felt that by killing an infant they loved, they would be in some way reclaiming it as their own" (P.324). So, when Schoolteacher is arrival in Cincinnati to reclaim his assets that was Sethe's children.

Therefore, we could see Schoolteacher himself is scared by Sethe's frightening authority; it displays Sethe's resistance towards slavery: "by the time she faced him looked him dead in the eyes, she had something in her arms that stopped him in his tracks. He took a backward step with each jump of the baby heart until finally there were none. She said I stop him, staring at the place where the fence used to be. I took and put my babies where they would be safe" (Morrison, 1997, P.164).

Slave owners may grasp the slave's bodies but not their souls. Schoolteacher may repudiate her maternal love and steal her milk but Sethe inscribes her own characters of maternal love with blood.

Grewal (1988) says" Sethe infanticide is a heroic act of resistance, one among many that constituted the quotidian experience and thus creates an alternative, subversive discourse of motherhood" (P.101). In Beloved Sethe's children are no supposed to live under the rule of Halle, the father of family but that of Schoolteacher who shows no care for their requests. Slave
children would often be traded by white masters. Sethe's horrible works does not signify dehumanization but profound maternal love.

Mills (2003) says "there were no pockets of freedom which escaped power relations but instead resistance existed wherever power is exercised. This resistance was everywhere and at every level" (P.104). Sethe defends her action as a denunciation of object position for herself and her children. So "Sethe ain't crazy. She love those children. She was trying to out- hurt the hurter" (Morrison, 1997, P.234). She resists many tortures just for her children.

Therefore, African Americans achieve information to defend against disciplinary rule in white culture. Sethe efforts to slay her children because she chooses their death instead of slavery. "Two were lying open-eyed in saw dust, a third pumped blood down the dress of the main one – the woman Schoolteacher bragged about, the one he said made fine ink, damn good soup, pressed his collars the way he liked besides having at least ten breeding years left" (Morrison, 1997, P.149). So, when Sethe gazed Schoolteacher, his nephews and the catcher, they were scared by her resistance. She wants to say them "definition is not belonging to the definers" (Morrison, 1997, P.190). Sethe was derived to the prison, when she killed her child.

On the other hand, it is not always accurate that power is limited which belonged to the people who obtain the inferior positions in the hierarchy of power. Foucault highlights that power proposes us to observe the technique of power from the lowest condition. Since most of time, this power works in an ascending way.

Paul D is the other slave who resists in white society. Paul D bears various tortures under the function of Schoolteacher. He was sent to jail because he "was trying to kill Brandywine, the man Schoolteacher sold him to …Where he was forced to work on a chain gang" (Morrison, 1997, P.106). He resisted all oppression- under white master. "They had a bit in his mouth" (Morrison, 1997, P.69). He then stores his life in a "tobacco tin buried in his chest where a red heart used to be" (Morrison, 1997, P.72-73). Paul D vanquishes his fears about the past and his own feeble identity to face Sethe and the demons of 124 Bluestone Road and to get his subjectivity.

In addition to Paul D, Sixo is in an inferior person that resists against whites. Sixo was endured against schoolteacher's incrimination of theft. Schoolteacher says to him: Did you steal that shoat? You stole that shoat. Schoolteacher was quite but firm, like he was just going through the motions not expecting an answer that mattered. Sixo sat there, not even getting up to plead or
deny. He just sat there, the streak—of—lean in his hand, the gristle clustered in the tin plate like gemstone—rough, unpolished but loot nevertheless. (Morrison, 1997, P.190)

In addition, these agonizing acts, Sixo's rebellion of the master's defining power are completed so sharply in a fight with Schoolteacher that the master slaps him "to show the definition belonged to the definers- not the defined" (Morrison, 1997, P.190). Moreover, Sixo is a slave who does not accept white's torture and tolerate any oppression by them." But .After the conversation about the shoat, Sixo is tide up with the stock at night … Sixo keeps a nail in his mouth now, to help him undo the rope when he has to" (Morrison, 1997, P.223).Schoolteacher burns Sixo but Sixo laughs. When he was blazing, He resists all pains under the operation of Schoolteacher. He asserts his final subjectivity by shouting.

Seth's mother is the other slave who resists all suffers in the white society for her girl, Sethe. Nan is the other woman who says how she and Sethe's mother were trespassed on various times by whites. Nan says "She threw them (babies) all away but you. The one from the crew she threw away on the island. The others from more whites she also threw away. Without names, she threw them. The others did not put her arm around" (Morrison, 1997, P.62). She does not accept white's children. At last, she is hanged for resistance against white people, just like one of Paul D's brothers and Sixo is shot when the fire set to burn him will not ignite.

3. Conclusion

This essay provides a new reading of *Beloved* based on the ideas of Michel Foucault that are presented in panopticon and resistance. In *Beloved*, Slaves are put in panoptic society. They are gazed by the look of the white master. In Panopticon, the practice of disciplinary rule between white and black is easily identified. However, Slaves changed this position by resistance against white people. Slaves especially black’s mothers resist all suffers in white society just for their children. Power of color especially white's color affects the character's marginalization and domination in Morrison's *Beloved*.

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Text and Subjectivity Toni Morrison's Beloved as Lacan gaze qua.

Title

A Comparative Study of Academic Articles Written by Iranian Scholars and English Native Scholars Based on Textual Cohesion

Authors

Aram Reza Sadeghi (Ph.D.)
Semnan University, Semnan, Iran

Amineh Danaee (M.A.)
Young Researchers Club, Garmsar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Garmsar, Iran

Biodata

Aram Reza Sadeghi holds a Ph.D. in TEFL from Isfahan University, Iran. He is an assistant professor and the head of English Language and Literature Department at Semnan University. He has given lectures at national and international conferences. His research interests which resulted in publications as well include culture in EFL, educational technology, and English as an International language.

Amineh Danaee is a member of Young Researchers Club and holds an M.A. in TEFL from Islamic Azad University, Garmsar Branch, Iran. She has taught English to EFL students for five years. Her research interests are EAP, ELT and language skills.

Abstract

On the assumption that Iran is stepping toward academic progress, scientific articles have turned out to be the main criteria of professors' promotion and indispensible for postgraduate students; therefore, the problems of Iranian scholars should be recognized so that they can publish effortlessly. One of these problems is presumed to be the lack of cohesion in Iranians' writings, so the aim of this study is to compare 20 linguistic articles, 10 has been written by each group of Iranian scholars and English native scholars, in relation to Halliday & Hasan (1976) notion of textual cohesion including five general categories of reference, ellipsis, substitution, lexical cohesion, and conjunction. Inferential statistics indicates as per exophoric reference, nominal substitution, antonymy, repetition, collocation and temporal conjunction, Iranian and native writers act similarly. No difference is discovered in nominal ellipsis and verbal ellipsis. Clausal ellipsis is utilized by neither of the article groups. However, findings reveal Iranian writers’
significantly less application of endophoric reference, verbal and clausal substitution, synonymy, meronymy/hyponymy of lexical category, additive, adversative and causal conjunction compared with native writers. Lastly, this article hints at some solutions to improve English writing of Iranians' academic articles.

Keywords: Textual cohesion, Academic article, Iranian scholars, English native scholars.

1. Introduction

Writing was used to reinforce grammar and vocabulary in the past, but it is a crucial skill today to the extent that its teaching requires education and training. Writing is a complex skill because it has higher and lower skills, so it can be said that writing precisely is a great achievement. By means of this skill, a set of permanent messages are conveyed; therefore it is also vital and demanding for a writer to know that he not only conveys a message but also talks to the audience who are the receivers of his message without giving him any feedbacks.

Among diverse forms of writing, paragraph writing, essay writing, paper writing, project writing, and etc. are some examples of academic writing. Academic writing needs its own language with special registers, genres and terms as a result knowing academic language will bring about literacy and academic achievement (Richards & Schmidt, 2002).

At times, academic writing is written in the form of scholarly paper or academic article to be published. Academic publishing has a lot of advantages for scholars. By bringing individuals together it can make a scholarly community. Without publishing the research results, new ideas and theories cannot be revealed in the world so they remain local. Promotional advantages for professors can be another advantage.

Non-native scholars, despite their desire to publish their articles in authoritative journals, face rejection upon submission as a result of which they get disappointed. This might be because English is an additional language (EAL) for these scholars. Li and Flowerdew (2007), for instance, recounted that the disadvantages experienced by scholars who use English as EAL in writing for publication have been well documented in the fields of applied linguistics (eg., Ammon, 2000; Belcher, 2007; Burrough_Boenisch, 2003; Flowerdew, 1999a, 1999b; Kaplan & Baldauf, 2005; St. John, 1987). Therefore non-native scholars of English often have difficulty in
writing their scientific articles and getting them published. A number of these problems that were
summarized by Bahrami and Riazi (n.d.) are as follows:

1. Being at disadvantage and taking longer to write
2. Low vocabulary size
3. Difficulty to make claims for their research with the appropriate amount of force
4. L1 interference
5. More problems with qualitative articles than quantitative articles
6. Being limited by a formulaic and simple language and style

Other areas of difficulty distinguished by Adams-Smith (1984), Bazerman (1988), Dudley-Evans (1994), Johns (1993), Mauranen (1993), St. John (1987), and Swales (1990) and
summarized by Flowerdew (1999) are seen below:

1. Grammar
2. Use of citation
3. Making reference to the published literature
4. Structuring of the argument
5. Textual organization
6. Relating text to audience
7. Ways in which to make knowledge claims
8. Ways in which to reveal or conceal the point of view of the author
9. Use of “Hedges” to indicate caution expected by the academic community
10. “Inference” of different cultural views regarding the nature of academic processes

English in Iran is a foreign language, namely, additional language, so above-mentioned
problems can be frequently seen in close examination. In Iran, not only Non-English major
students but also English-major students confront serious problems with English. Iranian
English-major students, due to their weakness in general English, which influences their
academic success, cannot communicate and handle English after graduating from university
(Maleki & Zangani, 2007). Furthermore, there are very few writing courses designed for the
university students, with actual problems in both language skills and writing skills, to help such
students write their articles and notes to an acceptable standard (Fallahzadeh & Shokrpour,
2007). Writing skills are even more problematic than language skills among Iranian student as
said by fallahzade and shokrpour (ibid). Askarzadeh Torghabeh (2007) concluded another problem which is Iranian students’ transfer of the patterns of their native language and culture into English language.

To examine Iranians’ writing problems scientifically, it seems worthwhile to refer to Kachru. Based on Kachru (1985), English is not limited to countries where English is their modern tongue. For this reason World Englishes proposed by him denote to various models of English (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). As reported in Wekipedia and Acar (2007), Kachru (1985) categorized the use of English into a set of circles. The “inner circle” which mainly includes Australia, United Kingdom, and The United States of America, uses English natively because English is their first language. Norm providing also refers to this circle (Kachru, 1985). India and Pakistan, for example, are among the “outer circle” also norm developing countries in which English is a lingua franca used officially in commerce, higher education and so on. The “expanding circle” refers to the countries like Iran where English is for certain functions particularly international business with no official role. This circle is called norm dependent in another classification by this writer (Kachru, 1985). In fact, Kachru considered EFL countries, i.e. Iran, marginal in terms of applying international language of English, so vulnerable to publication rejection. Along with the top reasons for rejection mentioned by Gupta, Kaur, Sharma, Shah and Choudhury (2006) such as absence of a message, lack of originality, inadequate methods, lack of relevance to journal, overinterpretation of results, unsatisfactory writing style, inaccurate data, and inappropriate statistical analysis, this study is in search for Iranian rejection problems by considering that lack of cohesion is a reason for the rejection of Iranian articles. Evidently, this research will uncover this problem through article analysis.

1.1. Background and Significance of the Study

Publishing importance is considered being prominent at the present time to the extent that numerous writers verified the magnitude. For instance, Malekzadeh, Mokri and Azarmina (2001) deemed that research articles and scientific publications are the main indicators of the scientific status of a country as well as the desirable status in the world. They can exchange knowledge among members of the academic community (Flowerdew, 1999). Dawson (2010) stated that universities in countries such as Australia and Great Britain survive only by such publications because central government funding depends on the quantity and quality of faculty publications which are measured according to standard mechanisms and consequently university
administrator and faculty seek to strengthen and improve their institution’s position in all-important national rankings.

Due to English development as an international language with growing interest in learning it, academic English has established itself a firm position in curricula for all university fields (Eslami & Eslami-Rasekh, 2007); therefore native and non-native scholars tend to publish their articles not only in English but also in indexed journals (Bahrami & Riazi, n.d.), however, some journals look more selective and more prestigious on the undergraduate level and they accept faculty’s articles (Dawson, 2010). Moreover, Tennant (2001) stated that writing well in English is of great importance to graduate students because completing a thesis or dissertation is essential for graduation, and publishing in an international journal may further their careers.

After the war, with better economic conditions, recent changes in Iranian government’s policy and the recent return of a large number of students trained overseas through government scholarships (Osareh & Wilson, 2002), Iranian publications in international journals have been increased. Iran is moving towards industrialization (Salager Meyer, 2008); therefore there exist challenges and sanctions that indicate the conflicts between Iranian and western (mostly English-speaking) governments (Bahrami & Riazi, n.d.).

Consequently, Iranian scholars pay more attention to publish their articles in ISC (Islamic World Science Citation Center) which is a citation index established by the Iranian Ministry of Science, Research and Technology after it was approved by the Organization of the Islamic Conference. It only indexes journals from the Islamic world. and ISI (Institute for Scientific Information) journals whose basic mission as a database publishing company is to provide comprehensive coverage of the world's most important and influential research. Today the ISI database covers over 16,000 international journals, books and proceedings in the sciences, social sciences and arts and humanities. Iranian professors receive frequent direct and indirect instructions to publish their articles therefore professors’ promotion is due to publishing articles. A high fee which will be paid for publishing articles in ISI journals is not negligent accordingly. Research grants, sabbatical leave and other rewards intended for publications should not be overlooked (Bahrami & Riazi, n.d.). Article publishing as a requirement for Ph.D. students is another reason which emphasizes the importance of producing better academic articles in English.
With regard to the importance of academic publication in English for the Iranian scholars, and considering the fact that deficiencies in textual cohesion may result in paper rejection, this study aims at comparing academic articles written by Iranian scholars and English native scholars according to textual cohesion. Textual cohesion is analyzed through Halliday and Hasan (1976) five general categories of cohesive devices of reference, ellipsis, lexical cohesion and conjunction. They believed that reference, substitution, and ellipsis are grammatical, lexical cohesion is semantic, and conjunction is in borderline, i.e. lexicogrammatical. It is hoped that the results of this study on textual cohesion of Iranian academic articles and their comparison with those of published English native speakers help Iranian scholars know the current problems in this regard hence improve their publication.

2. Method

Descriptive research involving a collection of techniques used to specify, delineate, or describe naturally occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation (Selinger & Shohamy, 1989) was applied in this study as it was aimed to compare academic articles of Iranian scholars and English native scholars. Due to inferential statistics which was used in this study in rejecting/confirming the hypotheses, it is an inferential study too (Hatch & Farhady, 1999).

2.1. Subjects

Twenty linguistic articles, ten native articles and ten Iranian articles were randomly selected. Native articles were taken from Journal of English linguistics and from recent years for example, five had been written in 2009, three in 2008, and the remaining two in 2006 because it was supposed that the authors used the same style in writing. In addition, in finding native articles, it was tried to pay attention to their writers to be native speakers. At times, the universities and the cities of the authors were taken into consideration to be from American or British native countries. This aspect was considered when the name of the author on its own could not help. When an article had been written by more than one author, it was attempted that all of them to be native speakers. Among the articles, one of them had been written by two authors and another one by five authors, but the rest was written by only one author, so they were fifteen altogether. More than half of the writers were females. Society for Iranian Linguistics and The First International Conference on Iran's Desert Area Dialects (2010) were the two sources in which
Iranian linguistic articles were selected. Six articles had been written by only one author. However, the remaining articles, namely, four had been written by more than one author. The number of writers, who were more than half males, was seventeen in total.

2.2. Design
Because of the absence of treatment and causal relationship between the two variables, this study is an ex post facto study. In this study the distinction between independent and dependent variables is not well defined therefore, it is arbitrary to call one or the other the independent variable. There is no control over selection and manipulation of the independent variable. That is why the researcher looked at the type and/or degree of relationship between the two variables rather than at a cause-and-effect relationship.

2.3. Instrumentation and Data collection
One of the instruments used in this research is document analysis or documentary analysis which is the collection and analysis of documents, better known in this study article, at a research site as part of building a grounded theory (Richards & Schmidt, 2002). Therefore, linguistic articles were sources for data collection. Since documents were intended to examine in this research, 10 academic articles Written by non-native Iranian scholars and 10 academic articles written by native English scholars were gathered. One more instrument of this study is Halliday and Hasan (1976) five general categories of textual cohesion through which twenty articles were analyzed. This category is listed below:

1. Grammatical cohesion
   a. Reference
      i. Exophora
      ii. Endophora
   b. Substitution
      i. Nominal
      ii. Verbal
      iii. Clausal
   c. Ellipsis

2. Lexical cohesion
   a. Synonymy
      i. Antonymy
   b. Collocation
   c. Repetition
   d. Meronymy
   e. Hyponymy

3. Conjunction
a. Additive
b. Adversative
c. Causal
d. Temporal
2.4. Data Analysis Procedures
After collecting the articles, the differences among these descriptive articles were all described according to Halliday and Hasan (1976) concept of textual cohesion. All the main parts of the articles such as abstract, introduction, method, discussion, result and conclusion except peripheral parts namely quotes, bibliographies, headings, footnotes, excerpts, examples, tables, figures and notes were analyzed. It should be mentioned that all the articles included these main parts even if some parts were not clearly labeled and were merged with one other sections under one label. Data obtained from this study were generally analyzed through frequency count, to be exact, the total number of occurrences of five general categories of cohesive devices of reference, substitution, ellipsis, lexical cohesion and conjunction in a corpus of language otherwise known as linguistic articles written by English native scholars and Iranian scholars.

3. Results and Discussion
In order to generalize the results of sample to the whole population, inferential statistics was utilized so that one can conclude that observed differences of descriptive statistics are according to the sampling or inequality of the articles.

With the purpose of applying inferential statistics, one must be sure that the data are normal. According to central limit hypothesis, if a sample of \( n \) units is selected from an abnormal population, the distribution will be normal in case \( n \) is great. Because of large amounts of data, normalization of data, in this study, could be substantiated on its own accord, so taking a normal distribution test was unnecessary.

To analyze the data, the main hypothesis based on what was mentioned regarding instrument, was divided into 24 hypotheses.

*Hypothesis 1*: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of reference

*Hypothesis 2*: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of exophora

*Hypothesis 3*: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of endophora

*Hypothesis 4*: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of anaphora
Hypothesis 5: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of cataphora

Hypothesis 6: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of substitution

Hypothesis 7: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of nominal substitution

Hypothesis 8: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of verbal substitution

Hypothesis 9: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of clausal substitution

Hypothesis 10: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of ellipsis

Hypothesis 11: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of nominal ellipsis

Hypothesis 12: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of verbal ellipsis

Hypothesis 13: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of clausal ellipsis

Hypothesis 14: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of lexical cohesion

Hypothesis 15: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of synonymy

Hypothesis 16: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of antonymy

Hypothesis 17: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of collocation

Hypothesis 18: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of meronymy/hyponymy

Hypothesis 19: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of repetition
Hypothesis 20: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of conjunction

Hypothesis 21: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of additive conjunction

Hypothesis 22: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of adversative conjunction

Hypothesis 23: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of causal conjunction

Hypothesis 24: there is no difference in the mean of frequencies between English native articles and Iranian articles in the use of temporal conjunction

The probability level chosen to reject null hypotheses is the level of significance. In this study, the significance level is taken as $p < 0.05$. Therefore, two tests are taken for each hypothesis that are Levene's test for equality of variance and t-test for the equality of means.

For instance, the level of significance for the first hypothesis according to Levene's test equals 0.372 ($0.372 > 0.05$) as a result, there is no difference between variances of Iranian and English native articles, so the hypothesis of equality of variances is not rejected. However, after taking into account the level of significance obtained from t-test for the equality of means 0.002 $< 0.05$, based on 95% level of confidence, the hypothesis of equality of means can be rejected. It can be concluded that mean of reference category is different in Iranian articles and English native articles. This category, on average, is applied more by English native articles (109.000) in relation to Iranian articles. As the table indicates, all the other hypotheses are rejected and confirmed in the same way. The results are as follows:

As per exophoric reference, nominal substitution, antonymy, repetition, collocation and temporal conjunction, Iranian and native writers acted similarly. No difference was discovered in nominal ellipsis and verbal ellipsis. Clausal ellipsis was utilized by neither of the article groups. However, findings reveal Iranian writers’ significantly less application of endophoric reference, verbal and clausal substitution, synonymy, meronymy/hyponymy$^1$ of lexical category, additive, adversative and causal conjunction compared with native writers.
### Table 1

**Table of inferential statistics of Iranian articles and English native articles based on textual cohesion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textual cohesion</th>
<th>Significance level for Levene’s test</th>
<th>Significance level for t-test</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>0.372*</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>109.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exopora</td>
<td>0.627*</td>
<td>0.160*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endophora</td>
<td>0.068*</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>97.600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaphora</td>
<td>0.067*</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>87.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cataphora</td>
<td>0.005</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>10.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitution</td>
<td>0.876*</td>
<td>0.051*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominal Substitution</td>
<td>0.965*</td>
<td>0.139*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Substitution</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>0.018</td>
<td>1.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clausal Substitution</td>
<td>0.021</td>
<td>0.015</td>
<td>1.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellipsis</td>
<td>0.655*</td>
<td>0.628*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominal Ellipsis</td>
<td>0.668*</td>
<td>0.660*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Ellipsis</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.168*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clausal Ellipsis</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexical Conjunction</td>
<td>0.180*</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>23.800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synonymy</td>
<td>0.002</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>4.400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonymy</td>
<td>0.281*</td>
<td>0.053*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collocation</td>
<td>0.344*</td>
<td>0.067*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meronymy/hyponym</td>
<td>0.042</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>5.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>0.399*</td>
<td>0.755*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunction</td>
<td>0.051*</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>345.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additive conjunction</td>
<td>0.054*</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>263.700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adversative Conjunction</td>
<td>0.807*</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>52.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causal Conjunction</td>
<td>1.000*</td>
<td>0.035</td>
<td>14.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal Conjunction</td>
<td>0.755*</td>
<td>0.226*</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** *Indicates the confirmed hypothesis. Symbol - indicates that clausal ellipsis was utilized by neither of the article group. It also shows no mean difference in the rest.

As mentioned by Halliday and Hasan (1976) and restated by Brown and Yule (1983) a set of sentences do or do not constitute a text depends on cohesive relationships within and between the
sentences, which create texture which is what distinguishes text from 'non-text'. Cohesion, therefore, is part of the text-forming component in the linguistic system (1976, 27).

Several objections, though, were expressed regarding the view held by Halliday and Hasan (1976) textual cohesion. For instance, they believed that there are formal markers which show cohesion explicitly. These markers according to Brown and Yule (1983) relate what has been said before to what is about to be said. Conjunction, as one category of textual cohesion, includes these markers. However, a text may include these markers, but it may not be understandable. All things considered, Chun Yeh (2004) restated that Brown and Yule hold that the source of cohesion is to be found outside the text, instead of in the words-on-the-page (1983,198). Texts, according to Brown and Yule, are what hearers and readers treat as texts.

References as another category of textual cohesion, direct readers to look elsewhere for their interpretation, in spite of this when there is an exophoric relationship, readers must look outside a text to interpret it, and so this type of reference plays no part in textual cohesion (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Exophora as part of this category was analyzed in this research but it has no relation with textual cohesion. These are endophoric relations which form cohesive ties within a text. Those relations which a reader must look back, anaphora or look forward, cataphora for their interpretations. This problem caused by the researcher in putting some demonstratives such as this article, this research, etc or some pronouns such as my, your, etc which did not refer back or forward to something in the text and also some of them were in the text from the very beginning, in these cases, they were taken as exophora as mental representation of what is in the world (see appendix).

In the case of substitution or ellipsis which was according to Halliday and Hasan (1976, p. 143) 'the fundamental relation between parts of a text', a reader is forced back into the text to look for a previous expression to substitute, in the case of substitution, or to provide, in the case of ellipsis. Ellipsis and substitution involve 'relatedness of form' according to Halliday and Hasan (1976). Brown and Yule (1983) claimed that substitution cannot take place on a strict replacement of an anaphoric form by an antecedent. As an example they referred to a sign in Edinburgh buses. That sign says STOP BUS VANDALS by reporting it at once to the driver or conductor. They explained that 'cohesion' model cannot accommodate the various connections which do exist in texts similarly they cannot replace it with bus vandals.
To have another look at this discussion, Brown and Yule (1983) deemed that such cohesion is not necessary to the identification of a text and is not sufficient to guarantee identification as a text. They believed that even if a text is identified by these criteria, they will not guarantee textual coherence. Halliday and Hasan (1976) admitted that this is the notion of register (appropriateness to a particular context of situation) which must be added to the notion of cohesion. They said the concept of cohesion accounts for the essential semantic relations whereby any passage of speech or writing is enabled to function as a text. They declared that cohesion happens when interpretation of each of these categories depends on something else that is verbally explicit. In their opinion, there are, of course, some semantic relations that are not represented in this concept, but their focus is mainly on those which this concept can represent.

Chun Yeh (2004) reaffirmed that according to Carrell (1982), Halliday and Hasan (1976) concept of cohesion fails to take the contributions of the reader into account. In the process of comprehension, the reader does not rely solely on the surface linguistic features of the text. Rather, the schemata, or the world knowledge, that the reader brings to the text play a more important part. Carrell (1982) quotes Morgan and Sellner (1980) as arguing that cohesion of surface linguistic feature is not the cause, but the effect, of coherence.

Widdowson (1978) enlightens that a text can be coherent without ‘overt, linguistically-sigaled’ cohesion. According to Widdowson (ibid.), when a text does not have overt linguistic cohesive links, as a reader we will make sense of it by ‘inferring the covert propositional connections from an interpretation of the illocutionary acts’. This is why we often find discourse coherent when it does not appear cohesive (Chun Yeh, 2004).

To make a long story short, based on Chun Yeh (2004, p. 246) if one juxtaposes the view of Halliday and Hasan (1976) regarding cohesion with the refutations of Widdowson (1978), Carrell (1982), or Brown and Yule (1983), one will find that semantic relations do exist in a text and help constitute its coherence. The biggest difference lies in “explicitness.” While Halliday and Hasan (1976) emphasize the explicit expression of semantic relations, the others advocate “the underlying semantic relation … that actually has the cohesive power”.

Although there are a set of criticisms concerning Halliday and Hasan (1976) view of textual cohesion, as mentioned by them in their categories, reference, substitution and ellipsis are grammatical, Lexical cohesion is semantic and conjunction is lexicogrammatical, as a matter of fact, their notion is very comprehensive consequently if used properly can lead to text
readability. However, to put greater emphasis on the results, it is worthwhile to present other writers’ research results about lack of proficiency in Iranian academic writing. Amirian, Kassaian and Tavakoli (2008), for instance, compared the discussion sections of English journals and professional Persian journals. The results reveal considerable difference across the three corpora regarding the generic features under investigation.

Findings of the Investigation of discourse markers in descriptive compositions of 90 Iranian students that was done by Jalilifar (2008) showed that Iranian students employed discourse markers with different degrees of occurrence. Results also revealed that graduate students used more discourse markers, and this led to more cohesive and qualitative texts.

The analysis of corpus of 25 authentic follow-up letters written by Iranians and 25 authentic letters written by native English writers through the notion of lexical density explained by Halliday (1985) and done by Arvani (2006) expresses that the Iranian business letter-writers mostly focus on surface linguistics aspects of English language while they are ignore of pragmatic aspects of language, such as politeness strategies.

Shokouhi and Talati Baghsiahi (2009) reported on metadiscourse functions in Sociology articles in Persian and English. The results have revealed a higher number of metadiscourse elements in the English texts.

A research conducted by Fallahzadeh and Shokrpour (2007) was concerned with EFL writing problems university Iranian students face when writing their report.

The effect of cohesive ties on reading comprehension was analyzed by Parvaz and Salmani-Nodoushan (2006) who believed that cohesion (lexical or referential) is a text feature that is decisive with regard to an individual’s comprehension of a passage, particularly to non-natives.

In general, based on what was mentioned above, learning academic writing is necessary for Iranian writers. These scholars must know that there are a lot of factors that can lead to this weakness. For example, they may have poor reading skills that prevent them from writing about something that they have read. They may need to improve their knowledge of words and grammar. Above all, as the results of this study indicated, higher level skill of cohesion must be reinforced.
4. Conclusion

One of the ways through which researchers can single out the differences between two sets of articles, to spell out the problems of one set and to sort out them later on is text analysis. This article, in line with other studies regarding text analysis of articles (e.g., Adnan, 2009; Arvani, 2006; Ansari & Babaii, 2009; Amirian, Kassaian & Tavakoli, 2008; Jalilifar, 2008; Lillis and Curry, 2006; McCabe & Heilman, 2007; Pecorari, 2003) intended to analyze Iranian articles and English native articles according to five general categories of textual cohesion proposed by Halliday and Hasan (1976). In this research similar to other studies writing system of two languages was compared. The results indicate as per exophoric reference, nominal substitution, antonymy, repetition, collocation and temporal conjunction, Iranian writers and native writers acted similarly. However, findings reveal native writers’ extra use of endophoric reference, verbal and clausal substitution, synonymy, metonymy of lexical category, additive, adversative and causal conjunction compared with Iranian writers. Through analyzing twenty articles, to be exact, writing system of two languages, some problems of Iranian scholars were known. This research is optimistic about helping novice Iranian scholars to be acquainted with their positive aspects and negative aspects so as to solve their problems.

On the whole, if it is supposed that textual cohesion can be made only through Halliday and Hasan (1976) five general categories, Iranian scholars are suggested to use endophora in the reference category, all the elements of the substitution category, synonymy, antonymy, collocation, meronymy/hyponymy in the lexical category, additive, adversative and causal in the category of conjunction in their writing more to make their article more and more cohesive (see appendix). Iranian writers can have this framework in their minds and apply it in their writing. Due to cohesion which has been categorized among higher level skills of writing, the results of this study are especially beneficial for those writers who are grammatically competent.

Besides, this research enjoys some recommendations for teachers. English language teachers can design tasks for their students focusing on five main elements of textual cohesion, that is to say, reference, substitution, ellipsis, lexical cohesion and conjunction. These tasks can be in the forms of English native reading texts and research articles, etc so that students can analyze them in class collectively. Iranian professors can attract students’ attention to this fact that they can highlight conjunctions or other relation signaling devices in their writing where appropriate. Replacing pronoun anaphors with more explicit noun anaphors and replacing synonym anaphors
with repeated noun are other suggestions to them. Possible replacement between lines must be made. Where text has been edited (e.g. sentences inserted), that anaphor-antecedent must be still clear. Obscure ellipsis must be filled out and repetition rather than substitution or hypertext glosses must be used.

As mentioned earlier in this article, Halliday and Hasan (1976) category, despite its deficiencies, is very all-inclusive. Teachers, by the results of this study, can be aware of writing nature and conventions, characteristics of discourse community and cultural differences between the two types of writing as analyzing the articles in this research showed. However, Teachers must know that along with cohesion, there are some other aspects that Iranian scholars must improve such as academic vocabulary, functionality, impersonality, and so on.

It is suggested that non-native Iranian scholars can work with native speaker so that in their collaboration, they can develop their writing. Also there must be writing courses at universities with the intention of teaching Iranian scholars writing so that they can succeed in international academic publication. Syllabus designers and material developers can construct some exercises in students' books regarding the use of these categories as well as exercises of text analysis.

Fortunately, this study, apart from a few delimitations, could cover all the categories of textual cohesion in detail. One of the delimitations of this study was that the analysis of conjunctions was limited to additive, adversative, causal and temporal because detailed analysis of articles for other subcategories such as simple additive relations, complex additive relations, etc. needed a lot of time which was beyond the scope of this study, so mainly appropriate for another study focusing mostly on the role of conjunctions. Not analyzing synonymy into its subcategories namely, with identity of reference and without identity of reference, can be delimitation as well. It is hoped that comprehensive studies to be done about conjunction and synonymy and their roles. Text analysis of the articles can be applied for each of the elements separately, for example, anaphora, cataphora, synonymy, antonymy, collocation, etc (see appendix A). Text analysis can be done in other text type.

Note:
1 Because of low application, meronymy and hyponymy were analyzed together.

References


**Resources of getting Iranian and English native articles**


**Appendix A**

Examples of components of textual cohesion applied in English native articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exophora</td>
<td>Like the Dutch study, my main data collection tool was a questionnaire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anaphora</td>
<td>Dennis Preston, one of the discipline’s major proponents, calls PD and he asks a series of questions that he suggests it is the perceptual dialectologist’s job to answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cataphora</td>
<td>Beal (2000: 352) even suggests that “h-dropping is a shibboleth of Makken speech.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominal substitution</td>
<td>DARE, which in the late 1960s surveyed 1,002 communities throughout the United States, used a prompt similar to the one in the linguistic Atlas projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal substitution</td>
<td>Geordie territory remains more strongly associated with “old” Northurnberland than it does with “old” county Durham.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clausal substitution</td>
<td>As with the northern sector, there is a correspondence between the sector’s shape and political areas. This is especially so in the south where the perceptual boundary follows quite closely the border between County Durham and Tess Valley.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominal ellipsis</td>
<td>Some sections are absent in one copy but present in another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal ellipsis</td>
<td>The blue slippers are torn, the green dirty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synonymy</td>
<td>Important considerations in the general study of language variation and change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antonymy</td>
<td>The lowest percentage of reported use, the greater the variation among speakers, the narrower the gap, the less the variation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collocation</td>
<td>Laugh a good laugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meronymy</td>
<td>He bought his papers and books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hyponymy</td>
<td>Base metals into silver and gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition</td>
<td>Linear order of units in the phonological component corresponds to the linear order of the corresponding units in the syntactic component</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additive conjunction</td>
<td>The survey instruments were piloted on a small number of people in Michigan and Chio before being implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adversative conjunction</td>
<td>Awareness of the construction in this book, however, is first made evident in an editorial footnote in the third edition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causal conjunction</td>
<td>Thus, I hypothesize that as the most cited form, want out will be the most accepted form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal conjunction</td>
<td>It’s also probably the answer you give when someone from the North East asks you “where are you from?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Title

The Relationship between Emotional Empathy and Self-efficacy among Iranian EFL Institute Teachers

Authors

Shole Hajghani (M.A.)
Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran

Mohammad Hasan Razmi (M.A.)
Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran

Mahtab Mohammadi Ghavam (M.A.)
Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran

Biodata

Shole Hajghani has an M.A. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Her current research interests include various aspects of English teaching and linguistics. She is currently teaching at Iran Language Institute.

Mohammad Hasan Razmi has an M.A. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). His main research interests include psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and critical discourse analysis. He has published papers at International Journal of Psychology (IJP) and Open Journal of Modern Linguistics (OJML).

Mahtab Mohammadi Ghavam has an M.A. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). Her main research interests include psycholinguistics. She has published a paper at Open Journal of Modern Linguistics (OJML).

Abstract

Although the consideration of emotion has been traditionally ignored in the context of teacher education, this has begun to gain significance with recent researches attempting to provide greater insight into and aid to enhancing teachers' performance so that they can experience greater sense of efficacy. Therefore, the assessment of emotional empathy has significant relevance for English as foreign language (EFL) teachers who have to deal with students in order for them to understand their feelings and empathize with them more effectively. This study tried to assess emotional empathy and its relationship to self-efficacy among Iranian EFL teachers. We hypothesized that if
teachers enhance their emotional empathy, this will increase their levels of self-efficacy and vice versa. In addition, EFL teacher differences on emotional empathy and self-efficacy beliefs were examined with respect to gender. The instruments for data collection were Emotional Empathy Scale (Caruso & Mayer, 1998) and Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). The results obtained through using Pearson product-moment Correlation showed that there was a positive significant correlation between perceived emotional empathy and self-efficacy (r=0.528). Using t-test, the researcher found that there was a significant relationship among EFL teachers with different genders concerning their emotional empathy and self-efficacy.

**Keywords:** Emotional empathy, Self efficacy, Teacher sense of efficacy, English as foreign language teachers.

1. Introduction

In the last few decades, the concept of self-efficacy has gained much attention, especially in educational research, as being an important measure for understanding and predicting human behavior and its assumed outcomes. Teachers are one group of professionals whose self-efficacy has been extensively studied. On the other hand and regarding Brown's (2000) definition of empathy as the process of "putting yourself into someone else's shoes," of reaching beyond the self to understand what another person is feeling, it becomes clear that in foreign language learning situation, with the presence of individuals such as teachers and students, a relationship between these two traits seems to appear which needs to be explored.

Considering the teacher's judgment of his or her capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and learning (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001), his measure of emotional empathy becomes important in order to see whether it can affect his self-efficacy.

However, regarding this issue, little or no research has been conducted. A recent research study by Rastegar and Memarpour (2009) has been carried out to investigate the relationship between EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their Emotional Intelligence. In the present paper, the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' self-efficacy and their emotional empathy is going to be explored.
1.1. Self-efficacy beliefs

Self-efficacy beliefs have been defined as: “people’s judgment of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura and Schunk, 1981, p. 31). Self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997), a facet of social cognitive theory, is represented by a causal model of interactions between self and society (triadic reciprocal causation) that maps behavior, internal personal factors (cognitive, affective and biological events), and the external environment as reciprocating factors. In other words, personal factors and the environment influence behaviors, while the environment is influenced by behaviors and personal factors. Self-efficacy beliefs as dynamic personal factors that Bandura (1997) states, are crucial to human agency or our ability to act. Self-efficacy beliefs are not considered a stable character trait of an individual, but rather, they are an active and learned system of beliefs held in context (Bandura, 1997). So, self-efficacy beliefs can be changed and vary depending upon the context and specificity of tasks.

Self-efficacy beliefs are believed to mediate relationships between knowledge and behaviors while interacting within environmental contexts. Self-efficacy is grounded in the theoretical framework of social cognitive theory emphasizing the evolvement and exercise of human agency that people can exercise some influence over what they do (Bandura, 2006). Bandura (2006) maintains that in this conception people are self-organizing, proactive, self-regulating, and self-reflecting. From this perspective, self-efficacy affects one's goals and behaviors and is influenced by one's actions and conditions in the environment (Schunk & Meece, 2006). Efficacy beliefs determine how environmental opportunities and impediments are perceived (Bandura, 2006) and affect choice of activities, how much effort is expended on an activity, and how long people will persevere when confronting obstacles (Pajares, 1997).

1.2. Teacher self-efficacy

The construct, teacher sense of efficacy (later shortened to teacher efficacy), was named, defined, and measured in the mid-1970s by two groups of researchers from the RAND Corporation (Berman & McLaughlin, 1977; Armor et al., 1976). Specifically, these oft-cited studies used two items combined into a single score to assess teachers’ beliefs in their ability to affect student performance (outcome), given their own actions (internal) and the impact of students’ home environments (external). These groups of researchers stated that they based the two items on Rotter’s (1966) locus of control theory. Bandura’s self-efficacy theory was not
mentioned in these documents as a foundation for item development. In addition, the studies found minimal, but statistically significant, results for the teacher sense of efficacy variable.

Based on social cognitive theory teacher self-efficacy may be conceptualized as individual teachers' beliefs in their own ability to plan, organize, and carry out activities that are required to attain given educational goals. Following this conceptualization Bandura's (1997, 2006) recommendation for item construction should be followed when measuring teacher self-efficacy: (a) because self-efficacy is concerned with perceived capability the items should contain verbs like “can” or “be able to” in order to make clear that the items ask for mastery expectations because of personal competence, (b) the object in each statement should be “I” since the aim is to assess each teacher's subjective belief about his or her own capability, and (c) each item should contain a barrier. The latter point is underlined by Bandura (1997, p. 42) stating that “If there are no obstacles to surmount, the activity is easy to perform, and everyone has uniformly high perceived self-efficacy for it.”

In the context of school, teacher self-efficacy beliefs can be defined as a teacher's individual beliefs in their capabilities to perform specific teaching tasks at a specified level of quality in a specified situation. Since the seminal contribution promoted by the RAND Corporation (Armor et al., 1976; Berman, Mclaughlin, Bass, Pauly, & Zellman, 1977) and the subsequent research of Ashton and Webb (1982, 1986), a number of studies have pointed to the influence of teacher's self-efficacy beliefs on children's cognitive achievements and success (Moore & Esselman, 1992, 1994; Muijs & Rejnolds, 2001; Ross, 1992, 1998). Teacher's self-efficacy beliefs may influence a student's achievements in several ways. Teachers with high self-efficacy beliefs are more likely than teachers with a low sense of self-efficacy to implement didactic innovations in the classroom and to use classroom management approaches and adequate teaching methods that encourage students' autonomy and reduce custodial control (Cousins & Walker, 1995a, b; Guskey, 1988), and to take responsibility for learners with special learning needs (Allinder, 1994; Jordan, Kracaali-Iftar, & Diamond, 1993).

Over two decades of research, there has been compelling evidence of the powerful effects of teacher's sense of efficacy concerning their instrumental activities as well as student attitudes and achievements (Atay, 2007). Findings of various research studies have shown that teacher efficacy affects learners' control orientations and control behaviors, their use of classroom discussions and innovative teaching practices; their responses to learners who are
difficult to teach; their levels of stress and their satisfaction with the teaching profession (Bandura, 1997; Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998).

1.3. Emotional Empathy

Empathy, defined as "the ability to comprehend another’s feelings and to re-experience them oneself," represents an important concept central to emotionally intelligent behavior (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, pp. 194–195). Plutchik (1987, p. 43) describes empathy as a sharing of positive and negative emotions that promotes a bond between individuals. Years of study within the fields of counseling and psychotherapy have shown the importance of empathy in establishing interpersonal relationships (Rogers, 1951, pp. 52–54) and in producing change and learning (Rogers, 1975, p. 3). He notes research evidence that "points strongly to the conclusion that a high degree of empathy in a relationship is possibly the most potent and certainly one of the most potent factors in bringing about change and learning." Another scholar, Katz (1963, p. 5), explains that an empathetic response is "triggered by cues in the conversation or by impressions we receive of the state of mind or feeling of the other person. We assimilate this information without being aware of doing so. We pick up the signals through a kind of inner radar and certain changes in our own emotional states make themselves felt. We mimic the other person and in the excitement of our spontaneous response our attention is almost completely absorbed." Thus, the empathizer becomes personally involved and conveys reassurance, recognition, and acceptance (Katz, 1963, p. 8).

Indeed, empathy has a longstanding history as an important characteristic for counseling and psychotherapy. Katz (1963, p. 3) states, ‘‘when we experience empathy, we feel as if we were experiencing someone else’s feelings as our own. We see, we feel, we respond, and we understand as if we were, in fact, the other person.’’ Katz (1963, p. 4), explains that it is not necessary for the empathizer to experience physical sensations. However, empathy is more than an intellectual exercise. It involves personal involvement and imagination. An individual, who is fortunate enough to encounter an empathic listener feels reassured, recognized and accepted (Katz, 1963, p. 8).

Guiora (1972, p. 142) defines empathy as "a process of comprehending in which a temporary fusion of self-object boundaries permits an immediate emotional apprehension of the affective experience of another" Agreeing with Guiora's definition, psychologists add that there are two necessary aspects to the development of empathy: first, an awareness of one's own
feelings, and second, identification with another person (Hogan, 1969). This means that unless you adequately know yourself, you cannot empathize with someone else.

2. Literature Review

As mentioned earlier, the relationship between Self-efficacy and Emotional Empathy, not only that of EFL teachers' but any specific groups of people, has not yet been explored in any research studies. However, by reviewing articles in different journals, we come across the relationship of these issues with other subjects. In one such article by Magogwe and Oliver (2007), the relationship between language learning strategies, proficiency, age, and self-efficacy beliefs among language learners has been explored. In another research paper by M. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010), teacher self-efficacy and its link to teacher burnout has been researched. Rastegar and Memarpour (2009) have also provided an article by investigating the relationship between Iranian EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and their self-efficacy. In general, the teachers' sense of efficacy concerning their instructional activities and students' attitudes and achievements (Atay, 2007) has been the main findings of various researches. These findings show the teachers' self-efficacy, their use of innovative teaching practices, their responses to difficult learners, and their satisfaction with the teaching profession (Bandura, 1997).

On the other hand, regarding the other trait, Emotional Empathy, some research has been done to investigate its relationship with subjects such as leadership, nursing, and task performance. In one article, relationships among perceptions of emotional empathy, cognitive abilities, and leadership emergence (Kellet, Humphery, and Sleeth, 2006) have been investigated. This study has found that people rated highly on empathy garnered attributions of leadership from their peers. Another earlier study by the same authors has explored the relationship between empathy and complex task performance (2002). Moreover, this trait has much been explored among nurses and medical students but it has rarely been a great concern to be investigated among teachers. However, the researcher considers it fruitful to study emotional empathy among EFL teachers to see whether it has any impact upon teachers' evaluation of themselves regarding their self-efficacy.

This study aims at seeking answers to the following questions:

1. Are there any significant relationships between EFL teachers’ self-efficacy and emotional empathy?
2. Are there any significant differences between males and females regarding their self-efficacy and emotional empathy?

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants
The participants of this study were 52 English teachers (22 male, 30 female) teaching at Kerman language institutes. These teachers were between the ages of 20 and 30 and had the average of 5 years of teaching experience. The institutes were chosen randomly from different areas of education of the city.

3.2. Instruments
The following two scales were used in this study:

a. Multi-Dimensional Emotional Empathy Scale (Caruso & Mayer, 1998)

b. Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001)

The Emotional Empathy Scale, developed by Caruso and Mayer, was used in this study. This scale assesses the trait based on self report responses to 30 items which mainly evaluate the degree of one's empathy for other people. The subjects responded to the items by indicating their degree of agreement with each of the 30 statements using a five-point likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree).

In this study, the short version of the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) was also utilized. This short version consists of 12 items. Participants responded to the items by indicating their degree of agreement with each of 12 items using a five-point likert-type scale ranging from 1 (nothing) to 5 (a great deal). The reliability for the 12-item scale is 0.90 (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

The Emotional Empathy Scale and Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) were distributed among the participants simultaneously. Participants were given some time (10-15 min) to answer these questionnaires while there were accompanying instructions. They were informed that the information would be used for research purposes and they were assured that they will be kept completely confidential. After collecting the data, SPSS version 16.0 was utilized to analyze the data.
4. Results
The descriptive statistics of EFL teachers and the individual variables have been gathered and the
data are available in Table 1 and Table 2.
Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>44.69</td>
<td>6.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional empathy</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>120.44</td>
<td>14.368</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of self-efficacy and emotional empathy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>%</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional empathy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>44.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it is indicated in Table 2, the frequency values indicate a tendency among participants
in their responses toward moderate regarding self-efficacy factor and toward high with regard to
their responses to emotional empathy items. Therefore, 42.3% of the participants have a
moderate value of self-efficacy and 44.2% of them have a high measure of emotional empathy.

The amount and degree of the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and emotional
empathy are shown in Table 3.
As shown in Table 3 a large number of the participants that is 23 of them with the highest degree of emotional empathy score have the highest percentage of self-efficacy factor that is 44.2%.

### Table 3. Cross tab (Self-efficacy * Emotional empathy)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>High</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-efficacy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within self-efficacy</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within self-efficacy</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within self-efficacy</td>
<td>.0%</td>
<td>29.4%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within self-efficacy</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 3 a large number of the participants that is 23 of them with the highest degree of emotional empathy score have the highest percentage of self-efficacy factor that is 44.2%.

### Table 4. Pearson correlation between emotional empathy and self-efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-Efficacy</th>
<th>Emotional empathy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Efficacy</strong></td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.528**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional empathy</strong></td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>0.528**</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

In order to investigate the relationship between emotional empathy and self-efficacy, a pearson product-moment correlation test was run using SPSS. According to the test (Table 4), and since the acquired significant level (0.000) is less than 0.05, it could be found that a significant amount of variations in self-efficacy would be dependent upon the amount of emotional empathy and therefore these two variables have a significant correlation with each other. Moreover, regarding the score (0.528) resulted from the Pearson Correlation Coefficient test, the degree of correlation between emotional empathy and self-efficacy is in a moderate and positive level, i.e. by increasing the emotional empathy, self-efficacy will subsequently be improved.

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Table 5. T.tst for equality of Means (Gender*Independent samples test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-efficacy</strong></td>
<td>1.768</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>2.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional Empathy</strong></td>
<td>3.95750</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to explore whether there were any significant gender differences in EFL teachers' emotional empathy and self-efficacy, an independent t-test analysis was conducted. This analysis (Table 5) shows that there is no significant relationship between gender and self-efficacy, since the scored significant level (0.083) is more than 0.05. However, there is a positive relationship between gender and emotional empathy (0.000 < 0.05). So, some degree of variation in emotional empathy depends on gender, with women having more of the construct than men.

5. Discussion
Considering the relationship between emotional empathy and self-efficacy, the study revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between emotional empathy and self-efficacy (See Table 4). The findings are in line with recent researches that demonstrate positive educational outcomes of teachers' sense of efficacy such as persistence, enthusiasm, and commitment and subsequently students' achievement and motivation (Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy, 2001).

Results of the present study further corroborate the contribution of teachers' emotional empathy on their sense of efficacy and provide new elements that attest to the influence that their perceived emotional empathy exert on their ability to effectively handle various tasks, obligations, and challenges.

In this study, a breakdown of results for emotional empathy by gender revealed significant differences. The findings indicated that there were significant differences between females and males, with females reporting higher levels of emotional empathy. However, this result might be due to such factors as culture and the kind of environment.

On the other hand, regarding the influence of gender on self-efficacy levels, it was found that there was no significant difference between the self-efficacy levels of male and female EFL
teachers, which confirmed the results reported by Gencer and Cakiroglu (2007), Chan (2004), and Rastegar and Memarpour (2009).

There were some limitations conducting this study, including the small sample size and their basis on just the specific sample of Iranian EFL teachers which raises concern about the generalizibility of the results. Moreover, another major limitation falls on the results' complete reliance on self-report data which may be susceptible to biases and not be entirely accurate. Finishing with limitations, some recommendations for future research are noteworthy. It would be worthwhile to examine the research questions among larger samples in order to shed light on the larger groups of teachers worldwide. Also, further studies could include age and years of teaching experience of teachers to determine whether these variables have any influence upon teachers' self-efficacy and their emotional empathy. The last suggestion for further studies would be that they should include qualitative tools such as interviews and think-aloud protocols which might provide further insight into emotional empathy and self-efficacy of specific groups of teachers.

6. Conclusion
The findings of this study indicate that EFL teachers' self-efficacy and emotional empathy correlate with each other, to the sense that by increasing one of them, the other one would also be enhanced. And since the females showed higher amount of emotional empathy than males, we can conclude that they might be having larger degree of self-efficacy. However, with these two traits being capable of getting improved, teachers, both male and female, can enhance their emotional empathy in order to increase their self-efficacy and vice versa. Therefore, the findings of this study that there was a positive relationship between emotional empathy and self-efficacy, gives us the implication that enhancement and development of each of these constructs can lead to enhancement of the other, hence establishing their great importance in EFL teaching field.

References


Title

The Effect of Gender on EFL Achievement Test in Pre-university Schools

Authors

Kamal Heidari Soureshjani
Islamic Azad University, Shahrekord Branch, Iran

Parisa Riahipour
Islamic Azad University, Shahrekord Branch, Iran

Biodata

Kamal Heidari Soureshjani holds an M.A. in TEFL from Shiraz University and is a Young Researchers Club Member. He taught English courses and IELTS at different institutes in Shiraz and is presently the academic member of Islamic Azad University, Shahrekord branch. He has also published papers in different academic journals.

Parisa Riahipour is a faculty member in Islamic Azad University, Shahrekord branch, Iran. She holds an M.A. in TEFL. Her areas of research include applied Testing, Linguistics and Discourse Analysis. Also, she has been teaching English for more than ten years.

Abstract

This paper examined the effect of gender on English as a foreign language (EFL) achievement test at the end of the second semester in Shahrekord in 2009-2010. In other words, the aim of this study was to determine whether students’ gender can affect learning English as a foreign language. Participants of the study were 480 pre-university school students (240 males and 240 females) selected from four educational regions of Shahrekord. Employing quantitative methods of analysis and making use of descriptive analysis, pair t-test, and the effect size, the results indicated that EFL learning is to some extent, gender-related, and it has a significant effect on the achievement test. The findings of this study help instructors to select their instructional strategies more effectively related to gender.

Key words: Gender, Foreign language, achievement test.
1. Introduction

In recent years, evidence has shown that while both boys and girls have improved their performance, girls are achieving higher grades than boys in EFL learning. Gender has been regarded as an important affective factor that plays a role and influences second language acquisition. Remember that the title of John Gray’s book, *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*. Of course it is a metaphor or conceit, but there are objective differences between the language of men and that of women, and no education or social conditioning can wholly erase these differences. A gender difference is a disparity between male and female humans. According to gender role theory, prevalent gender stereotypes are culturally shared expectations for gender appropriate behaviours. Females and males learn the appropriate behaviours and attitudes from the family and overall culture they grow up with, and so non-physical gender differences are a product of socialization (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Karau, 2002). From the biological viewpoint, females and males also differ fundamentally in terms of cognitive ability and learning style. These differences derive both from basic physiological differences, such as differences in the development of brain, and from differences in higher-level cortical functions (Keefe, 1982). Males and females have somewhat different patterns of lateralization, with males being more left-hemisphere dominant than females (Banich, 1997, p. 306-312).

No matter what gender differences are primarily culturally or biologically determined, educational research in the last several decades has proven that the gender differences manifestly influence students’ academic interests, needs, and achievements (Halpern, 1986; Collins, Kenway & McLeod, 2000; Swiatek & Lupkowski-Shoplik, 2000). However, different educational domains have different claims to the gender issue. The theorists of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) believe that female learners show possible superiority in their second language learning process (Burstall, 1975; Boyle, 1987; Ehrlich, 2001). Therefore, whether ESL students leaning English with CALL programs will gain or counteract the learning efficiency due to their gender difference has become a significant issue of ESL instruction. As Bernhardt’s (1991) model predicted that studies revealed significant gender differences in comprehension with different passages at early stages of acquisition, but not at more advanced stages.
It has also been suggested that researchers study how beliefs differ across language learners, particularly in terms of individual differences such as gender, age, learning styles, and personality type (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005; Wenden, 1999; Horwitz, 1999; Rifkin, 2000).

The purpose of this study is to find out an answer to this question that whether or not females are better English language learners than males specifically, in achievement test in pre-university schools. To do so, a number of males and females have been chosen from Ahwaz. Its aim is to re-examine the identity of gender and learning English language in four educational regions of Ahwaz. It conducts a quantitative statistical analysis and raises the following questions:

A. Do females outperform males in their EFL achievement tests?

B. Is there any significant difference between the mean of males and that of females in their scores?

C. How big the difference between the means is? In case there is a difference.

The significance of gender warrants further investigation. By examining the effect of students’ gender on their achievements, it will be possible for instructors to be more careful about the important role of students’ gender in their performances.

2. Background to the study

Gender is an issue with important theoretical and pedagogical implications in L2 learning. A good number of studies have found that gender can have a significant effect on how students learn a language. A large number of researches have worked on a wide range of topics about gender, including language learning ability, motivation, teacher perceptions, learning styles and strategies, classroom interaction, teaching materials, testing, learner identities, masculinities, and pedagogies. Many studies that examined gender as a variable in the use of language learning strategies (LLS) reported that significant gender differences almost always occurred in a single direction, showing greater use of LLS by females (see for instance, Green, 1992; Green & Oxford, 1995; Noguchi, 1991; Oxford, 1993).

Politzer (1983) reported that females used social LS significantly more than males. Ehrman and Oxford (1989), using the LLSL with both students and instructors at the U.S. Foreign Institute came to the conclusion that compared to males, females reported significantly greater use of LLS in four areas of general study strategies, functional practice strategies, strategies for communicating meaning, and self management strategies. Oxford and Nyikos
(1989) looked at the strategies used by university students and concluded that gender differences had a “profound influence” on strategy use. They also found that female learners used formal rule-related practice strategies, general study strategies and conversational input elicitation strategies more frequently than did male learners. Green and Oxford (1995) found similar results in a study of students at the University of Puerto Rico, and concluded that females significantly used strategies more often than males.

Hismanoglu (2000) maintains that factors like age, gender, personality, etc. affect the way in which language learners learn the target language. Catalan (2003) summarized the results of a study on sex differences in second language vocabulary learning strategies, and confirmed that males and females differ in both the number and range of vocabulary strategies reported. Peacock and Ho (2003) also investigated the learning strategies used by 1006 Chinese students of English. They noticed that females reported significantly higher use of all six strategy categories. They also reported a much higher use of nine individual strategies, seven of which are also associated with higher proficiency.

Similarly, Chang (2004) finds males and females different in several aspects including their strategy use. He notes that men and women are not only biologically different but they are also brought up in different ways with different social expectations. As a result, men and women behave differently so that these behavioural differences are reflected in academic aptitudes. Rua (2006) explored the role of the sex variable in foreign language learning success by reviewing and connecting data gathered from several tests and studies. She confirmed the hypothesis that girls’ achievement in FLL is enhanced by the interaction of neurological, cognitive, affective, social and educational factors. Each factor is activated in a different way for boys and girls; with the result that boys and girls are equipped with different systems of variables and these variables build a network of influences which is posited to be eventually responsible for girls’ FLL success.

Contrary to the above-mentioned positions, some research studies consider no significant role for gender in LLS use. Kim (1995) investigated the use of LLS of Korean adult English learners and found no significant differences between males and females in the use of strategies. Furthermore, Oh (1996) conducted a study involving Korean English learners and found that gender difference did not affect the use of strategies. In another study, Tran (1988) discovered that Vietnamese women use fewer LLS than men. The same result was found in
Tercanlioglu (2005) with Turkish university student participants. The results showed significant gender differences, characterising males with more strategy use.

The area of gender differences in motivation has long been explored, partly in an effort to explain gender differences in achievement and career choice in the fields of math and science. In general, despite research findings that show females outperform males (see Linn and Hyde, 1988); female students have lower self-perceptions of ability than male students (Wigfield et al., 1996). Especially in math and sports, males show higher self-perception whereas females show higher self-perception in English (Eccles, 1983; Eccles et al., 1989; Meece et al., 1990; Wigfield et al., 1991). Wigfield et al. (1996) also found that males have higher self-ratings for physical appearance, physical ability, and math while females have higher self-ratings for verbal and reading tasks. In terms of the value which students attach to subjects, Wigfield and Eccles (1992) also found differences between male and female students: males value math more, whereas females value English more.

In second language acquisition (SLA), researchers have found some evidence implying the existence of gender differences in motivation and attitudes (e.g., Bacon and Finnemann, 1992; Burstall et al., 1974; Clark and Trafford, 1995; Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Ludwig, 1983; Goldberg Muchnik and Wolfe, 1982). Although most of the research in mainstream psychology mentioned earlier was carried out with elementary school students or adolescents studying in their native language, if the same patterns apply to university students studying English, one might assume that females have higher self-perception for and/or attach greater value to English. As a matter of fact, this assumption is congruent with findings of some foreign language studies that indicate greater motivation and more favourable attitudes in female students (Burstall et al., 1974; Pritchard, 1990; Williams et al., 2002; and Jones, 1997). Following the general trend in motivational research in second language learning, many researchers focused on the instrumental and integrative types of motivation first proposed by Gardner and Lambert (1972). Those researchers (for instance, Bacon and Finnemann, 1992; Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Goldberg Muchnik and Wolfe, 1982; Sung and Padilla, 1998) also found female students have greater motivation and more positive attitudes toward studying a foreign language than male students, although the distinction between instrumental and integrative motivation in these studies was found to be ambiguous (summarized in Chavez, 2001).
Although gender was not the focus of their studies, both Dornyei and Clement (2001), reported possible gender differences in motivation. According to Dornyei and Clement, female students scored significantly higher than male students on the scales of all of the seven motivational dimensions in most of the target languages. Those motivational dimensions include Direct Contact with L2 Speakers, Instrumentality, Integrativeness, Vitality of L2 Community, and Cultural Interest.

A number of studies conducted in various contexts have confirmed the presence of gender-related differences in verbal ability and language use (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; Thorne et al., 1983; Tannen, 1990). The consensus seems to be that females are superior to males in general verbal ability (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974; Denno, 1982; Cole, 1997), but there is disagreement about which types of verbal ability shows gender differences. This is especially true when it comes to different language skills. Hyde and Linn (1988) conducted a comprehensive meta-analytical study investigating gender differences in verbal ability. Among the 56 vocabulary studies included, six reported a significant difference in favour of males, while eight reported significant differences in favour of females. Generally the meta-analysis demonstrated no significant gender difference in vocabulary, although there was significant heterogeneity in the effect size.

In terms of reading comprehension, five out of the 21 studies reported a significant difference in favour of males, while ten found significant differences in favour of females. Generally, females were found to have slight advantages in reading, speaking, writing, and general verbal ability, but the differences were so small that Hyde and Linn argued that gender differences in verbal ability no longer existed. Statistics from ACT of 2001 also showed no significant sex differences in English or reading, although the means of females were slightly higher than those of males (Zwick, 2002). In contrast, a gender study recently conducted by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) yielded completely different results. This comprehensive study (Cole, 1997) involved 400 tests and millions of students. It was reported that a language advantage for females had remained unchanged compared with 30 years ago. Female superiority in verbal ability ranged from noticeable differences in writing and language use to very small differences. At the same time, however, evidence also suggests that males are superior in listening vocabulary, that is, comprehension of heard vocabulary in both first and second
language contexts (Brimer, 1969; Boyle, 1987). In general, despite the female advantage in general verbal ability, there seems to be no agreement as to whether and to what degree gender differences exist in different types of verbal ability. Since the gender effect has been dealt with through different aspects by different researchers and also because much time and space is required to be paid to these different and extensive aspects; narrowing down the topic to a specific aspect that is, EFL achievement test, seems legitimate.

In the context of second language proficiency testing, gender differences have been examined only to a limited degree. Generally, little differential performance by gender has been found. According to Ryan and Bachman (1992), the TOEFL did not demonstrate gender DIF. When means of subtests were compared, no significant gender differences were found in listening, structure and written expression, or vocabulary and reading. Wainer and Lukhele (1997) also reported that the reading comprehension testlets of TOEFL showed essentially no differential functioning by gender.

In this term that is , the effect of gender on the performance of EFL male and female language learners’ achievement test, there have been conducted various studies. Angela Rammouz (English education consultant Lebanese International University) in English Intermediate Cycle (Brevet) Official Examination Results, for the Regular Session of Examination Results, for the Regular Session of 2002-2003, according to Regions and Gender, clearly showed that the percentage of success of females was higher than males in all regions of Lebanon in EF learning. For instance, the percentage of success among females was 76.33%, 57.52%, 55.89%,73.14%, 55.38% and 55.42% in Beirut, the North, the South, Mount Lebanon, Nabatiyé and the Bekaa respectively, while it was 62.11%, 52.11%, 52.52%, 67.09%, 54.64% and 53.15% among males for the same regions. Thus it is evident from the given data that females performed better than males in the Intermediate Cycle official examinations (2002-2003) in all regions.

Hard evidence of any differences, especially in the specific L2 environment, can be useful for further development of linguistic theory as well as applicable in today's EFL classroom. As Sy (1995) points out, "A longitudinal study, together with quantitative and qualitative analyses of data, may also shed light on sex differences and Language Learning Strategies." This study, therefore, is intended to examine the effects of gender on EFL achievement test and a comparison between males’ and females’ scores as well.
3. Method

3.1 Participants
The participants in this study were pre-university school students (240 males and 240 females) who were selected at random from four educational regions of Shahrekord. They attended the English language classes in the second semester of the year 2009/2010 and participated in the final English achievement test at the end of that semester. Out of 240 male students, 120 were majoring in science and 120 in art and humanities; and it was the same for 240 female students. In order to ensure that the participants shared similar characteristics, such as language skills, only those participants, who had previously passed the first semester final exam, were included in this study. They all were from different classes of society. The age of the participants was between 17 and 18, and they all had 7-9 years of experience in English language learning.

3.2 Materials
One instrument was used for this study. It was the raw scores of the students’ English achievement test which administered at the end of second semester. The test paper included four parts: vocabulary, grammar, sentence function, and reading comprehension. The items contained fill in the blank, matching, multiple choice, and jumbled sentence questions which intended to assess students’ overall ability in language use. To ensure the effectiveness of the test, a nationwide English test was chosen. A sample of the test has been provided at the end of the paper in appendix section.

3.3 Data Analysis
SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) 16.0 was employed to analyze the data. Firstly, descriptive analysis was performed to compute the means, and standard deviations to see the mean differences of two groups (males and females). Secondly, Independent-Samples T-Tests were run to compare the differences among different groups (between science male and female students, between humanities male and female students, and between total of science and humanities male and female students). Thirdly, the effect sizes (Eta squared) were utilized to calculate the strength of association and the relative magnitude of the differences between males and females.

4. Results
This study aimed to investigate if there were females’ outperformance rather than that of males in their EFL achievement tests. The research questions were analyzed by means, standard deviations, independent-samples t-tests, and effect sizes.

As can be seen in table 1, the total average of the humanities female students (M=13.18) is higher than that of males’ (M= 11.47). Humanities female students outperformed the humanities male students. In this case, Female students have a standard deviation of 3.20 whereas males have achieved a standard deviation of 3.54 that shows the amount of variation within female scores is smaller than males’.

**Table 1  Humanities Male and Females' Mean and Standard Deviation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scores of Humanities</th>
<th>Gender of Humanities</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>13.18</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In table 2, the result of the independent-samples t-test indicates that there is a significant difference between the scores of the two humanities groups. (P< 0.05, Sig= 0.00).

**Table 2  Humanities Male and Females' Independent T-Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scores Of Science</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances</td>
<td>-3.928</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-1.71458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1 Mean of humanities male and females' scores**
Here, the effect size was calculated in order to see the magnitude of the difference and the strength of association in humanities males’ and females’ students. The calculated effect size is 0.06, so it is concerned with a moderate effect between humanities males’ and females’ scores. Cohen (1988, as cited in Pallant, 2001, p.175).

Table 3 indicates that the total mean of the science female students (M=16.0) is higher than that of males’ (M= 15.2). In this case, female students outperformed the male students. Female students have a standard deviation of 2.84 whereas that of males’ is 3.2. This shows that the amount of variation within female scores is smaller than males’.

**Table 3 Science Male and Females' Mean and Standard Deviation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of Humanities</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scores Of Humanities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in table 4, the results also indicate that there is a significant difference between the scores of two science groups. (P< 0.05, Sig= 0.04).

**Table 4 Science Male and Female Independent T-Test**

<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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scores Of Science</td>
<td>-2.041</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>-.81042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 2 Science male and female mean score](image-url)
The result of the effect size obtained for the third question (d= 0.01) also shows that there is a small effect of difference between science males’ and females’ students.

Table 5 indicates that the total mean of all female students (M= 15.59) is higher than that of males’ (M= 12.33). Here, female students outperformed the male students. The standard deviation of all females is 3.09 while all males have achieved a standard deviation of 3.48. It reveals that females’ scores have a small amount of variation rather than males’.

**Table 5 Total Male and Female Mean and Standard Deviation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender of Total Male And Female Scores</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>12.33</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>15.59</td>
<td>3.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As table 6 shows, results of statistical analysis of independent-samples t-test also reveal that the p-value is 0.00. (P < 0.05). This means that there was a significant difference between the total mean males and the total mean females.

**Table 6 Total Male and Female Independent T-Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Male And Female Scores</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>-10.84</td>
<td>478</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-3.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3** Mean of total male and female scores
Then, the effect size was calculated for the third question in order to investigate the strength and the magnitude of difference in total males’ and females’ students. It was equal to 0.19. It also indicates that there is a small relative magnitude of difference between the total females and the total males.

5. Discussion and conclusion
This study aimed to investigate if there were females’ outperformance rather than that of males in their EFL achievement tests. After running the SPSS program and observing the results it was understood that the obtained findings were congruent with the previously resulted findings. What emerged clearly from the analyses is the fact that female students at both the humanities and the science majors outperform that of the male students. According to Majors and Gender, it clearly showed that the success of the total females was better than males in all regions of Ahwaz in their EFL achievement test. For instance, the means among humanities and science females was 13.18, 16 respectively, while it was 11.47 and 15 among males for the same majors. Again the total mean of females was 15.59 while it was 12.33 for total males in Ahwaz. Thus it is evident from the given data that females performed better than males in the final exam (1387-1388) in all regions of Ahwaz. These results imply that gender is a factor which is concerned with EFL learning. Gender was found to have significant effect (P< 0.05, Sig= 0.00) on students’ EFL achievement test.

The findings are consistence with findings of Huebner (1995), Linn and Hyde (1989), Chaves (2001), and Rammouz (2003) which suggested that females are better second language learners. These findings however revealed a significant interaction effect of gender on students’ achievement test, the effect sizes (humanities d= 0.06, science d= 0.01, and total d= 0.19) were relatively moderate and small respectively. Again the results of this study are congruent with findings of Rayan and Bachman (1992) who suggested that there was little differential performance by gender, the TOEFL did not demonstrate gender DIF, Zwick (2002) who stated that the means of females’ differences were slightly higher than those of males, and Rammouz (2003) who suggested that the percentage of success among females was 76.33%, 57.52%, 55.89%, 73.14%, 55.38% and 55.42% in Beirut, the North, the South, Mount Lebanon, Nabatiyé and the Bekaa respectively, while it was 63.61%, 52.11%, 52.52%, 67.09%, 54.64% and 53.15%
among males for the same regions. All the above findings showed that there was a small effect size between males’ and females’ performances.

It is important that EFL instructors be informed more with the gender effects. They need to be more familiar with the differences between males and females. The findings of this study help instructors to select their instructional strategies more effectively related to gender.

In view of the quantitative findings of this study, it is clear that female students in humanities and science majors outscored that of the males’. The total female students outperformed the total male students. This study indicates that however there is a significant difference between males’ and females’ performance, the magnitude of the difference and the strength of association between the total males and the total females is relatively small. Therefore, gender could have a small effect on students’ EFL achievement tests.

This study has some limitations. First of all, the number of participants was rather limited; secondly, they were all from the same city. Caution should therefore be exercise in generalising the current findings beyond this student population, or indeed to other wider population. A bigger sample size might have yielded slightly different. The third limitation which can be mentioned here is related to the final test used in the article. Much more time, energy, and study are needed in order to prepare a more valid and reliable test.

For further research, this study is needed to be done in different Types of context students. The effects of gender could be investigated more with treatment and control groups. Some research with learners with different ages could be helpful to find the best answers to the above research questions. Another interesting approach could be investigating whether it is necessary to present the content of the curriculum of EFL classes in accordance with gender.

References


Title

The Comparative Effect of Using Critical Thinking, Constructivist Learning, and a Combination of the Two Techniques on EFL Learners’ Writing

Authors

Hamid Marashi (Ph.D.)
Islamic Azad University at Central Tehran, Iran

Roya Jafari (M.A.)
Islamic Azad University at Central Tehran, Iran

Biodata

Hamid Marashi is Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics, Islamic Azad University at Central Tehran and Executive Manager of the Journal of English Language Studies (JELS). He currently teaches the graduate courses of seminar in TEFL issues, discourse analysis, and teaching language skills and his main areas of research interest include cooperative learning, collaborative teaching, critical thinking, and critical discourse analysis. He has published in national and international academic journals and presented in international conferences.

Roya Jafari holds an MA in TEFL from Islamic Azad University at Central Tehran and is an English teacher at a number of language schools in Tehran. Her main area of research interest is using innovative techniques in ELT.

Abstract

This study is an attempt to investigate the effects of critical thinking techniques, constructivist learning techniques, and a combination of critical thinking and constructivist learning techniques on the writing skill among Iranian EFL learners. For this purpose, 90 learners of a total number of 120 upper-intermediate learners studying at Tehran’s Iranmehr Language School were chosen through a piloted PET. The 90 learners were thus divided into three groups randomly and each of the groups was taught writing through one of the three procedures of critical thinking, constructivist learning techniques, and a combination of the two. At the end of the study, the participants in all groups were given a writing test. The comparison of the means of the three groups on this posttest revealed that there was no significant difference among using critical thinking techniques,
constructivist learning techniques, and a combination of both techniques on EFL learners’ writing ability.

**Keywords:** Critical thinking, Constructivist learning, Writing.

### 1. Introduction

In this globalized age, foreign language learning is no longer merely a luxury; people do actually contact speakers of other languages to discuss an issue, to establish a dialogue, or to express their own ideas throughout their daily lives. With the rapid expansion of information and communication media around us, such as computers and cell-phones, the above exchanges are not restricted to the oral form of language. Accordingly, more and more people are using written forms through emails and text messages to communicate alongside the spoken channel. Thence, writing is no longer restricted to formal transactional exchanges of language; as a result, learners need to master this skill more often than they did in previous times.

#### 1.1. Writing

Writing is one of the most difficult skills for second language (L2) learners to master. Out of the four skills in the language learning process, it is competent writing which is often approved as being the last language skill that native speakers of any language including L2 learners acquire (Hamp-Lyons & Heasly, 2006). The difficulty lies not only in generating and organizing ideas, but also in translating these ideas into readable texts. Writing is goal-directed in that the writer – whether novice or expert – writes according to an intended outcome and a directional procedure for achieving that outcome (Schwartz, van der Geest, & Smic-Kreuzen, 1992). Furthermore, writing involves a number of different abilities, some of which are never fully achieved by many students even in their native language. L2 writers have to pay attention to the higher level skills of planning and organizing, as well as to the lower level skills of spelling, punctuation, word choice, and so on. The difficulty becomes even more profound if their language proficiency is weak (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Writing teachers have thus long acknowledged students’ writing problems and provide all sorts of feedback to their students either individually or collectively. The most common form of feedback in the past has been writing comments on the students’ final draft, pointing out problems, and making suggestions for the improvement of future papers. “More recently, many
teachers have started making comments on students’ initial draft, offering suggestions for the future development of the final draft” (Naidu, 2007, p. 21).

Furthermore, a great number of foreign language teachers will agree with Harmer (2004) saying that writing has been traditionally perceived only as a system which fosters the acquisition of syntax and vocabulary and not as a skill per se. Similarly Littlejohn (as cited in Hedge, 1991, p. 6) claims that the writing that the great majority of students do is something of “reproductive character”. This means that students just practice what was taught during the lesson, using gap filling exercises, grammar transformations, dictations, etc. This kind of use stresses the spelling discipline. Albeit the fundamental skills and application are passively employed in this way, traditional writing in schools is not directed to develop communicative and expressive language usage during the early stages of language learning (Remiášová, 2009).

“Also to a preponderance of EFL learners, nothing is more discouraging than doing a writing task and knowing that it will come under the eyes of the teacher, who will consider it as a source of errors to be corrected” (Tuan, 2010, p. 81). Accordingly, writing anxiety is unique to the language-particular skill of writing (Bline, Lowe, Meixner, Nouri, & Pearce, 2001; Bugoon & Hale, 1983). It is defined as the “fear of the writing process that outweighs the projected gain from ability to write” (Thompson, 1980, p. 121).

1.2. Critical Thinking

While engaged in the process of writing, EFL learners – as all human beings – also benefit from a critical thinking ability with varying degrees of course among them; having become aware of this human ability and its significance in everyday life, modern educational settings are increasingly expected to foster this generic ability inter alia (Pithers & Soden, 2000). Although consensus regarding a definition of critical thinking does not currently exist, researchers frequently cite the last four categories of Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives, “Application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation all require the higher-order thinking that characterizes critical thought” (as cited in Lee, 2005, p. 43). Fisher (as cited in Marashi & Jodeiri, 2006) argues that critical thinking represents a higher level of thought and in order to think critically one must be able to take other viewpoints into consideration before coming to a conclusion.

It appears though that most students focus on the lower-order cognitive skills of knowledge and comprehension, which separates course content from higher-order cognitive
skills and blocks students’ learning of the course material (Lauer, 2005). To help students become more adept critical thinkers, Vesely and Sherlock (2005) emphasize that teachers could prompt learners to identify major questions and problems, collect relevant information, develop sound conclusions, and communicate their conclusions to appropriate audiences.

One of the pioneer scholars of critical thinking, Glaser (1941, p. 5) defines this mode of thinking as follows, “(1) an attitude of being disposed to consider in a thoughtful way the problems that come within the range of one’s experiences, (2) knowledge of the methods of logical inquiry and reasoning, and (3) some skill in applying those methods”. He further states that, “Critical thinking calls for a persistent effort to examine any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the evidence that supports it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (p. 5). Hence, critical thinkers (and among them language learners) are those who carefully and deliberately determine to accept, reject, or suspend judgment about a claim (Moore & Parker, 1986).

Furthermore, the notion underlying critical thinking is that it serves crucial in any given society to safeguard human beings “from being attacked for their beliefs or brainwashed into believing what others want them to believe without having the opportunity to question or inquire for themselves; thus critical thinking needs to be applied to life outside the classroom atmosphere” (Rfaner, 2006, p. 29).

Auerbach and McGrail (as cited in Benesch, 1993) discuss how critical thinking should be reflected by students in classrooms by stating that within classrooms promoting critical thinking, learners participate actively and they discuss issues of concern in their daily routines as topics for class debates.

A major point concerning the pedagogy of critical thinking is that the emphasis is on the learner rather than the teacher. It is the learner who interacts with his/her environment and thus gains an understanding of its features and characteristics. “Critical language learners must also be able to identify and cite good reasons for their opinions and answers, correct themselves and others’ methods and procedures, and adapt to uniformities, regularities, irregular circumstances, special limitations, constraints and over-generalizations” (Lipman, 1988, p. 34).

Thus the concept of critical thinking may be one of the most significant trends in education relative to the dynamic relationship between how teachers teach and how students learn (Mason, 2010). Critical thinking shifts classroom design from a model that largely ignores
thinking to one that renders it pervasive and necessary (Cohen, 2010; Tittle, 2010; Vaughn, 2009). Critical teaching views content as something alive only in minds, as modes of thinking driven by questions, as existing in textbooks which are to be developed in the minds of the learners (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008).

1.3. Constructivist Learning

Besides resorting to critical thinking, learners go on to construct their own conceptualizations and find their own solutions to problems, mastering autonomy, and independence. Jonasson (1991, p. 5), discussing the point from a constructivist view, states that, “Learners construct their own reality or at least interpret it based upon their perceptions of experiences. Consequently, an individual’s knowledge is a function of one’s prior experiences, mental structures, and beliefs that are used to interpret objects and events”.

What someone knows is founded upon the perception of the physical and social experiences which are comprehended by that person’s mind. Moreover, “Learning is the result of individual mental construction, whereby the learner learns by matching new against given information and establishing meaningful connections, rather than by internalizing mere factoids to be regurgitated later on” (Riegler, 2001, p. 1).

In the constructivist paradigm, learning is inescapably affected by the context, beliefs, and attitudes of the learner. Here, learners construct their own perspective of the world through individual experiences and schema. Constructivism prepares the learner for problem solving in ambiguous situations (Schuman, 1996).

Also Constructivism is another somewhat related trend in education that can play a dynamic role in the relationship between how teachers teach and how learners learn. “One foundational premise of constructivism is that individuals actively construct their knowledge rather than simply absorb ideas spoken to them by teachers” (Lunenburg, 2011, p. 3).

Furthermore, it is important that, as Piaget (1967) notes, constructivism is not a particular pedagogy. In fact, constructivism is a theory describing how learning happens regardless of whether learners are using their experiences to understand a lecture or following the instructions for building a model. In both cases, the theory of constructivism suggests that learners construct knowledge out of their experiences and convictions. However, constructivism is often associated with pedagogic approaches that promote active learning, or learning by doing.
According to Brooks and Brooks (1993), constructivism is beyond a mere pedagogical theory; it is indeed a conceptualization about knowledge and learning. In the same trend of argument, Naylor and Keogh (1999, p. 93) hold that, “The central principles of this approach are that learners can only make sense of new situations in terms of their existing understanding. Learning involves an active process in which learners construct meaning by linking new ideas with their existing knowledge”.

Moreover, constructivist theorists believe students improve their critical thinking and problem solving skills when they construct new knowledge based on background experiences and multiple resources (Price, 1997). In other words, “Students are involved in learning as a process of knowledge construction and not knowledge absorption. This learning process is also knowledge-dependent, i.e. learners use current knowledge to construct new knowledge (Neo, 2007, p. 152).

In line with what has been discussed so far, the main goal of this study was to investigate comparatively the effect of critical thinking techniques, constructivist learning techniques, and a combination of the two on EFL learners’ writing. In order to investigate the above mentioned notion, the following research hypothesis was formulated:

\[ H_0 \text{ There is no significant difference among the impact of using critical thinking techniques, constructivist learning techniques, and a combination of both techniques on EFL learners’ writing ability.} \]

2. Method

2.1. Participants

The participants of this study were 90 learners selected among 120 students of a language school in Tehran who were selected and homogenized through a previously piloted sample Preliminary English Test (PET). The 90 participants consisted of 45 female and 45 male students, aged between 22 and 28 with intermediate knowledge of English and they were assigned randomly to three experimental groups each consisting of 30 learners. Moreover, each group itself was divided into two classes of 15 students. While the first group, was exposed to critical thinking techniques during the course, the second group underwent constructivist learning techniques and the third group experienced a package combined of critical thinking and constructivist learning techniques during the course.
2.2. Instrumentation and Materials

2.2.1. Proficiency Test of Homogenization
As explained above, a PET was used in this study following its piloting in order to homogenize the participants. The test which took 120 minutes and enjoyed a reliability of 0.84 in the piloting was administered to 120 learners, 90 of whom whose scores fell between one standard deviation above and below the mean were chosen as the participants of the study.

2.2.2. Writing Posttest
At the end of the course, all the participants in the three groups underwent another PET writing test in order for the researchers to see whether any significant differences existed among the mean scores of the three groups on the test.

2.2.3. Rating Scales
In order to rate all the writings used in this study, the researchers used the General Mark Schemes for Writing by Cambridge. To ensure accuracy of the scoring, the researchers asked three teachers who were MA holders in TEFL with several years of teaching experience, to join in. The inter-rater reliability of the three raters was of course established a priori.

2.2.4. Textbook
All the participants in the three experimental groups received instruction based on “Topnotch 2A and Topnotch 2B” (units 1-10 in two successive terms) as their course book, “Topnotch 2A and Topnotch 2B” workbook, and the pertinent audio materials. Furthermore, the “Topnotch2” quizzes (3 in all) were also used for all groups. Each quiz consisted of 33 items including multiple-choice, fill-in-the-blanks, matching, and true-false.

2.3. Procedure
Following the participant selection process, the teacher (one of the researchers) began the treatment process in all six classes (two classes in each group) which were held three days a week for a total period of 16 weeks (48 sessions). All the 90 learners underwent the same procedure of teaching in terms of listening, speaking, and reading and were assigned the same kind of homework even in their writing instruction (in addition to writing in the class, they were assigned to write two essays as their homework each week). The difference underlying the three treatments of this study thus was the three different procedures that the teacher-researcher adopted to teach the writing component of the course. In one of these experimental groups, the teacher used critical thinking techniques during the course while in the other group, she taught
the course using constructivist techniques and finally, in the third group, she used a mixture of critical thinking and constructivist learning techniques. These three different procedures are detailed below.

2.3.1. Teaching Writing through Critical Thinking Techniques

In the first group, the critical thinking techniques of concept formation, reasoning, classifying, analyzing, clarifying, and reasoning were employed one by one and in accordance with the class progress during the term.

In the first two sessions, the teacher tried to familiarize the students with concept formation through teaching them how to develop heuristics for processing and manipulating invention, disposition, and style. Also she tried to make them familiar with the concept of argument as an attempt to persuade someone of something, by giving reasons or evidence for accepting a particular conclusion. She reminded students that writing is a process of generating and editing texts within the spheres of three constraints: formal (from the word level on up), ideational (what ideas are to be expressed), and intentional (relating ideas to purposes of readers and writers).

To this end, the teacher would ask the learners to write one paragraph about their favorite sport, a comfortable life, and a good job. The students did the first one as their first writing in class in 20 minutes. Meanwhile, the teacher tried to focus on the process of their writing rather than their product; thus she encouraged them to have drafts. The reason for emphasizing drafting was that the students may find new points and decide to add them to their writing at different times before the final draft. Furthermore, due to the importance given to the process of writing in this research, the researcher asked students to underline any points that seemed problematic to them in their writing. In this way, the students self-monitored themselves and could check whether their doubts were true or not.

The students were subsequently asked to write about one of the two left topics as their homework for the next session. The topics were a comfortable life and a good job. This was done to reinforce what they had learned and help them become more aware of their problems and new learning points.

Another point that the teacher emphasized in class was creative thinking. The researcher asked the learners to redefine a problem, generate possibilities, see multiple perspectives, and take risks. Here, the teacher assigned them to write about a picture as their homework.
Due to the importance of classification and analysis in critical thinking, the students were asked to write about their plans for the weekend and also their goals of learning English according to their importance. The teacher also taught the students how to clarify their writing. She did this by reminding students to state one point at a time, elaborate, give examples, and be clear about their intended message rather than to write just some vague and complex sentences.

The teacher also told the students about reasoning as one of the important points in critical thinking. Accordingly, she encouraged the learners to distinguish mere thinking, i.e. a sequence of unrelated thoughts, from reasoning, in which case one thought directly leads to another.

Subsequently, she introduced inference indicators which are the words that indicate that one thought is intended to provide support for another. Some examples of inference indicators presented in the class were: since, thus, implies, consequently, because, it follows that, given that, etc. Here, the students were assigned to write their opinions about three given topics in three successive weeks as their homework.

Empathic thinking was the other important point in critical thinking techniques. The teacher reminded the students of the importance of audience analysis through which students could develop critical thinking skills and empathic thinking. This skill was strengthened by having students work cooperatively in a workshop format since peer-review groups not only encourage students to see the multiplicity (and potential validity) of their classmates’ points of view but they also help to reduce egocentrism and enable them to imagine themselves in other peoples’ shoes.

As an exercise of cooperative learning, for some topics, student groups which were composed of two or three students commented on each others’ writings and sent the final version to the teacher. Moreover, in the spirit of problem-solving, the students were asked to define and redefine problem situations, set goals, generate solutions, use alternative representations, recognize constraints, and evaluate solutions both in cooperative groups and individually.

Decision-making as a relevant technique was emphasized in class. So students were to frame a decision, generate options, predict consequences and weigh pros and cons, recognize bias in hindsight analysis, and seek disproving evidence. Here, the students were asked to write about three other given topics.
To complete the mentioned techniques, the teacher engaged with the learners in discussing evaluation as the most complex of skills, perhaps, as a process having students work through multiple drafts and revisions, evaluating their linguistic, logical, and rhetorical choices. Accordingly, by reformulating and dismantling their prose and putting it back together again, students had a chance to strengthen their evaluative abilities, from the smallest microscopic word-level concerns to the more global macroscopic formatting concerns. And finally through meta-analysis, students were provided the opportunity to not only evaluate their own writing but also have a go at explaining it. Such meta-analysis was emphasized to enable the students to look critically and closely at their work and consciously watch themselves doing it thereby learning about their composing processes and developing executive schemes for writing.

2.3.2. Teaching Writing through Constructivist Learning Techniques

Similar to the previous group, the students in the constructivist learning group were encouraged to take initiative and have autonomy in their language learning. The methods of learning or instruction applying constructivist learning theories are derived from a variety of concepts such as scaffolding, social activism or negotiation, and discovery learning. To this end, the students of this group were encouraged toward scaffolding in which learners move from what is presently known to what is to be known and so a learner’s knowledge extends task management functions as a supporting tool for learners.

In social activism, learning takes place in social environments where there is cooperative learning. Through these activities, students communicate, interact, and learn from each other, as a result of constructing their own world of knowledge. So in this group, learners were encouraged to communicate among themselves rather than just with the teacher; this means that when they sent their writing ideas or their homework to their teacher through email, they forwarded it to all of the students in the class as well so that they too could say their ideas about that writing file.

Students performed writing tasks slightly beyond their ability such as sending emails which included their suggestions whether positive or negative about their writing class. Here, the students did not always have assistance and guidance from the teacher but guidance was provided on the basis of the student’s experience and the appropriate support of the teacher which could allow students to function at the cutting edge of their individual development. At this stage, they were asked to write about two given topics.
Moreover, the students had different group works and cooperative writing practice since they were supposed to write a journal in two groups of three students and one group of four students in each class. This opportunity would let them think and write cooperatively in order to compensate each others’ shortcoming in writing. It is worth mentioning that theses journals constituted two writings and the topics of writings were not determined by the teacher. Instead, the students in each group chose the topic for their writing.

Discovery learning was another important component of constructivist learning in this research. According to this component, learners construct knowledge concepts based on current or past experiences which involve active participation where learners explore concepts, relate ideas, and find alternative solutions to the problems. At this stage, the students were again asked to write about two given topics.

In light of constructivist techniques, students were free in their writing from the beginning. The teacher encouraged the students to work on their own and write themselves rather than copy others’ written texts or materials. At times, the students were asked to write based on their own favorite topic as a practice for free writing. The reason for this free writing was to gradually allow the students to learn to build a bridge or associate what they already knew and what they might learn by explaining the situation. Thus, it seemed more motivating to ask the students to write about something about which they had some information – albeit scanty – than to start writing about an unfamiliar subject in a vacuum.

Furthermore, as according to constructivism each brain is unique, the teacher would expect different ideas in the writings of different students about the same topic and thus there were no fixed sentences, phrases, or words that the students were forced to use in their writing. When students learned what to do and felt that they were learning a new way of writing, the teacher asked them to make exhibition activities. These included presenting an article for the class, making a graph or chart on different ideas. In addition, the learners were sometimes given a picture either in their book or the picture of a cartoon brought by the teacher for the students and asked to construct a written story about that picture. Also the students were at times asked to write their ideas about the reading material that they used in class (Select Reading: Upper-Intermediate).
2.3.3. Teaching Writing through a Combination of Critical Thinking and Constructivist Learning Techniques

In this group, the teacher chose both critical thinking and constructivist learning techniques which seemed to be applicable to different situations in the same sessions as the other two groups had. Some of these two series of techniques such as online instruction, cooperative learning, and making story about pictures overlapped and the teacher did them just once. Although it was not very easy, she tried to strike a balance between using those techniques during teaching and not to sacrifice one for the other.

For instance from the beginning, the teacher emphasized that the learners use their own initiative (as one constructivist technique) while writing and not try to copy others’ sentences although it is not always a bad idea to quote great people’s sentences which were related to the topic of the writing (relevance being one critical thinking technique). At this stage, they were asked to write about two given topics.

Also one of the other interesting techniques in this group was watching Top Notch movies. First, the students watched the movie without hearing its sound. They were thence asked to think creatively and also critically about the movie (as one of the techniques in critical thinking) and say what the actors or actresses were saying and what the problem or solution was in that movie (as discovery learning or decision making in constructivist learning). In this activity, the participants would usually take notes while or after watching the movie and later on, they provided their responses. Since those students who took notes tended to give better responses, note taking seemed to be a useful technique. Of course there was not just one response and the students expressed different ideas. Following this part, the learners watched the movie again but this time they were able to hear the sound and said what they understood and subsequently expressed their ideas about it.

At the end of the study, the students in all groups were given a test of writing so that the researchers could compare their results to see whether the three treatments would produce any significant differences and thus verify the null hypothesis.

3. Results

All the data analysis procedures and results are presented and discussed in the chronological order of participant selection, posttest administration, and testing the hypothesis.
3.1. Participant Selection

3.1.2. Descriptive Statistics of the PET Piloting

Following the piloting of the test, the mean and standard deviation of the raw scores and the reliability were calculated. Table 1 below shows these descriptive statistics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PET Piloting</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>56.90</td>
<td>.139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As stated earlier, the reliability of the test scores gained by the participants on the pilot PET was 0.84 and three items were found faulty and removed. As three raters were used to score the writing section of the this piloting, their inter-rater reliability also had to be established. Table 2 below shows the descriptive statistics of the three sets of scores given by the three raters to the writing papers of these 30 testees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rater 1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16.97</td>
<td>2.456</td>
<td>.191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17.23</td>
<td>2.063</td>
<td>.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rater 3</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.53</td>
<td>1.852</td>
<td>-.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 2 reveals, the skewness ratio of all three sets of scores (0.45, 0.16, and -0.13) fell within the acceptable range of ±1.96 which means that all sets resembled normalcy of distribution and thus, running a parametric test to check the go-togetherness of the scores was legitimizied. Consequently, the Pearson Product Correlation was run. Table 3 below displays the significant correlation of the three sets of scores given by the three raters (the researcher together with two of her colleagues) to the writing papers.
Table 3 Inter-Rater Reliability among the Three Raters Scoring the PET Writing Papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rater 1</th>
<th>Rater 2</th>
<th>Rater 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.954**</td>
<td>.838**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level**

Hence, the researchers were rest assured that they could use the same raters for the actual administration and also the posttest in this study.

3.1.3. Descriptive Statistics of the PET Administration

Next, the piloted PET was administered for participant selection. Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics of this administration.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of the PET Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PET Administration</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>56.01</td>
<td>7.669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.1.4. Dividing the Participants into Three Groups

Among the 120 students who took the PET, the researcher selected 90 who scored between one standard deviation above and below the mean. To make sure that the 30 learners in each of the three experimental groups bore no significant difference in terms of the dependent variable of this study (that is, their writing skill) prior to the treatment, the researchers checked whether the mean scores of the three groups on the writing section of the PET administered earlier demonstrated any significant difference or not. First, however, the descriptive statistics of the scores obtained by these 90 learners on the PET reading section (Table 5).

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics of the Writing Scores of the Three Groups on the PET Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1 – Crit.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19.33</td>
<td>1.688</td>
<td>.401 .427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2 – Const.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19.03</td>
<td>2.025</td>
<td>.352 .427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3 – Comb.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19.07</td>
<td>1.780</td>
<td>.797 .427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Going back to Table 5, the skewness ratios of all three groups (0.94, 0.82, and 1.87) fell within the acceptable range of ±1.96 thus signifying that the score distributions in all groups represented normality. Table 6 below shows that the variances among the three groups were not significantly different (F(2,87) = 0.631, p = 0.534 > 0.05).

**Table 6 Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.631</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>.534</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Subsequently, Table 7 below shows that the mean scores of the three groups on the writing scores prior to the treatment bore no significant difference (F(2,87) = 0.240, p = 0.787 > 0.05); consequently, any probable differences at the end of the treatment could be attributed to the effect of the treatment.

**Table 7 One-Way ANOVA of the Mean Scores of the Three Groups in Their Writing Prior to the Treatment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.622</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.811</td>
<td>.240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>293.500</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>3.374</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>295.122</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2. Posttest

The researchers administered the writing posttest among the three experimental groups once the treatment was completed. Table 8 below shows the descriptive statistics of this administration disaggregated by the three groups.

**Table 8 Descriptive Statistics for the Posttest in the Three Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 1 – Crit.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26.51</td>
<td>1.498</td>
<td>-.550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2 – Const.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27.02</td>
<td>1.102</td>
<td>-.629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3 – Comb.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26.00</td>
<td>1.770</td>
<td>-.365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 8 reveals, the difference between the two groups’ means is negligible. However, further statistical analysis was required to see whether this difference was significant or not.

### 3.3. Testing the Hypothesis

To verify the null hypothesis of the study, the researchers set out to conduct another one-way ANOVA on the scores. Prior to this, the normality of the distribution of these scores within each
group had to be checked. Going back to Table 8, the skewness ratios of all three groups fell within the acceptable range of ±1.96 (1.29, 1.47, and 0.85) thus signifying that the score distributions in all groups represented normality. Table 9 below, however, shows that the variances among the three groups were significantly different (F(2,87) = 5.408, p = 0.006 < 0.05).

| Table 9 Levene’s Test of Homogeneity of Variances |
|---------------------------------|----------|---------|---------|
| **F**                          | df1      | df2     | Sig.    |
| 5.408                          | 2        | 87      | .006    |

Hence, running a one-way ANOVA was not legitimized and instead the nonparametric equivalent Kruskal-Wallis had to be applied. Tables 10 and 11 below show these results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.10 Kruskal-Wallis Test: Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constructivist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.11 Kruskal-Wallis Test: Test Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing Posttest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.091</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the results of the Kruskal-Wallis test indicate, at the 0.05 level of significance, there was no significant difference between the mean rank of the three groups on the writing posttest (p = 0.091 > 0.05). Thus, no significant differences were found among the learners who underwent the three different treatments of critical thinking, constructivist learning, and a combination of the two.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study revealed that there was no significant difference among the performance of the students in critical thinking, constructivist learning, and a combination of critical thinking and constructivist learning groups. Although the researchers did not find any other previous studies which had investigated the impact of critical thinking, constructivist learning, and a
combination of the two in one research, the literature is overwhelmed by numerous researches on the impact of both critical thinking and constructivist learning in one research and also some other researches which studied either the impact of critical thinking or constructivist learning on education and writing. One such example is a recent study conducted by Lunenburg (2011) which demonstrated that critical thinking and constructivism offer real promise for improving the achievement of all students in the core subject areas and learn to use their minds well.

Another study by Facione (2000) demonstrated that educational and professional success require developing one’s thinking skills and nurturing one’s consistent internal motivation to use those skills. His research also proved that if critical thinking were included in school and professional development curricula, in the instructional assignments, and in the educational assessment of outcomes, students would be able to engage further in critical thinking.

Regarding constructivist learning techniques, Tuan’s study (2010) demonstrated that through reading and responding to learners’ journal entries, teachers are able to measure each learner’s performance and understand their needs, thoughts, and feelings, which help teachers accommodate their teaching ways to learners’ preferences and give learners appropriate assistance to their problems along the writing course.

This study revealed the importance of critical thinking and constructivist learning in the writing skill and demonstrated a more successful cooperation and communication among learners. Thus, in teaching writing, one goal should be to enable learners to write both critically and creatively and, at the same time, try to make sure that the reader can understand the message they produce in the process. Accordingly, teaching critical thinking and constructivist learning and a combination of the two is recommended to be a part of the pedagogical curriculum to help students empower themselves in the act and process of writing.

Introducing critical thinking techniques, constructivist learning techniques, and a combination of the two can help teacher training centers and language schools to familiarize the teachers with these concepts. This can help both novice teachers and also those teachers who are already engaged in the practice of pedagogy in the form of in-service courses.

In this study, as examples of the critical thinking techniques, the researchers introduced different topics and pictures for which students were supposed to write and sometimes they were asked to have free writing. Also, the students were not supposed to use specific clichés or sentences in their writing; this means that there was no limitation in writing tasks either in...
writing for topic or picture or in free writing. The important point was that they could think critically, reflect, and ask questions about what they wanted to write.

It is worth mentioning that teaching through critical thinking and constructivist learning would not only help the students but also the teacher in that s/he would not just follow old methods while teaching; instead teachers may think critically about what they are supposed to teach and at the same time, try to construct new ways for teaching writing and introduce new topics for the students’ writing.

To this end, critical thinking and constructivist learning techniques and a combination of the two could be emphasized in teacher training workshops as effective features which can facilitate both teaching and learning the writing skill.

At the same time, syllabus designers and material developers have to provide teaching materials and tasks which are appropriate and comprehensible for the learners and which have communicative purposes rather than materials and syllabus designs in which students have to undergo an unappealing classroom environment doing de-motivating activities and homework. It is thus recommended that more attention be paid to critical thinking and constructivist learning and a combination of the two in syllabus design thereby providing classroom contexts in which the students can think critically and construct their own knowledge.

References


Title

Self-Efficacy Components in Relation with the Metacognitive Listening Strategies Iranian EFL Learners use

Authors

Mohammad Hasan Razmi (M.A.)
Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran

Mina Rastegar (Ph.D.)
Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran

Sholeh Hajghani (M.A.)
Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran

Biodata

Mohammad Hasan Razmi has an M.A. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). His main research interests include psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and critical discourse analysis. He has published papers at International Journal of Psychology (IJP) and Open Journal of Modern Linguistics (OJML).

Mina Rastegar Assistant Professor of Language and Applied Linguistics in the language department of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman. Her professional expertise lies in the area of Psycholinguistics. Her research focuses on L2 learner factors - affective, cognitive, and personality. She is currently teaching research methods, methodology, testing, and advanced writing at both B.A. and M.A. levels.

Sholeh Hajghani has an M.A. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) from Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman. Her main research interests include psycholinguistics and discourse analysis.

Abstract

The present study aimed at investigating the relationship between self-efficacy and the frequency of metacognitive listening strategies (MLS) Iranian EFL learners use, and to explore any significant relationships between the subscales of self-efficacy and the types of MLS use. 117 Iranian EFL learners studying at the departments of foreign languages of Kerman universities, namely Shahid Bahonar and Azad took part in this study. The participants, including both males and females, were randomly selected from
among junior and senior students majoring in English Translation and English Literature. In order to obtain the required data, two questionnaires were utilized: Vandergrift et al.’s (2006) Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) to measure the type and frequency of metacognitive listening strategies, and Bosscher and Smit’s (1998) General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES-12) to determine the self-efficacy and its subscales. The findings of this study revealed that first, there was a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy and MLS use ($r = 0.86$); second, initiative self-efficacy subscale did not explain any MLS type; third, the subscale effort explained planning and evaluation, person knowledge and mental translation MLS types; fourth, the subscale persistence explained person knowledge, mental translation, and problem solving strategies, and finally, none of the subscales of self-efficacy explained directed attention MLS use.

**Keywords:** Metacognitive Listening Strategies (MLS), Self-Efficacy, English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

1. Introduction

In recent years, emphasis on listening, as a frequently used mode of human communication, has been gaining momentum in the area of language learning. Consequently, a need for teaching language listening skills is deeply felt. In the last 20 years, along with the advancements in cognitive psychology and linguistics, teaching listening has focused its attention on evidence-based approaches with special attention on authenticity and contextualization (Goh, 2008). One of these approaches is the metacognitive approach presented by scholars such as Chamot (1995) and Vandergrift (2004). The success through metacognitive listening strategy use, however, does not occur in a vacuum. There are various related factors involved, for instance: anxiety, motivation, self-efficacy, etc. (Goh, 2008). Self-efficacy, among these factors, makes the learners have control over different tasks (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995) and plays a vital role in strategy use (Yang, 1999).

This study, therefore, aimed at investigating Iranian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners’ self-efficacy in relation with their use of metacognitive listening strategies. Furthermore, the relation between the components of self-efficacy and the types of metacognitive listening strategy use was another issue to be explored in this study.
Metacognitive listening strategies belong to learning strategies. Learning strategies are approaches and strategies used by the learners to enhance their learning (Chamot, 2004). Oxford in 1990 categorized language learning strategies (LLS) into six basic types. Metacognitive strategies, among the six types, include non-sequential processes of planning, monitoring, problem-solving, and evaluating (Chamot, 2004). Metacognitive listening strategies involve thinking about and directing the listening process. In other words, metacognitive listening strategies include planning before starting a listening task and carrying out problem-solving, monitoring, and self-evaluation actions through a listening task.

Based on O’Malley and Chamot’s (1990) classification and Oxford’s (1990) categorization, many researchers in specific areas related to the strategies have devised ways to explore the practical nature of strategies in different language skills. Listening has not been an exempt. Vandergrift (2004), for example, proposed a metacognitive listening cycle. In 2006, Vandergrift along with Goh, Mareschal, and Tafaghodtari revised the proposed cycle and developed a questionnaire to identify and establish the listening metacognitive strategies the learners use. The problem with metacognitive strategies in such cycles is that they do not remain accountable outside the walls of the classroom (Goh, 2008). Therefore, new metacognitive activities are needed to account for the language uses in contexts other than the classroom use. To reach such a sophisticated goal, Metacognitive learning activities should aim at “deepening learners’ understanding of themselves as L2 listeners and the demands and process of L2 listening, as well as teaching learners how to manage their comprehension and learning” (Goh, 2008, p. 192). To run such an errand, metacognitive knowledge categories should be studied in relation with many different factors such as self-efficacy, anxiety, and motivation to name but a few (Dornyei & Skehan, 2003; Paris & Winograd, 1990; Schunk, 2001; Vandergrift, 2005; Winne, 2001; Zimmerman, 1990).

Bandura (1986) added self-efficacy as a component to his famous social cognitive theory. He defined self-efficacy as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p.3). According to him self-efficacy makes the people have a self-system that makes them able to control their feelings, thought and actions. Such a self-system includes both cognitive and affective sides influencing one’s learning from others, strategy investment, and self-regulation in a learning task (Bandura, 1986).
Self-efficacy, therefore, influences one’s expectations towards goals and consequently, the level of effort and time one devotes to a particular task. Accordingly, the self-efficient learners make good use of opportunities and deal with the problems more easily (Sadighi, Alavi & Samani, 2004). Learners with high level of perceived self-efficacy look at tasks as challenges to be resolved. Thus, they set reasonable goals and try to make efforts to achieve them even in a stressful environment. Such an effort makes them manage their stress and avoid depression. They are able to manage the fear of failure in a particular task. Success in one task brings about a better feeling towards the following tasks (Yong, 2010).

2. Review of the Related Literature

Graham (2011) conducted a research to investigate the role of self-efficacy in academic listening. Maintaining that self-efficacy is crucial to the development of effective listening skills, and that listening strategy instruction has the potential to boost self-efficacy, she concluded that in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) context, high self-efficacy can help learners cope more effectively with listening comprehension.

Rahimi and Abedini (2009) conducted a research to investigate the role of EFL learner's self-efficacy regarding listening comprehension. 61 freshmen undergraduate learners of English participated in this study. The results indicated that listening comprehension self-efficacy was significantly related to listening proficiency.


Kharazi, Ezhehei, Ghazi Tabatabaei, and Kareshki (2008) carried out a research on the relationship between achievement goals, self-efficacy and metacognitive strategies based on a causal model. They selected a sample of 685 third grade high school students. The result of their study showed a significant correlation. Besides, all paths of their proposed model were significant.

Chen (2007) conducted a research on the relationship between EFL learners’ self-efficacy beliefs and English listening achievement. The study was conducted within college-level English listening comprehension classes at two universities in Taiwan. 277 students’ listening course
grades were used as their listening proficiency level. A survey questionnaire which consisted of English listening self-efficacy scale constructed by the researcher was performed in this study. Results of this study indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and listening achievement.

Magogwe and Oliver (2007) carried out a study on 480 students from primary schools, secondary schools, and a tertiary institution. A modified version of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) and the Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale (MJSES) were used in this study. Findings of the research indicated that there was a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and overall use of language learning strategies for the students with the three proficiency levels mentioned.

Yang (1999) investigated 505 tertiary-level Chinese/Taiwanese EFL learners’ beliefs about learning English and their perceived use of learning strategies and also the relationship between the two. She found a strong correlation between beliefs and strategy use. Self-efficacy beliefs were strongly related to the use of all types of learning strategies.

This study aimed at seeking answers to the following research questions:

1. Are there any significant relationships between self-efficacy and the frequency of metacognitive listening strategies Iranian EFL learners use?
2. Are there any significant relationships between Iranian EFL learners’ scores on the subscales of self-efficacy and the metacognitive listening strategy types they use?

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

The participants of this study were 117 male and female junior and senior students majoring in English Literature and English Translation at Shahid Bahonar and Islamic Azad universities of Kerman. These participants were randomly chosen.

The rationale behind selecting junior and senior students was that students at higher levels of proficiency are perceived to have more experiences of involving in listening tasks. Furthermore, according to Vandergrift (1997) intermediate listeners use a higher percentage of metacognitive strategies than do novice listeners. Similarly, O’Malley, Chamot, and Küpper (1989) and also Goh (2002, as cited in Shirani Bidabadi & Yamat, 2011) concluded that more proficient listeners employed metacognitive strategies more frequently than the less proficient

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3.2. Instruments

In this study, the following instruments were used to collect the required data:

1. Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) developed by Vandergrift et al. (2006)
   Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) was developed by Vandergrift et al. (2006). MALQ is based on a likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (strongly disagree). This instrument consists of 21 items. There are five distinctive subscales in this questionnaire, namely problem-solving, planning and evaluation, mental translation, person knowledge, and directed attention. In order to validate the subscales in the instrument, the developers used the questionnaire with nearly 1,000 learners from various countries including Iran. According to them, reliabilities of the subscales were as follows: problem-solving: 0.74, planning and evaluation: 0.75, mental translation: 0.78, person knowledge: 0.74, and directed attention: 0.68.

   In the present study, the two subscales, namely mental translation and person knowledge were scored negatively. In the original form of MALQ, the proposed language is French. The researcher replaced the word French with English.

   Bosscher and Smit’s General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES-12) is a 12-item questionnaire scored on a 5-point likert scale (1 = disagree to 5 = agree). The instrument is a modified version of General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) developed by Sherer et al. in 1982 (as cited in Bosscher and Smit, 1998). GSES-12 measures three subscales, namely initiative, effort, and persistence. Bosscher and Smit (1998) reported the reliabilities of the overall general self-efficacy and subscales as follows: overall GSES-12: 0.69, initiative: 0.64, effort: 0.63, and persistence: 0.64.

   Before launching the main study, MALQ and GSES-12 were piloted with 30 junior and senior EFL students who were randomly selected at Shahid Bahonar and Islamic Azad universities of Kerman. Cronbach alpha showed that the reliability of MALQ of the pilot study was 0.81. The reliability of the MALQ in the main study among 117 participants came out to be 0.87. Moreover, the reliability of GSES-12 of the pilot study was 0.79. The reliability of the GSES-12 in the main study came out to be 0.83.

   Bosscher and Smit’s General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES-12) developed by Bosscher and Smit (1998)
MALQ and GSES-12 scales were distributed among the participants simultaneously. Participants were given time (15–20 mins) to answer these questionnaires and there were accompanying instructions. They were assured that the information would be kept completely confidential. They were also told that the gathered information would be used only for research purposes.

4. Results

The descriptive statistics of the variables of the study, namely metacognitive listening strategy use and self-efficacy as well as the subscales of these variables have been presented in Tables 1 & 2.

Table 1. The Descriptive Statistics of the Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLS</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>78.00</td>
<td>47.00</td>
<td>125.00</td>
<td>86.84</td>
<td>24.74</td>
<td>612.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>37.00</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>60.00</td>
<td>45.42</td>
<td>11.09</td>
<td>123.02</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 2. The Descriptive Statistics of the Subscales of MLS and Self-Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directed Attention</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>24.00</td>
<td>22.42</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>7.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person Knowledge</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>10.09</td>
<td>5.09</td>
<td>25.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and Evaluation</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>24.68</td>
<td>6.96</td>
<td>48.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Translation</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>11.41</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>36.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>22.86</td>
<td>9.41</td>
<td>88.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>19.49</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>39.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>12.50</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>27.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1. Frequency of MLSs in Relation with Self-Efficacy

In order to answer the first research question regarding the relationship between MLS use and self-efficacy, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient and Spearman Correlation Coefficient were conducted. The analysis of the data shows that Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficients between MLS and self-efficacy are 0.866 and 0.843 respectively with the P-values of 0.000 which are less than the significant level of $\alpha = 0.05$. Thus, it can be
concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between MLS use and self-efficacy ($r = 0.866$). Thus, as the scores of self-efficacy increase, the scores of MLS increase too (Table 3).

### Table 3. Pearson and Spearman Correlations between MLS and Self-Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>Pearson</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Spearman’s rho</th>
<th>Significant Relationship</th>
<th>Type of Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>0.86*</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>0.84*</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

### 4.2. MLS Type Preferences in Relation with Subscales of Self-Efficacy

In order to investigate the second research question regarding the learners’ MLS type preferences in accordance with their obtained scores from self-efficacy subscales, the following five Multiple Linear Regressions were conducted.

#### 4.2.1. Planning and Evaluation

The regression variance analysis of planning and evaluation MLS type in relation with subscales of self-efficacy (Table 4) shows that $R^2 = 0.74$ ($R^2$ is the common variance between planning and evaluation and the subscales of self-efficacy) and $P = 0.000$. Since $R^2 > 0$ and $P < 0.05$, the Multiple Linear Regression is significant. In other words, at least one of the subscales of self-efficacy has a linear relationship with planning and evaluation MLS type. On the whole, the three subscales of self-efficacy explain 73.5 percent of variability of students’ planning and evaluation MLS preference ($R^2_{adjusted} = 0.735$). The regression coefficient for each subscale of self-efficacy has been presented in Table 4.

### Table 4. Regression of Planning & Evaluation and Subscales of Self-Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$R^2_{adjusted}$</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Regression Model</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.735</td>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>$0.88^*$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Multiple Linear Regression is significant at the 0.05 level
With regard to the calculated P for each subscale of self-efficacy at the level of $\alpha = 0.05$, effort with $P = 0.000$ has a significant positive relationship with planning and evaluation ($\beta = 0.88$). Initiative and persistence do not explain planning and evaluation strategy preference.

4.2.2. Directed Attention

The regression variance analysis of directed attention MLS type in relation with subscales of self-efficacy (Table 5) shows that $R^2 = 0.018$ and $P = 0.553$. While $R^2 > 0$, $P$ is larger than 0.05. Therefore, Multiple Linear Regression is not significant. In other words, none of the subscales of self-efficacy has a linear relationship with directed attention MLS type (Table 5).

Table 5. Regression of Directed Attention and Subscales of Self-Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$R^2_{adj}$</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>15.004</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.001</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>-0.008</td>
<td>0.70</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>805.629</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>7.129</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>820.632</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3. Person Knowledge

The regression variance analysis of person knowledge MLS type in relation with subscales of self-efficacy (Table 6) shows that $R^2 = 0.765$ and $P = 0.000$. Since $R^2 > 0$ and $P < 0.05$, the Multiple Linear Regression is significant. On the whole, the three subscales of self-efficacy explain 76.5 percent of variability of students’ person knowledge MLS preference ($R^2_{adj} = 0.765$). The regression coefficient for each subscale of self-efficacy has been presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Regression of Person Knowledge and Subscales of Self-Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$R^2_{adj}$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
<th>Regression Model</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Sig. (P)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.765</td>
<td>0.759</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>0.14*</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>0.75*</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Multiple Linear Regression is significant at the 0.05 level
With regard to the calculated $P$ for each subscale of self-efficacy at the level of $\alpha = 0.05$, persistence ($\beta = 0.75$) and effort ($\beta = 0.14$) have the highest relationship with person knowledge. Initiative does not explain person knowledge strategy preference.

4.2.4. Mental Translation

The regression variance analysis of mental translation MLS type in relation with subscales of self-efficacy (Table. 7) shows that $R^2 = 0.748$ and $P = 0.000$. Since $R^2 > 0$ and $P < 0.05$, the Multiple Linear Regression is significant. On the whole, the three subscales of self-efficacy explain 74.2 percent of variability of students’ mental translation MLS preference ($R_{adj}^2 = 0.742$). The regression coefficient for each subscale of self-efficacy has been presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Regression of Mental Translation and Subscales of Self-Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>$R_{adjusted}^2$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
<th>Regression Model</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>0.742</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Effort</td>
<td><strong>0.15</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td><strong>0.95</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Multiple Linear Regression is significant at the 0.05 level

With regard to the calculated $P$ for each subscale of self-efficacy at the level of $\alpha = 0.05$, persistence ($\beta = 0.95$) and effort ($\beta = 0.15$) have the highest relationship with mental translation. Initiative does not explain mental translation strategy preference.

4.2.5. Problem Solving

The regression variance analysis of problem solving MLS type in relation with subscales of self-efficacy (Table. 8) shows that $R^2 = 0.831$ and $P = 0.000$. Since $R^2 > 0$ and $P < 0.05$, the Multiple Linear Regression is significant. On the whole, the three subscales of self-efficacy explain 82.7 percent of variability of students’ Problem Solving MLS use preference ($R_{adjusted}^2 = 0.827$). The regression coefficient for each subscale of self-efficacy has been presented in Table 8.
Table 8. Regression of Problem Solving and Subscales of Self-Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Beta</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative</td>
<td>0.001</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>0.84*</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Multiple Linear Regression is significant at the 0.05 level

With regard to the calculated P for each subscale of self-efficacy at the level of \( \alpha = 0.05 \), only persistence with \( P = 0.000 \) has a relationship with problem solving (\( \beta = 0.84 \)). Initiative and effort do not explain problem solving strategy preference.

5. Discussion

Regarding the first research question of the present study concerning the relationship between MLS use and self-efficacy, it was found that there was a significant positive relationship between metacognitive listening strategy use and self-efficacy. Therefore, the results of the present investigation shows that learners’ self-efficacy correlates with the language strategy use. This finding is in line with those of Kharazi et al. (2008), Magogwe and Oliver (2007), Shmais (2003), and Yang (1999). Students with high self-efficacy seem to actively increase their exposure to language outside the classroom, for example, by listening to English radio programs. Besides, the relationship between self-efficacy and strategy use is not a one-way one; using learning strategies results in successful learning outcomes which in turn raise the learners’ self-efficacy (Zimmerman, 1990).

Concerning the second research question of this study regarding the learners’ metacognitive listening strategy type preferences in relation with their obtained scores from self-efficacy subscales, some significant findings were achieved that are discussed one by one.

It was found that planning and evaluation MLS had only a significant relationship with the subscale effort. Initiative and persistence did not explain planning and evaluation strategy preference. This finding is theoretically sound, since according to Brown’s (1978) strategy categorization, planning strategies determine the comprehension objectives and decide which direction to take so that the objectives are attained. Moreover, evaluating strategies determine the success of the individuals’ efforts at processing spoken input for improving their listening abilities. Therefore, it can be concluded that without willingness to expend effort in completing the behavior, the best use of planning and evaluation MLS cannot be achieved.
With regard to the directed attention metacognitive listening strategy type, it was found that none of the subscales of self-efficacy explained directed attention metacognitive listening strategy use. According to Vandergrift et al. (2006), directed attention represents strategies such as getting back on track when losing concentration, recovering concentration when one’s mind wanders, and having a high level of attention and concentration in the process of listening comprehension. However, based on the findings of this study, directed attention has nothing to do with the three subscales of self-efficacy. The justification of directed attention metacognitive listening strategy may lie somewhere else such as anxiety and/or personality factors.

Concerning the person knowledge MLS, it was found that person knowledge had significant relations with two subscales of self-efficacy, namely effort and persistence. The subscale initiative did not explain person knowledge strategy use. It is implied that learners with willingness to expend effort in completing the behavior and persistence in the face of adversity, are better person knowledge metacognitive strategy users. This finding is in line with Vandergrift et al.’s (2006) view that person knowledge “represents listeners’ perceptions concerning the difficulty presented by L2 listening and their self-efficacy in L2 listening” (p. 451).

Concerning the mental translation MLS in relation with the three subscales of self-efficacy, it was found that mental translation had significant relations with effort and persistence. The subscale initiative did not explain mental translation strategy use. It is worth mentioning that mental translation represents strategies that learners must avoid. These strategies fight against the fruitless approaches to listening that lower-level listeners often are obliged to adopt (Vandergrift et al. 2006). This finding might be due to the fact that the participants of this study were not beginners. Moreover, most of the participants had mid and high level self-efficacy scores. The replication of this relationship at other levels of proficiency may produce some other results.

With regard to problem solving metacognitive listening strategy type in relation with subscales of self-efficacy, it was found that problem solving had only a significant relation with persistence. The subscales effort and initiative did not explain problem solving strategy use. According to Vandergrift et al. (2006), problem solving strategies include using one’s experience and general knowledge in interpreting the text, adjusting one’s interpretation upon realizing the information in the text, and monitoring processes. Thus, the successful use of such strategies necessitates learners with high level of persistence in the face of adversity.

This study had some limitations, including the nature of sample size and consequently, a
lack of opportunity to generalize the findings which were based on a specific sample of Iranian EFL students. Another limitation was the level of proficiency of the students, for the participants were junior and senior students. Another major limitation was the reliance on self-report data in assessing the level of MLS use and self-efficacy. The inclusion of other ways of data collection such as interviews and diaries in longitudinal studies would help other researchers have a better understanding and, of course, more comprehensive assessment of the level of each variable.

6. Conclusion

To guarantee a good use of metacognitive listening strategy use, factors such as self-efficacy should enter to enhance the learners’ understanding of themselves (Goh, 2008). This study found that there is a positive relationship between MLS use and self-efficacy. Perceived self-efficacy has been theorized to influence learners’ performance by influencing the choices they make, the amount of effort they make, and the persistence they put forth in accomplishing a specific task (Pajares & Valiante, 1997). By the same token and in light of the findings of the present study, listening tasks among the existing diverse tasks can face the influence of self-efficacy. Believing that they are capable listeners can benefit EFL learners by having them make enough effort and exercise sufficient persistence when they try to comprehend diverse listening tasks.

Regarding the subscales of self-efficacy in relation with MLS use, this study found some significant relationships. Therefore, success in MLS use necessitates a proper attention to self-efficacy. Such a finding can bear fruit when teachers, curriculum developers, material designers, and teacher trainers take concepts such as metacognition and self-efficacy into account and provide opportunities that best suit the needs of the learners with different levels of MLS use and self-efficacy. Students that do not use strategies should not be left alone. They might have learnt the strategies but they are not able to use them practically. They may not lag behind in strategy learning but in other factors related to the strategy use, such as self-efficacy. The findings of this study might also encourage the other researchers to do much more about enhancing metacognitive listening strategy use. There are different factors affecting the strategy use, such as anxiety, achievement goal orientations, culture, learning styles, motivation, extraversion, and introversion, to name just a few. The implementation of the researches on these factors can find fruitful ways to enhance listening comprehension.
References


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Title

Textbook Evaluation: A Comparative Study between Iranian and Turkish High School English Textbooks

Authors

Sajad Davoudi Mobarakheh (M.A.)
University of Isfahan

Hossein Khani Arani (M.A.)
Tarbiat Moallem University

Biodata

Sajad Davoudi-Mobarakeh is presently an M.A. student in TEFL at University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. He received his BA in English literature from University of Kashan in 2009. He has over 6 years of teaching experiences at different language institutes. He is currently an English teacher at Iran Language Institute and a part-time translator. His research interests lie in ESP, reading strategies, discourse analysis, textbook evaluation, teacher evaluation, and language teaching.

Hossein Khani Arani has recently received his M.A degree in TEFL from Tarbiat Moallem University, Tehran, Iran. He also received his B.A in English Translation from University of Kashan in 2008. His research interests lie in EAP, ESP, reading strategies, discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis and media studies.

Abstract

The basic goal of materials evaluation is selecting teaching materials which are appropriately relevant for a particular teaching context. In other words, evaluation is a “matter of judging the fitness of something for a particular purpose” (Tok, 2010). The current study aims to carefully evaluate two ELT packages in Iran and Turkey. High school textbooks of general English courses prepared and published by the Ministry of Education in Iran were selected to represent the Iranian side; New Bridge to Success series which are taught in Turkish high schools was also selected for the purpose of comparison. Adopting ESL textbook evaluation checklist devised and prepared by Joshua Miekley (2005), the researchers carefully evaluated the two ELT packages. Considering all the important criteria any standardized checklist covers like content presentation,
physical make-up, administration concerns, integration of skills, etc. the results showed that generally speaking NBS series was in a better position than ELT textbooks taught in Iranian high schools. It's not the case that NBS is a perfect textbook, but comparing to the Iranian version, its quality is in a better position, compatible with the global criteria standardized textbooks possess.

Keywords: Textbook, Textbook Evaluation, English Language Teaching (ELT), Textbook Evaluation Criteria.

1. Introduction

Although recent technological innovations have helped educators to teach in new ways and to reach new goals, published textbooks are still the most commonly used source materials for most instructional situations. In language teaching, the situation is similar, and many new commercial textbooks are regularly published in order to meet the changing focuses of instruction and the changing language needs of learners. As a result of this situation, it is important to decide on which language textbooks are most useful for students in particular settings (Ansary & Babaii, 2002).

To put it differently, whether or not one accepts the value of textbooks, it is the case that they are of an acceptable standard or level of quality and popularity to the learners (Ansary & Babaii, 2002). In the educational settings where there are not enough trained and experienced teachers, textbooks can play an important role. This does not mean that teachers are completely devoted to the method proposed by the book and nor that they should be slaves to the textbooks, and as stated by Williams (1983) "It is ironical that those teachers who rely most heavily on the textbook are the ones least qualified to interpret its intentions or evaluate its content and method" (p. 251).

2. Review of the Related Literature

What follows includes an enriched literature review on textbook evaluation. We argue how prominent figures of this field including Cunningsworth, 1995, McDonough and Shaw, 2005, Sheldon, 1998, Tomlinson, 2001, Hutchinson & Torres, 1994, etc. all discuss that it is a must to evaluate textbooks to make sure that they all meet basic needs of learners and further provide
teachers with a pedagogic tool to get along efficiently with the whole process of teaching a second language.

Tomlinson (2001) defines a textbook as a book “which provides the core materials for a course” (p. 9) and which covers many issues in a single volume by taking into consideration all the points that students are required to learn during a course period. Generally, such kind of a book includes four-skill activities, grammatical information, vocabulary studies, and different language functions.

Cunningsworth (1995) puts emphasis on the value of textbooks and further argues that they are an effective resource for self-directed learning, an effective resource for presentation material, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence. Litz (2001) further states that without textbooks, a program may have no impact; therefore, they provide structure and a syllabus. He later puts emphasis on the role of textbook in ELT situations and argues that teachers determine the aims of the lessons, tests to be used, teaching strategies and tasks in accordance with the textbooks which give ideas to teachers about the activities that can be used during teaching learning process in classroom.

As Hutchinson and Torres (1994) suggest: “The textbook is an almost universal element of [English language] teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in [various] countries...No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook” (p.315).

Other researchers refer to the usefulness of textbooks for both students and teachers; Sheldon (1988), for example, posits that textbooks not only “represent the visible heart of any ELT program” (p. 237) but also offer considerable advantages for both the student and the teacher when they are being used in the ESL/EFL classroom.

Beside these benefits for textbooks in educational settings, others have pointed to the problems they may cause in those settings. More recent authors have criticized textbooks for their inherent social and cultural biases and have demonstrated that many EFL/ESL textbooks still contain examples of gender bias, sexism, and stereotyping (Litz, 2001). Other researchers have adopted critical approaches to textbooks and posit that they sell the ideas of the dominant countries. Among them, Yamanaka (2006) is aware of the complex relationship between language textbooks and the target language culture, but he sees the promotion of 'Western' global
textbooks with both an economic as well as an ideological agenda. Others, however, don't find any problems with the authentic texts and how they may carry ideologically biased notions and argue that the problems with many textbooks are not necessarily the fact that they are culturally or socially biased but that they are actually too complex and artificial in their presentation of the target language. As Kirkgoz (2006) points out, textbooks may function as agents for change during educational innovation due to a number of reasons; first textbooks act as a vehicle for teacher and learner training; second textbooks provide a picture of what the change will look like; and third, they provide the psychological support to teachers.

Although language textbooks are widely used all over the world, they are often criticized because of displaying inconsistencies between “educational aspects” and “commercial roles”. Sheldon (1998), for example, criticizes the popular textbooks in the market and posits that they are often regarded as the “…tainted end-product of an author's or a publisher's desire for quick profit” (Sheldon, 1988: 239). The fact is that many of textbooks are often marketed with artificial claims by their authors and publishers; to put it differently, these books tend to contain serious theoretical problems, design flaws, and practical shortcomings. However, as the abovementioned sentences argued Sheldon (1998) finds the selection of a textbook or textbook package an important decision in language education as it is necessary to take into consideration such factors as ‘professional, financial, and political investment’.

Up to now, the basic strengths and weaknesses of ELT textbooks were pointed out to notify that it is a must to evaluate textbooks to guarantee both teachers and students' benefits in any ELT settings. We should all ensure "that careful selection is made, and that the materials selected closely reflect [the needs of the learners and] the aims, methods, and values of the teaching program." (Cunningsworth, 1995: 7). Therefore a careful selection enables teachers and managerial staff to discriminate well between all available textbooks on the market. One additional reason for textbook evaluation is the fact that it can be very useful in teacher development and professional growth.

According to Cunningsworth (1995), textbook evaluation helps teachers move beyond “impressionistic assessments” and it helps them to acquire useful, accurate, systematic, and contextual insights into the overall nature of textbook material. Tok (2010) to highlight the value of textbook evaluation, states that “evaluation is an intrinsic part of teaching and learning”. Evaluation plays a key role in education and it is important for the teacher since it can provide
valuable information for the future going of classroom practice, the planning of courses and management of learning tasks by students. Finally, evaluation is essential for the use of instructional materials such as textbooks (Ellis, 1997).

One option for textbook evaluation might be to rely on use of various checklists suggested by different authors and researchers who are professionals in their academic fields (McDonough, & Shaw, 2005). In other words, various writers have suggested ways of helping teachers to be more sophisticated in their evaluative approach by presenting evaluation ‘checklists’ based on generalizable criteria that can be used by both teachers and students in many different situations. Most of these standardized evaluation checklists contain similar components that can be used as helpful starting points for ELT practitioners in a wide variety of situations.

Ansary & Babaii (2002) argue, for instance, that evaluation checklists should have some criteria pertaining to the physical characteristics of textbooks such as layout, organizational, and logistical characteristics. Other important criteria that should be recognized are those that assess a textbook's methodology, aims, and approaches and the degree to which a set of materials is not only teachable but also fits the needs of the individual teacher's approach as well as the organization's overall curriculum.

Moreover, criteria should analyze the specific language, functions, grammar, and skills content that are covered by a particular textbook as well as the relevance of linguistic items to the socio-cultural environment. Finally, textbook evaluations should include criteria that pertain to representation of cultural and gender components in addition to the extent to which the linguistic items, subjects, content, and topics are relevant to students' personalities, backgrounds, needs, and interests as well as those of the teacher and institution (Ansary and Babaii, 2002).

3. Methodology

The abovementioned lines concisely cover related literature review on the importance of textbook evaluation in any ELT settings; moreover, it argued that checklist evaluation is highly efficient to be applied for textbook evaluation. In the following sections, the researchers focus on the methodological part of the study and carefully elaborate on the design of the study together with the stages of the current study.

3.1. Instrumentation
As the purpose of the current study was to evaluate two series of textbooks taught in Iranian and Turkish high schools, we did our best to search which packages were taught in the high school level in both countries. For the Iranian side, we chose English Book 3. The book was published by Publication Corporation of Text Books of Iran. The corresponding authors were Birjandi, Nourozi and Mahmoodi. Moreover the copyright date for the book was 2011. For the Turkish side, however, we selected a package series written by non-native Turkish textbook writers. New Bridge to Success package was selected for our purpose; the textbook was prepared by Ministry of National Education (MONE) for grade 12. The copyright date for the book was 2011. Furthermore, the corresponding authors were Akman, Yildiz, Ergin, Dagdeviren, Dincel Yetik, et al.

With regards to the checklist selected for the current study, it is worth to mention that the researchers adopted a textbook evaluation checklist prepared by Miekley (2005) for the purpose of evaluation.

3.2. Procedure
For this stage, we carefully analyzed different sections of the textbooks in accordance with the global criteria any checklist contains; it considers issues related to both internal and external characteristics of the selected textbooks (McDonough & Shaw, 2005). These criteria are issues related to the physical characteristics of textbooks such as layout, organizational and logistical characteristics. The checklist also covers issues pertaining to the representation of cultural and gender components in addition to the extent to which the linguistic items, subjects, content, and topics match up to students' personalities, backgrounds, needs, and interests as well as those of the teacher and institution.

Finally, the researchers carefully analyzed issues related to specific language, functions, grammar, and skills content all applied through the whole textbooks. Considering all these issues, we evaluate different aspects of the ELT textbooks and recognize to what extent they are meeting the specific characteristics of a well-organized textbook appropriate to meet both students' needs and suitable for teacher's assessment of the teaching process.

4. Data Analysis
4.1. Textbook Evaluation Stage
Considering the basic criteria proposed by the global checklists devised by the great figures of the field, we try to evaluate both textbook series concisely; in the following sections, we firstly get along with the Iranian side and carefully analyze different sections of the high school English book 3; then we skip the channel and move to the abroad version prepared by the Turkish writers. We seek to evaluate how different parts of the Turkish package New Bridge to Success are in line with the proposed checklist criteria.

4.2. English Book 3

Following the ongoing trends of materials evaluation, we have chosen the third grade high school English text book. In fact, since textbooks taught at the Iranians high schools follow the same trend of thought and organization, we just evaluated English Book 3. This book consists of six lessons and two review exercises, one at the beginning of the book, the other at the end of the book. There is a list of irregular verbs and also a list containing the new words covered in the book. Moreover, considering the apparent shape of the book, it's yellow and gray with the name of the book, English Book 3, typed in bold capitals in the book cover.

4.2.1. General Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title: English Book 3</th>
<th>Copyright date: 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Author(s): P. Birjandi, M. Norouzi, Gh. Mahmoodi</td>
<td>Cost (student edition): 3500 Rs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher(s): Publication Corporation of Text Books of Iran</td>
<td>Subject/Grade level: Intermediate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What follows is a list of questions which aim at evaluation of the book. For each question a seven-point likert scale is provided. For the purpose of evaluation, we first choose one of the options and then elaborate on it.

The scale is as follow:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Totally lacking</th>
<th>Optional</th>
<th>Not Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4.2.2. General Organization of the Textbook

1- Does the textbook provide a useful table of contents, glossary?

Excellent. The book includes a table of contents at the beginning of the book and a glossary at the end, unlike the book of junior high school without any reference to Persian equivalents which can be assumed as a positive point because it makes students look up them from a dictionary.
2- Is the layout consistent? Are chapters arranged logically?
Adequate. Although not attractively, but they have been arranged satisfactorily.
3- Do chapters contain clear and comprehensive introductions and summaries?
Totally lacking. There is no kind of specified introductions or summaries included in the textbook.
4- Does textbook contain references, bibliography and resources?
Totally lacking. It does not contain the above-mentioned parts.
5- Is information accurate & current?
Poor. Accuracy is warranted but it is not the case for currency. At the time being, students are living in the so-called information and technology age and accordingly require contents which match this point.
6- Is size and format of print appropriate?
Good. It is the one which is observed most of the time by most of the book publishers.
7- Is format visually appealing & interesting?
Poor. Except for some of the low quality pictures, it follows a monotonous trend which makes students bored and impatient.

4.2.3. Content of the Textbook
1- Are real-life applications given?
Poor. it can be truly conceived as the missing link of the present book. The link between subjective thinking and objective doing has been lost. At the end of the year students are filled with a host of knowledge inapplicable and irrelevant to the reality outside the classroom.
2- Are directions clearly written and explained?
Good. Most of the time; it is tried to simply lead students toward the correct way of answering the questions.
3- Are activities developmentally appropriate?
Good. The structural activities are appropriately arranged. They follow a simple-to-complex trend and this is theoretically acceptable from an educational point of view.
4- Are lessons/activities interdisciplinary?
Totally lacking. The book does not involve different subjects or areas of knowledge simultaneously.
5- Do activities apply to a diversity of student abilities, interests and learning styles?
Poor. As it was elaborated on before, students' diversities can not be catered for in a national scale.

6- Do activities include guiding questions which encourage the development of higher-level thinking skills?
Poor. Activities just try to cover present tasks at hand and do not intend to develop other points including higher level thinking skills.

4.2.4. New Words

1- Are the new words presented in a variety of ways (e.g. glosses, multi-glosses, and appositives)?
Poor. It is noticed that the presentation of new words is of poor quality. They are introduced just in one way. They are put in a sentence frame so that their meaning would be clear. There is rarely any use of synonyms, antonyms, cognates and so on.

2- Are students taught top-down techniques for learning new words?
Not applicable. In this book there is no activity to reinforce bottom-up or top-down processing for learning the new words.

4.2.5. Reading

1- Are there any techniques for activating students' background knowledge before reading the text?
Not applicable. In this book, the writers directly go into the text without any use of pre-reading and warm-up activities. So the learners' background knowledge is not paid attention enough to. This causes a problem for the learners because they have no kinds of preparation for reading a new text.

2- Does the content serve as a window into learning about the target language culture (American, British, etc.)?
Not applicable. The text does not refer to any cultural points of the target language. Although there is possibility of referring to the target culture but it is neglected. For example the write can name some of the programs aired at the target country's channels.

3- Are the reading selections authentic pieces of language?
Totally lacking. The text is a simplified one so that it is appropriate for the students' levels.

4- Compared to texts for native speakers, does the content contain real-life issues that challenge the reader to think critically about his/her worldview?
Good. The text presents topics which are useful for the learners to think about. For example, one of the passages deals with the role of TV in people's life; since TV and other forms of multimedia have obsessed the people's lives and every person spends most of their time watching TV, it is a good idea to encourage them to think of the time when TV has no role in everyday life.

5- Are the selections representative of the variety of literary genres, and do they contain multiple sentence structures?
Poor. We can just say that the text is a simple form of formal writing. The text contains some form of embedded sentence, sentences with infinitives and noun clauses.

6- Does the text make comprehension easier by addressing one new concept at a time instead of multiple new concepts?
Adequate. Yes it does and this is rooted in the fact that they are some simple texts geared to students' level of proficiency. In addition, the shortage of space doesn't permit representation of multiple new concepts concurrently.

7- Is the text interesting enough that students will enjoy reading it?
Good. According to the learners' age and their interest, the text is interesting for them.

8- Is the text free of the material that might be offensive to students?
Excellent. The text is completely neutral and free of offensive points.

9- How much is the text related to the social cultural values?
Adequate. The text presents an issue that is present in all societies. Since every society values TV, the authors of the textbook have tried to include topics which are relevant to people's socio-cultural life.

4.2.6. Exercises and Activities

1- Are there interactive and task-based activities that require students to use new vocabulary to communicate?
Poor. There is no use of interactive activities which involve students in using new words. Of students do but the focus is on learning the structures of the unit not the new words, in such tasks the answers are clear and pre-determined with no use of new words.

2- Are top-down and bottom-up reading strategies used?
Poor. The text is presented per se without any instruction to help students apply top-down or bottom-up strategies.
3- Do the activities facilitate students' use of grammar rules by creating situations in which these rules are needed?
Poor. Students just apply grammatical rules in drills which are either in written form or in spoken form. All they do is to replace some words with some others. There is no description of situations.

4- Do the exercises promote critical thinking of the text?
Poor. Most of the exercises are simple drills. Students only need to replace words with each other. But in the write it down section, students are required to make sentences with three different tenses. In this way they are invited to think of the different uses of tenses more critically.

5- Are there any activity requiring students to skim or scan the text?
Poor. Although no direct reference is made to skimming or scanning, there are some inference questions or some others which demand for specific details. Needless to say, both of these questions require students to be familiar with skimming and scanning techniques.

6- Are there any activities requiring students to summarize or find the main idea of the text?
Totally lacking. There is some peripheral reference to main ideas but summarization is completely lost.

4.2.7. Speak out, Write it down, Language Function, Pronunciation, Vocabulary

1- How much does the Speak out section contribute to the understanding and appropriate use of grammatical structures?
Adequate. The Speak out section pays a huge attention to the grammatical structures and there are enough drills and exercises. The problem with this section is that it teaches grammatical rules via drills and based on the repetition. There is no authentic situation provided so that learners can feel a real need to use the structures. There is another problem behind Speak out. As the name speaks for itself this is a spoken type of task. But there is no attention to the speaking of the learners. They consider this part exactly as a writing task so they just try to answer the questions in written form.

2- How much does the Write it down section contribute to the understanding and appropriate use of grammatical structures?
Good. We can say that this part is an improvement over the Speak out section. Although there are drills here too but some exercises have been implemented that require students to work more on their own and commits them to use more open-ended knowledge.

3- How much is the Language Function section useful for the students?
Poor. This section has some weak points. The first is that with regard to its undeniable importance in real life and in learning a second language, this part has not received its appropriate attention and it is marginalized to the end of the book. The other problem is that Language Function is presented with no use of pictures which can clarify the functions introduced. The objectives of this part are not clear for the students. They don't know why they should learn this part so they just memorize it so that they can perform well in their exams. Target language needs have no place here.

4.2.8. Pronunciation
1- Does the book include any pronunciation guide?
Poor. The book doesn't have any specified pronunciation key for different types of sounds.
2- Does the book differentiate American and British system of pronunciation?
Totally lacking. There is no reference to these two systems of pronunciation.

4.2.9. Vocabulary Drill
1- Does the vocabulary drill section prepare learners for learning other new related words?
Good. This section introduces two kinds of suffixes which students can add to nouns and make adjectives from them. This kind of vocabulary teaching prepares learners for guessing the meanings of words with such suffixes.
2- Does this section introduce new and modern words or old fashioned ones?
Excellent. The words presented are new and are found in most English texts types.
3- Are the words of high frequency or are found in just specific texts?
Excellent. Words in this book are highly frequent ones which can be found in all genres of English.

4.2.10. Vocabulary List
1- Does the vocabulary list provide the meaning of words?
Totally lacking. The list just presents the words alone without any meaning.
2- Does the vocabulary list present the pronunciation of words?
Totally lacking. There is no pronunciation for the words.
4.2.11. Physical Characteristics

1- Is the cover of the book appealing?
Poor. The cover is not that much interesting. It is of course in colors but it consists of a simple yellow and gray frame in which the words English Book 3 have been typed.

2- Is the visual imagery of high aesthetic quality?
Totally lacking. The pictures are not colorful, therefore uninteresting and boring. This results in learners' inability to maneuver on them for more than a few moments.

3- Are the illustrations simple enough and close enough to the text that they add to its meaning rather than detracting from it?
Adequate. Most of time they are, but in the cases which the authors felt unhappy with them (because they aren't expressive enough) they accompanied them with relevant words with which students are supposed to answer the questions. Their work is devalued because they provide students with desired hints.

4- How much interesting are the pictures of the book?
Poor. Pictures are just in two colors, blue and white; they are not very well drawn. Pictures are out-of-date in terms of people's clothes, their appearance, etc.

5- Is there any relevance between the instructional content and the pictures used in the book?
Good. The pictures implemented in the book are clear and related to the instructional content of the book. The problem is that they are dull and not very interesting.

4.2.12. Other Evaluation Questions

1- How much is the unit contents relevant to the cognitive ability of the learners?
Good. It can be better because students at this age are cognitively ready to be loaded with more information. They are about 17 or 18 years old and have developed enough mental potential to deal with multidimensional subjects.

2- To what extent do the lesson contents consider learners differences?
Poor. In the present book which is published nationally no place is predicted for the learners' differences or their preferred learning styles or strategies.

3- How much do the lesson contents activate creative thinking in the learners?
Poor. For creative thinking, the learners should frequently come across with puzzling situations which require their quick actions. In fact, some of the reading passages raise students' awareness
but not to the extent that enables them to think critically or creatively in order to analyze or find solutions to problems.

4- To what extent do the lesson contents prepare learners for the contents of the next lesson?
Poor. There isn't enough cohesion between lesson contents. If there are some cohesive ties, they are all structural.

5- How much are the lesson contents related to the learners' real life?
Poor. The lesson is heavily loaded with grammatical points and structures which are useful just to be applied in tests of grammar; there is no authentic situation provided for the learners to apply their knowledge of language. There is no reference to the cultural points of the target language.

6- How much do the lesson contents serve learners' needs?
Poor. To some extent it caters for learners' linguistic needs by presenting grammatical points in a pre-arranged fashion. But when examined for communicational content, it falls short of being satisfactory. This can be easily found from the learners' weakness at their introducing themselves even with a few simple words.

4.3. New Bridge to Success (NBS)

4.3.1. General Information

<table>
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<th>Title: New Bridge to Success (NBS)</th>
<th>Copyright date: 2011</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Author(s): Akman, Yildiz, Ergin, Dagdeviren, Dincel Yetik, et al.</td>
<td>Cost (student edition): 9.00 Turkish Lira</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publisher(s): Ministry of National Education (MONE)</td>
<td>Subject/Grade level: Intermediate</td>
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4.3.2. Textbook Evaluation

Since the Turkish version, New Bridge to Success, has overlaps in a lot of cases with the Iranian English Book 3, we just mention the important sections absolutely essential to be covered by the researcher; to put it differently, the two series have common features in many cases, therefore the evaluation for this part is limited to a concise overview of the textbook evaluation.

The textbook, New Bridge to Success taught at Turkish high schools, is composed of 225 pages with a purple cover. On the cover, the printings are in bold capitals indicating the name of
the textbook and the abbreviations reflecting the publisher of the textbook. The name of the
textbook, the publisher and the authors of the textbook are indicated on the first page.

The Contents section is presented on a single page and it includes the page numbers of the
course introduction, table of contents, names of the units, grammar reference, irregular verbs,
references and word list. The table of contents includes topics, functions, language areas/structure and vocabulary.

The course introduction section reflects information considering the aim of the textbook from the students’ and teachers’ perspectives and gives extra information regarding the level of the textbook.

The table of contents reflects the names of the 22 textbook units and these are depicted as
personal identification, family, people and places, etc.

Each lesson in the New Bridge to Success series consists of eight parts: (A) new vocabulary,
(B) reading, (C) comprehension, (D) speaking, (E) writing, (F) grammar, (G) pronunciation, and (H) vocabulary review. All in all, the abovementioned sections are concisely taken into consideration and we try to investigate how they are covered in NBS series and further whether they meet the basic criteria of standardized checklists for textbooks evaluation.

As the first issue to consider, it is necessary to examine the features of the physical appearance of the textbook NBS. The color of the textbook is purple. The name of the textbook and for whom it is prepared is indicated on the front cover in black capital letters. In NBS, the illustrations are composed of real photos and drawings.

With respect to content, content of the textbook is generally realistic. Moreover, it is interesting, challenging and motivating. There are sufficient varieties in the subject and content of the textbook. Moreover, the materials are not culturally biased and they do not portray any negative stereotypes.

Regarding the presentation of pronunciation in the textbook, it's worth to note that the pronunciation section includes exercises such as focusing on the stress of the questions, identification of speech sounds, listening and repeating the sounds and recognizing the pronunciation varieties of speech sounds. Comparing with its Iranian counterpart, it's clear that the Turkish version puts heavier emphasis on the pronunciation. However, one of the most shortcomings of the series was the fact that very few units contained any exercises devoted to the teaching of sentence stress and intonation.
Considering vocabulary presentation, the textbook takes a strict method to familiarize the learners with the new vocabulary items; the vocabulary items seem a little bit difficult for a high school student to learn; especially as vocabulary items constitute the lion's share in any reading passages, the difficulty to handle them has made reading passages complicated for the students to understand; therefore vocabulary difficulty level does not match students' proficiency level.

Regarding the methodology of textbook, we can claim that New Bridge to Success series does its best to integrate all four skills presenting the materials to students. Students are all provided with different activities to practice all four skills. However it is important to note that although the textbook deals with all four language skills, reading and listening are especially more emphasized than the other productive skills namely speaking and writing. Moreover, the main focus of the speaking exercises is acting out the dialogues. The written communication is covered with samples from e-mails, postcard and letters.

As instructions are very important leading students to either understand or misunderstand different sections of the textbook, it's worthwhile to consider how instructions are presented in NBS series. The instructions used in NBS series were presented with simple and understandable sentence structure. They also include relevant and basic information for the students in order to understand the purpose of a specific activity.

One of the highly significant skills for students is reading; it is clear that students should be able to read different passages without any problem; Reading passages in NBS series, however, seem to cause problems for students; as we perceived the reading passages in the textbook were quite long. Moreover, they consisted of too many unknown vocabulary items and confusing sentence structures. Therefore there was a mismatch between learners' proficiency level and the textbook difficulty level. One conclusion that can be drawn from this is that the difficulty level of reading passages appeared to be a negative factor that hinders students from doing the related activities and exercises aiming to improve their reading skills. As Sheldon (1998) posits, it should be checked whether the textbook deals appropriately with all for skills, taking the level into consideration. He also adds that there should be a suitable balance between skills and indicates that the reading passages and associated activities should be suitable for the language level of the students.

Sheldon (1998) later continues that with the effective teaching of grammar, learners are equipped with the ability to make their own sentences and will be able use target language for
their own purposes. Taking all these issues into consideration, we can claim that the particular textbook does not provide students with sufficient number and variety of grammar exercises. Therefore it's assumed to be a major pitfall for NBS series.

Speaking activities are carried out in a variety of manner in the NBS series; oral repetitions, spelling abbreviations and asking about the classroom objects in a pair-work activity, are used as examples of speaking exercises. Furthermore, practicing the given dialogues is one of the speaking exercises in the textbook. Students read or listen to the dialogues and act them out with their partner. So students have enough opportunities to practice speaking in the classroom; although they are not truly communicative but at least they are much better than the same situation in the Iranian English book 3.

Last but not least, if we want to assess to what extent activities presented in NBS series are in line with promoting real life communication for the learners, we can claim that they were both motivating and interesting and they generally promoted meaningful exchanges and genuine communication in realistic contexts.

5. Conclusion

Textbook preparation requires a long period of time in any country; moreover, structuring any textbook, it's a must to consider the features of textbooks as a whole. Therefore textbook design is a very demanding task, so any textbook evaluation necessitates critically analyzing different parts of each unit in the textbook. Considering all the issues we discussed in the previous lines, it seems that the principle goal of any teacher should be devoted to finding the appropriate textbook for a group of learners in a particular teaching context. Although it is difficult to find a perfect book which is suitable for a particular group of learners, but the teachers should do their best to investigate for the right kind of book that fits into the current teaching situation better than other materials (Ansary & Babaii, 2002).

Considering all, the current study on textbooks carefully evaluated different parts of two ELT packages in Iran and Turkey; we tried to shed light on different aspects of English textbooks published and taught in Iranian high schools; furthermore, we evaluated a non-native devised English package in Turkey, namely New Bridge to Success. The comparative analysis of the textbooks evaluation revealed significant outcomes concerning the two series.
To put in a nutshell, the Turkish version, *New Bridge to Success*, surpassed the Iranian version in quality and efficiency regarding many aspects of the textbook evaluation. In fact, considering all the important criteria we discussed for any ELT textbook like approach, content presentation, physical make-up, administration concerns, integration of skills, etc. the NBS was in a better position than ELT books taught in Iranian high schools. The evaluation process revealed that ELT books used in Iranian high schools are not authentic; considering socio-cultural issues, English and Persian names were used interchangeably; and most importantly oral skills were totally ignored. NBS series, on the other hand, didn't suffer from the abovementioned shortcomings. The syllabus of NBS can be defined as notional-functional; the functions are designed according to the topics of the units. Besides functions, each unit is covering four main skills of speaking, reading, listening and writing, also grammatical points, and vocabulary. These issues can be regarded as the superiority of NBS series over the Iranian ELT books taught in high schools. The conclusion that can be drawn from this result would be that material developers and textbook writers need to make sure that textbooks provide the particular group of learners with sufficient coverage of four skills namely, reading, writing, speaking and listening through adequate practice.

References


Title
Investigating the Degree of Correspondence between Topics of Reading Passages in General English Course Books and Students’ Interest

Authors

Hafez Shatery (M.A.)
Department of English, Sirjan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sirjan, Iran

Maryam Azargoon (M.A.)
Tarbiat Modarres University

Biodata

Hafez Shatery graduated from M.A. program from Isfahan University in 2005. He is a faculty member also a lecturer in Islamic Azad University (IAU) of Sirjan, Iran. He is especially interested in areas of EFL/ESL material design and evaluation, teaching of the four skills, and classroom interaction.

Maryam Azargoon graduated from M.A. program from Tarbiat Moddares University in 2006. She has been teaching in Payame-Noor University of Sirjan for six years. He is especially interested in areas of EFL/ESL material design and evaluation, teaching of the four skills, sociology of language as well as psychology.

Abstract

Interest has long played an undisputable role in different aspects of language learning, one such aspect has been Foreign Language Reading Comprehension. Therefore, exposing students to topics which interest them the most is of great significance. As such, the present study empirically investigated the degree of correspondence between topics of reading passages in General English course books and students’ interest in them to see whether or not the topics of reading passages in General English course books are related to students’ interest. The participants of the present study were students in 22 General English classes from three universities located in the city of Sirjan. 8 classes were selected from Islamic Azad University of sirjan; another 8 classes were selected from Payame Noor University of Sirjan and 6 classes were selected from Sirjan Industrial University. A list of topics was given to the students in question and then they were asked to check the topics they were interested in. The researcher, then, evaluated the textbooks introduced for General English courses in order to determine the topics most presented in the textbooks.
in question. The findings of the survey were analyzed using Mini Tab software. It was revealed that in all of the universities under study, students’ interest had not been taken into consideration in introducing textbooks for General English course books.

**Keywords:** Topics of Reading Passages, Correspondence, Students’ Interest.

1. **Introduction**

Textbook evaluation and design has turned into a very important area in English Language Teaching. Evaluation is basically said to be matching students’ needs with possible existing solutions (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987). Low states that “teachers must continually evaluate textbooks in order to make sure that they are appropriate for the classroom in question. Therefore, teachers as well as material designers have to make use of the area of textbook evaluation and design so that they can question and form their opinions about textbooks” (p. 47). Other benefits of textbook evaluation are identifying their weak and strong points, utilizing their strong points and improving their weak points by either modifying or replacing them with other books (Cunningworth, 1995).

Reading comprehension has always been the most important communication skill for Iranians compared to other communication skills (Listening, Speaking, Writing) in that it plays a more important role in pursuing education, comprehending up-to-date knowledge and doing research projects (Zareian, G., Zirak, M., 2011). Reading comprehension skill also is important in supporting other communication skills (Richards, J. C. & Renandya, W. A. 2002). However, Iranian students are not good enough in comprehending reading passages which makes it essential to find a way so that the problem could be resolved. One of the ways proposed by ELT experts is that reading passages in reading passages should take into consideration students’ interest (Carrell, P. L. and Wise, T. E., 1998). As such the present study aims to show whether or not topics of reading passages in General English course books have been selected based on students’ interest. With regard to the fact that students’ interest in what gets taught plays an important role in the quantity and quality of learning (Hidi, S. 2001), textbooks introduced for General English courses ought to contain materials students are mostly interested in so that both the quantity and quality of learning could be enhanced.

2. **Review of Related Literature**
A plethora of studies have been conducted on textbook evaluation and design. The first group of these studies has concentrated on the advantages and disadvantages of various textbooks. Alwright (1982) believes that textbooks are not flexible and merely reflects their authors’ priorities and opinions. Sheldon (1988) came to the conclusion that students trust more in published textbooks compared to teacher developed materials. Heycraft (1998) states that one of the main advantages of using textbooks is that they are psychologically necessary because students can tangibly assess their progress based on them.

Other researchers have focused their attention more on evaluating specific sections of textbooks, their strength and weaknesses and their effectiveness in different educational settings. One of these areas has been reading comprehension sections in English textbooks which have had an important role in improving linguistic as well as scientific level of the students. Students’ interest in the topics of reading passages in General English textbooks makes them to comprehend these passages both faster and more easily (Hidi, S. 2001). Students’ interest in the topics makes them to not only extract more information from the text but also helps them to get involved more deeply with the text so that they can understand its main ideas more quickly (Krapp, A. 1999, Ryan, R. M., Connell, J. P. and Plant, R. W. 1990, Schiefele, U. 1992 Schiefele, U. and Krapp).


Brantmeier, C. (2003, 2006) investigated the relationship between students’ interest in the topics of reading comprehension texts and students’ ability in recalling information from reading passages among Spanish students. The result was that there was strong relationship between students’ interest in the topics of reading comprehension texts and their ability to recall information. Brantmeier, C. (2006) studied the relationship between students’ interest in the topics of reading comprehension texts and their ability and their ability to complete and answer
multiple-choice questions. The result was that there was strong relationship between students’ interest in the topics of reading comprehension texts and their ability to complete and answer multiple-choice questions.

All these studies show that there’s a strong relationship between students’ interest in the topics of reading comprehension texts and their degree of comprehension from these texts. However, there has been a dearth of studies conducted on the issue of students’ interest in the topics of reading comprehension texts in General English text books. As such the present study aims to show whether or not topics of reading passages in General English course books have been selected based on students’ interest. With regard to the fact that students’ interest in the topics of reading comprehension texts is an important factor in fostering their comprehension of these passages, the need to do research on the relationship between students’ interest in the topics of reading comprehension texts and their degree of comprehension from these texts is strongly felt.

3. Methodology

This study sought answers to the following questions: 1) What types of topics are students most interested in for reading comprehension texts in General English textbooks? 2) What types of topics have been made use of the most for reading comprehension texts in General English textbooks? 3) Has students’ interest in the topics of reading comprehension texts been taken into consideration when introducing textbooks for General English Courses? The basic assumption is that students’ interests in the topics of reading comprehension texts in general English textbooks are not related to each other in any way; in other words, students’ interest in the topics of reading comprehension texts has not been taken into consideration when introducing textbooks for General English Courses. In order to find answers to the above-mentioned questions the following methodology was used.

3.1. Participants

The participants of the present study were students in 22 General English classes from three universities located in the city of Sirjan. 8 classes were selected from Islamic Azad University of Sirjan; another 8 classes were selected from Payame Noor University of Sirjan and 6 classes were selected from Sirjan Industrial University. The participants were chosen from different types of
universities so that the collected data and the findings of the study render more generalizeable results.

3.2. Materials and Instrumentation

A questionnaire in the form of a list of topics (see Appendix 1) was given to the students’ in General English classes the above-mentioned universities and then they were asked to check the topics they were interested in. The researcher, then, evaluated the textbooks introduced for General English courses in order to determine the topics most presented in the textbooks in question. Information obtained through students checking topics in the questionnaire constituted the materials for the present study.

In order to analyze the collected data; that is, the frequency of students’ interest in the type of topic and the frequency of the occurrence of the same topic in textbooks in question Mini Tab software was used. Chi Squares were first run to see whether or not the topics of reading passages in the textbooks in question and students’ interest in these topics are correlated in any way. A Pareto chart was utilized to calculate the frequency and the percentage of students’ interest in each of the categories of topics were calculated. Another Pareto chart was used to calculate the frequency and the percentage of occurrence of individual categories of topics. Linear regression test was run to see if students’ interest in particular topics has been taken into account in developing or choosing General English textbooks for university students.

4. Results and Discussions

Three research questions were posed in the present study. But before that we have to see if students’ interest and the type of topic are related in any way. In order to test this, separate Chi-Square tests were run. As Table 1 shows, it was revealed that P-Value is 0 which is less than %5. As a result Ho is rejected which show that students’ interest and the type of topic are correlated.

<table>
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</table>

Table 1: The Results of the Chi-Square Test

Having proven that there is a correlation between students’ interest and the type of topic, now we turn to the first research question. The first research question posed in the present study was what types of topics students are most interested in for reading comprehension texts in General
English textbooks. To do this, a questionnaire in the form of list of topics (see appendix 1) was given to the students’ in General English classes the above-mentioned universities and then they were asked to check the topics they were interested in. Then a Pareto chart was utilized to calculate the frequency and the percentage of students’ interest in each of the categories of topics (see figure 1). As figure 1 shows Family & Housing, Free time activities, Education norms and values are the three topics students are most interested in. The supernatural, Crime, Media (fame, celebrities, cinema, popular music) were the three topics students were least interested in. The rest of the topics fall in between.

**Figure 1: Pareto Chart for the Frequency, percentage of Students’ Interest in Categories of Topics**

The second research question investigated what types of topics have been made use of the most for reading comprehension texts in General English textbooks. To do this, the researcher made use of the same table used in the previous section. The researcher, then, evaluated the textbooks introduced for General English courses in order to determine the topics most presented in the textbooks in question. Then a Pareto chart was utilized to calculate the frequency and the percentage of occurrence of each of the categories of topics (see figure 2). According to figure 2, Media (fame, celebrities, cinema, popular music), Science and technology, Nature: animals, plants, ecology were the three most frequently occurring topics in reading comprehension texts in General English textbooks. Family & Housing, Languages and cultures, Education, norms and values were the three least occurring topics in reading comprehension texts in General English textbooks. By comparing figures 1 and 2, one can see that these two figures are almost opposite; in other words, categories of topics in which students are most interested in (see figure 1) are
those least presented in reading comprehension texts in General English textbooks. As an example, Family & Housing which was the topic in which students were most interested in (see figure 1), was the least frequently topic which occurred in reading comprehension texts in General English textbooks (see figure).

**Figure 2: Pareto Chart for the Frequency, percentage of Categories of Topics in General English Textbooks**

![Pareto Chart of TOPIC](image)

The third research question posed in the present study investigates whether or not students’ interest in the topics of reading comprehension texts has been taken into consideration when introducing or compiling textbooks for General English Courses. In order to answer this research question, Linear Regression test was run. It was revealed that there is nearly perfect negative correlation between the type of topics students were mostly interested in and the frequency of the same topics in reading comprehension texts in General English textbooks (see figure 3). According to figure 3, the higher the topic frequency in reading comprehension texts in General English textbooks, the lower students’ interest in them. In order to capture this fully, another linear regression was drawn between the types of topics students were least interested in and the frequency of the same topics in reading comprehension texts in General English textbooks (see figure 4). It was found out there is a nearly perfect positive correlation between the type of topics students were least interested in and the frequency of the same topics in reading comprehension texts in General English textbooks (see figure 4). In other words, the
lower the topic frequency in reading comprehension texts in General English textbooks, the higher students’ interest in them.

**Figure 3:** Linear Regression for Topic Frequency and Students’ Interest

![Graph showing linear regression for topic frequency and students’ interest](image)

**Figure 4:** Linear Regression for Topic Frequency and Students’ Disinterest

![Graph showing linear regression for topic frequency and students’ disinterest](image)

The results of this study may be of benefit to EFL/ESL teachers, teacher trainers, and syllabus designers, as well as to the students. The findings may encourage teachers who select General English textbooks haphazardly to care a bit more for students’ interest in the topics of reading passages. The results are especially of value to teachers in Iran where the present study was conducted and where there was an attempt to work against students’ interest to do a need analysis before the commencement of the semester and select an appropriate textbook accordingly.

The findings of this study are also useful for teacher trainers in that they learn to take students’ interest into consideration by introducing textbooks in which the authors have taken...
students’ interest into account through selecting topics which are most interesting compared to others.

Syllabus designers and textbook writers will also benefit from the results of this study to incorporate in their EFL/ESL materials textbooks in which there has been given care for students’ interest and affinity in the topics of reading passages.

Another advantage to the present study is that it encourages students to become aware of the role of interest in efl/esl contexts and to take a critical view towards the books either selected by teachers for a particular course or compiled by authors recommended for the same purpose. It also helps students to see whether they are interested in the topics of reading passages as a factor for purchasing or not purchasing a particular textbook for self-study.

The present study showed that students’ interest was not only not taken into consideration in introducing or compiling textbooks for General English course books but also there was an attempt to work against that, it cannot be claimed that findings of this research are generalizable to similar cases. As Seller and Chummy (1989) believe, “the nature of research is such that the more answers are obtained, the more questions arise. Curiosity in second language acquisition, as in other disciplines, leads researchers to more problems, more questions, and more areas of research”. The present study is no exception.

With regard to the present study, the following areas may be worthy of further investigation:

1. The present study dealt with EFL classes; other classes such as ESL and ESP can be examined using the same procedures. This study can be replicated by a large number of classes at different universities so that the result of the study will be generalizable to a larger population.

2. This study dealt with investigating the degree of correspondence between topics of reading passages in General English Course Books and Students’ Interest in them in a university level, another study using the same procedures can be conducted in high schools.

3. A comparison between the roles of interest in first language acquisition with that in second language acquisition can be another topic for further research.

4. In this study only three universities were investigated; more universities with more classes can be studied using the same procedures.

5. Replicating the present study with other complementary instruments such as interview
with teachers, students and material designers calls for further study.

In brief, it should be noted that many questions concerning the role of interest in efl/esl reading comprehension are still unanswered and empirical research is required to shed light on those problematic areas.

5. Conclusion
The results obtained from the three research questions addressed in this study all point out to the fact that though interest has long played an undisputable role in different aspects of language learning, one such aspect being Foreign Language Reading Comprehension and exposing students to topics which interest them the most is of great significance, in all of the universities under study, students’ interest was not only was not taken into consideration in introducing or compiling textbooks for General English course books but also there was an attempt to work against that. The implication is for teachers and efl/esl material designers and developers to care much more for students’ interest in the topics of reading passages both in compiling and introducing textbooks for General English courses, etc. As a concluding note, it can be stated that although it was revealed that students’ interests in the topics of reading comprehension texts in general English textbooks were related to each other negatively, any generalization based on the results of the present study should be made cautiously.

References


### Appendix 1: Questionnaire

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Title

The Impact of Langston Hughes’ Poetry on Toni Morrison’s The Bluest Eye: An Afro-American Critical Reading

Authors

Hassan Shahabi (Ph.D.)
Islamic Azad University, Kerman Branch, Iran

Ali Asghar Emami Pour (M.A.)
Islamic Azad University, Karaj Branch, Iran

Biodata

Hassan Shahabi is an assistant professor and the research vice chancellor in Islamic Azad University, Kerman Branch, Iran. He has published five books and three articles in different areas. His interests are literary criticism, drama and story. This article has not been published elsewhere.

Ali Asghar Emami Pour is an M.A. graduate of English literature. His research interests include story, poetry and literary criticism.

Abstract

Establishing the framework of the discussion based on Henry Louis Gates’ The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism (1988), in which he elaborated on the unorthodox tendency among the black writers to read, repeat, imitate, and revise each other’s texts, the present article aims at analyzing the first novel of Toni Morrison (1931- ), The Bluest Eye (1970), so as to highlight the instances in her work in which the readers can see her Signifying on Langston Hughes (1902-67), as an earlier Afro-American poet. To fulfill such an aim, a very concise characterization of the blues and jazz music, which are the built-in features of Hughes poetry, is given in order to pave the way for the article to make some intellectual connections between Morrison and Hughes. The study reveals that Hughes, as one of the significant voices of Harlem Renaissance, has inspired Morrison as a later black writer especially through his poetry. The recurrence of such themes as the unfair treatment the blacks are subject to, longing for freedom, an urge for unity between the blacks, the importance of the blacks all through the history,
and the struggle to make one’s dreams come true, all in all, are discernible in the novel of Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*. In other words, considering Gates’ *The Signifying Monkey*, the paper concludes that Morrison was Signifying on Hughes, as one of the pivotal poets of the black history, when she penned her novel.

**Keywords:** Signifying, the blues, jazz, Harlem Renaissance.

1. Introduction

After World War I, New York, especially Harlem saw a huge migration of Afro-Americans from the South. Artists, Singers, dancers, writers and poets, all in all, migrated to this semi-Byzantium district to voice themselves and celebrate their rich African culture. Langston Hughes (1902-67), a man of all literary genres best known for his poems, was one of the leading figures of this upheaval known as “Harlem Renaissance” which happened in the 1920s, and whose great influence had a lot to do with inspiring other black writers particularly Toni Morrison (1931- ). He “continued to support and influence the careers of many black writers until his death in 1967” (Andrews, 1997, p. 341). Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (1988) in *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* elaborated on what once the editors of *The Negro Caravan* – Sterling A. Brown, Arthur P. Davis, and Ulysses Lee – as early as 1941 noted: “Negro writers [tend] to be influenced by other Negroes more than should ordinarily be expected” (as cited in Gates, p. xxii); “black writers,” they maintained, “read, repeated, imitated, and revised each other’s texts to a remarkable extent” (p. xxii). The jazz and blues techniques used in Hughes’ poetry along with the oral and improvisatory traditions of the black culture, all in all, influenced the works of later Afro-American writers particularly those of Morrison’s.

2. Method

*The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the winner of the 1989 American Book Award in criticism, establishes the theoretical framework of this study. Myers has highlighted one of the merits of *The Signifying Monkey* by asserting that “at a moment when nearly every university in the country seems to be rushing to hire specialists and arrange courses in Afro-American literature, the book is perhaps the best summary of an influential movement in current literary thought” (1990, p. 61).
In his lecture, Paul Fry has traced the Afro-American literary production to the eighteenth century when slave narratives owed their debut. He, also, introduced Phillis Wheatley (1753-84) as the first really rather important poet in the tradition. He identified Gates’ “Writing, ‘race,’ and the Difference It Makes” as the earliest work of Afro-American criticism (class lecture, Spring 2009). One year before the publication of this essay, however, Michael Cook (1934-90) in Afro-American Literature in the Twentieth Century: The Achievement of Intimacy (1984) argued that the history of Afro-American literature passes through four stages: “self-veiling” in which, more often than not, black writers attempt to follow a white model. The second phase, which Cooke calls “solitude,” involves following the white models along with “self-definition.” “Kinship” comes the third in which the Afro-Americans “identify themselves as a community, not as individuals struggling to be free but rather as a community.” It can be considered, to cite Fry, “the dialect and a way of narrating and poetizing, which involves a self-conscious insistence on verbal and linguistic difference,” as some realizations of this phase. Langston Hughes is an exemplary figure of this phase. The last phase is “intimacy” which is “the freedom to expropriate any and all models . . . that come ready to hand.” Ellison's Invisible Man is of such a case. The last phase is, in fact, “a finally achieved merger of traditions . . . such that one no longer has to write as a spokesperson”; “the utopian vision of no matter who I am, I have access to absolutely any forms and themes I care to work with” (class lecture, Spring 2009). However, To Fry, the Afro-American writers have not reached “intimacy” yet, for self-definition is still an issue.

In other words, there is still a tendency working deep down in the unconscious of the black writers which every now and then would bubble up and give way to “self-definition.” Even among the modern black writers, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker for example, the readers can trace such themes as slavery and racial discrimination. That the modern black writers still have a covetous attachment to the themes once explored by their ancestors has a lot to do with the notion of “Signifying” the full account of which is given in the following section.

To consider Signifying as the focal point in the article, we should investigate its characteristics from different angles: Mezz Mezzrow, a well-known jazz musician, has defined it as “hint, to put on an act, boast, [and] make a gesture” (as cited in Gates, p. 69). The novelist Zora Neale Hurston, on the other hand, has defined it as “a contest in ‘hyperbole’ carried on for no other reason” (as cited in Gates, p. 201). In these conceptions, Myers (1990) has argued that “signifying sounds not too different from the traditional category of rhetoric known as
‘epideictic,’ a term used for a display piece, a speech the sole purpose of which is to put the orator’s gifts on display, and not with any practical intention” (p. 62).

Gates, however, has traced Signifying to an entire series of oral narrative poems about the “signifying monkey” in the black tradition. In its general outline, although everyone knows who the real king of the jungle is, i.e. the elephant, the lion keeps claiming to be the king. The monkey, frustrated with the lion’s bragging, insults the lion, his mother as well as his grandmother, publicly. When the lion takes offense at the monkey, however, the monkey shrugs off his insult by claiming that he is merely repeating what the elephant has been saying. The roaring lion heads to challenge the elephant who defeats him mercilessly. The monkey, finally, either gets away with his trickery or not (there are differing versions), but is successful at Signifying. Having studied many versions of the “toasts” of the Signifying Monkey, Gates came to admit that most of them commence with the following lines:

Deep down in the jungle so they say
There's a signifying monkey down the way
There hadn't been no disturbin' in the jungle for quite a bit,
For up jumped the monkey in the tree one day and laughed
"I guess I'll start some shit."

Endings, too, tend to be as follows:

"Monkey" said the Lion,
Beat to his unbooted knees,
"You and your signifying children
Better stay up in the trees."
Which is why today
Monkey does his signifying
_A-way-up_ out of the way. (55)

Throughout his entire book, Gates tends to write _signifying_ with an upper case _s_, and bracket the final _g_ (“Signifyin (g)”) so as to give a black American scent to the word, for it is a common practice among the black people to drop the final _g_ in speaking. “The absent _g_ is a figure for the Signifyin(g) black difference” whereby signification is rubbed off all its sign = _signified/signifier_ equation; through this “(re)naming ritual, which apparently took place anonymously and unrecorded in antebellum America, some black genius or a community of witty and sensitive
speakers emptied the signifier ‘signification’ of its received concepts and filled this empty
signifier with their own concepts” (p. 46). Therefore, Gates challenges the notion of
“signification” as a denotation of what a term conveys in standard English, and suggests the
black homonym “Signification” as “a concept that stands for the rhetorical structures of the black
vernacular, the trope of tropes that is Signifyin(g)” whose application “engage[s us] in certain
rhetorical games” (p. 48). Thus Signifyin(g) is an umbrella trope which can include metaphor,
metonymy, synecdoche, hyperbole, litotes, and metalepsis (p. 52).

Borrowing his idea from the editors of The Negro Caravan for whom the “Negro writers
tend] to be influenced by other Negroes more than should ordinarily be expected” (as cited in
Gates, p. xxii), Gates affirmed that “black writers read, repeated, imitated, and revised each
other’s texts to a remarkable extent” (xxii). In fact, black writers, like critics of black literature,
learn to write by reading literature, especially the canonical texts of the Western tradition.
Consequently, the black texts resemble other, Western texts; however, “the black formal
repetition always repeats with a difference, a black difference that manifests itself in specific
language use” (p. xxii). Through this rhetorical strategy, “later writers can be seen to have
‘signified upon’ earlier writers—to have imitated them, but with a reversal of their strategy”
(Myers, 1990, p. 61).

Revision is one of the fundamental aspects of Signifying whose frequent application by
different black writers has misled some philosophers to degrade black writers as mere parrots; to
cite John H. Smythe, “if there is any fault with us it is that we are always aping somebody else”
(as cited in Gates, p. 114); “As early as the mid-eighteenth century,” Gates asserted, “David
Hume (and later Immanuel Kant and Thomas Jefferson, among scores of other commentators)
argued that black authors were not original in their writings. They were ‘imitative’.” Hume
maintained, “‘tis likely he [the Cambridge educated Francis Williams] is admired for very
slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly” (as cited in Gates, p.
113). It was the very metaphor of the “black parrot” which paved the way for the nineteenth
century notion of the “mockingbird poets”; as Gates declared, “black poets generally thought to
lack originality but who excelled, rather, at mimicry, at what was called mindless imitation,
repetition without sufficient revision” (p. 113). This very idea is probably the reason because of
which some black people “claim for themselves no black literary antecedents whatsoever, or else
claim for themselves an anonymity of origins” (p. 114).
Zora Neale Hurston, however, challenges the notion of Hume and his company by equating originality with “masterful revision”; just as we “cannot claim first source even for Shakespeare,” so is the case for every artist who can do nothing but to “re-interpret.” “Instead, borrowings, echoes, and revisions characterize modern art of all forms, and in this ‘new art’ is to be found the truly original” (as cited in Gates, p. 118). In other words, she deems “mimicry as the most fundamental aspect of great art . . . which is an art in itself”; Negroes, she concludes, mimic “for the love of it” (as cited in Gates, p. 118).

3. The Description of the Blues and Jazz

Since jazz and blues can be featured in the poems of Hughes, both in form and content, it is inevitable to provide a very brief description of these musical genres.

3.1. The Blues

Steven C. Tracy (2004) in *The Blues Novel* has noted that the blues as a musical genre owed its debut to the songs of American frequently illiterate singers in the late nineteenth century. These “traditionally pitchy oral lyric works” use “a variety of loosely fixed structures into which are poured the subject matter of an individual experience that reflects communal interests” (as cited in Graham, p. 122). When it comes to the emotional facet of the genre, just as its name denotes, the blues, more often than not, is associated with sadness; to cite Tracy, “a sadness crucially related to African American experiences in slavery and the Jim Crow era” (p. 123). The blues performance, however, may not convey sadness but is “a creative celebration of not only the overcoming of hardship but of the nature of human existence in an imperfect world”; in fact, when a blues singer sings, “when you see me laughin, I’m laughin to keep from cryin [sic]” (p. 123). In other words, to cite Tracy, the blues philosophy is nothing but the “endurance in the face of odds, hope in the face of adversity” (p. 123). He mentioned loneliness, frustration, isolation, sexual desire, the personal relationship between men and women, and such common emotions as the traditional subject matters of the blues which have found their way into novels. “Frequently frank, creative, signifying, and poetic” (p. 131) are the characteristics he attributed to the language of the blues novel.

3.2. Jazz

Referring to Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, and Lester Yong – just to name a few jazz players who once played the blues – Tracy asserted that “many of jazz’s most important performers have
been talented blues players” (as cited in Graham, p. 127). “When writers utilize jazz in their works,” therefore, “they are often by extension referencing the blues tradition as well” (p. 127). The underline difference, however, is that jazz performers “champion the spirit of improvisation” which is a “quest” for “spontaneity, immediacy, and ultimately, freedom” (p. 127). Labeling the blues as “more ‘down home’ – earthy, direct, lower-class, [and] rural-oriented,” he contrasted it with jazz whose “improvisatory flights, often becomes a symbol for breaking the mental and physical bonds of the slave mentality”; the former stands for “the wisdom of the ancestors made manifest in the contemporary world,” while the latter resides in “a more intellectually probing journey in mind” (p. 127).

4. Discussion

Considering Hughes as a former Afro-American writer, this section aims at applying Gates’ notion of Signifying to The Bluest Eye so as to highlight the instances in the novel where one can see Morrison Signifying on Hughes poetry. The oral and improvisatory qualities of the Afro-American culture, on the other hand, whose significant influence on the blues and jazz is indisputable, are also going to be dealt with in the discussion.

“Quiet as it’s kept, there were no marigolds in the fall 1941” (1994, p. 5). Thus begins the prelude to the first chapter of The Bluest Eye; “our seeds were not the only ones that did not sprout;” the narrator continues, “nobody’s did.” Through these very beginning sentences, or rather whispers, the reader comes to perceive that the speaker is going to give away a secret, to unfold an enigma, and to pour out her heart to the reader. Morrison’s rather meticulous choice of the phrase, “quiet as it's kept,” leads the reader to acknowledge that the secret is not an ordinary one; to cite Agnes Suranyi (2007), this “often overheard” phrase in “women’s intimate gossip . . . suggests that it is a story to be told and withheld at the same time, a story of incest, of blame, of loss” (as cited in Tally, p. 14).

4.1. The Significance of the Title

The novel calls into attention the sheer destruction of the white gaze and racial discrimination from its very title where, according to Suranyi, the singular noun – *eye* – which “may refer to the damaging white gaze” does not allow the attachment of any plural “s” as far as it signifies the black people so as to highlight “an epitome of beauty according to mainstream society” wherein beauty talks (p. 11). On the other hand, should we not take the title for granted, a layer of irony

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strikes our mind particularly by reminding us the notion of Gates toward Signifying: Borrowing the phrase “[the rejection of] a whole articulation of relevant context” from Jacques Lacan, by which he meant the deletion, ignorance and censorship of all the associations which a signifier carries from other contexts, Gates opposed Lacan’s idea by asserting that “everything that must be excluded for meaning to remain coherent and linear comes to bear in the process of Signifyin(g)” (p. 50). In this sense, then, the “eye” of the title can refer to the black gaze as well.

4.2. The Significance of Hughes’ Poetry to the Novel

As far as the title is concerned, “[t]he multivocality of the I/eye,” not only serves to “reinforce the text’s emphasis on the visual, evident in everything from the white men’s gaze,” but also can refer to “the saddest story of the demise of a child’s identity, integral to the blues sung by Claudia’s mother” (Tally, 2007, p. 11). In the latter sense, then, the novel is nothing but a blues song sung by Morrison, a narration in which Pecola’s quest for the bluest eyes ends in the bluest, most tragic, Pecola. “She is not seen by herself,” as Morrison puts it in the afterword to the novel, “until she hallucinates a self” (p. 215). Hughes, through employing tangible images in “Harlem [2]” depicts very well what happens if a dream is ever suspended, ever delayed: never ever is it going to leave the dreamer, but to be so deep-seated in the consciousness that explodes – precisely what happens to Pecola’s dream:

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode? (Rampersad, 1995, p. 426)

It is Pecola’s obsession with beholding through the blue eyes the shattering of which, at the end of the day, crazes her to flail “her arms like a bird in an eternal, grotesquely futile effort to fly.
Beating the air, a winged but grounded bird, intent on the blue void it could not reach – could not even see – but which filled the valleys of the mind” (Morrison, 1994, p. 204).

Tracing her mortal longing to be in possession of such eyes takes us to Mary Jane candies the picture of the blue-eyed girl on the wrappers of which haunts Pecola. This urge confronts her with the white store-keeper Mr. Yacobowski whose “impoverished gaze” becomes noticeable as Pecola asks him for some Mary Jane candies which have more to do with quenching her wish than satisfying her appetite: “To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane” (p. 50). The fact that Mr. Yacobowski “will sell her nine lovely orgasmic Mary Janes without ever touching her dirty little hand, [and] his refusal to even look at her confirms . . . the insignificance and invisibility of a little black girl for the white gaze” (p. 12):

The gray head of Mr. Yacobowski looms up over the counter. He urges his eyes out of his thoughts to encounter her. Blue eyes. Blear-dropped. Slowly, like Indian summer moving imperceptibly toward fall, he looks toward her. Somewhere between retina and object, between vision and view, his eyes draw back, hesitate, and hover. At some fixed point in time and space he senses that he need not waste the effort of a glance. He does not see her, because for him there is nothing to see. How can a fifty-two-year-old white immigrant storekeeper with the taste of potatoes and beer in his mouth, his mind honed on the doe-eyed Virgin Mary, his sensibilities blunted by a permanent awareness of loss, see a little black girl? Nothing in his life even suggested that the feat was possible, not to say desirable or necessary. (p. 48)

Mr. Yacobowski’s inability to “see” Pecola, “points to both the hegemony and the weakened state of the male White gaze. It is both debilitating and debilitated” (Tally, p. 154); not only does it make Pecola weak, marginalized and othered, but also it is already weak in itself, for it follows an imperfect ideology wherein just beauty talks.

“Yeah?”

She looks up at him and sees the vacuum where curiosity ought to lodge. And something more. The total absence of human recognition – the glazed separateness. She does not know what keeps his glance suspended. Perhaps because he is grown, or a man, and she a little girl. But she has seen interest, disgust, even anger in grown male eyes. Yet this vacuum is not new to her. It has an edge; somewhere in the bottom lid is the distaste.
She has seen it lurking in the eyes of all white people. So. The distaste must be for her, her blackness. (Morrison, pp. 48-49)

The notion of ignoring the black has been manifested in much of Hughes’ poetry as well; it is discernible that Morrison was Signifying on Hughes’ poetry, especially his “Blind” while describing Yacobowski’s attitude toward Pecola:

I am blind.
I cannot see.
Color is no bar to me.
I know neither
Black nor white.
I walk in night.
Yet it seems I see mankind
More tortured than the blind.
Can it be that those who know
Sight are often doomed to woe?
Or is it that, seeing,
They never see
With the infinite eyes
Of one like me? (Rampersad, p. 277)

Thus, in Hughes’ idea, the prejudiced white gaze cannot appreciate the black race, for their eyes are finite to feast on the physical beauty which deprives their appreciation of the personal characteristics which are by far more significant. Morrison restates the same idea by indicating us how the prejudiced Mr. Yacobowski fails to see Pecola.

As Agnes Suranyi (2007) proclaimed the novel itself is signifying on a “film adaption of Fannie Hurst’s novel *Imitation of Life* (1933)” (as cited in Tally, p. 13); as Pauline herself confesses, “them pictures gave me a lot of pleasure, but it made coming home hard, and looking at Cholly hard” (Morrison, p. 123). Suranyi suggested that the very name Pecola itself has been derived from Peola, “the mulatta who hates her black mother in the movie *Imitation of Life*” just as her mouthpiece in *The Bluest Eye* does (as cited in Tally, p. 13).

“Pauline’s alienation leads her to go to the movies, where she learns to value the dominant culture’s narrative of physical beauty” (Heinert, 2009, p. 21). Unlike Claudia’s mother
who would allot some quality time to her kids through singing thus transmitting the folklore to them orally, Pauline is so obsessed with the white culture that cannot help but appreciate it. In the meantime, as the novel goes on, she finds “a permanent job in the home of a well-to-do family” where she can brush “the yellow hair, enjoying the roll and slip of it between her fingers. . . with no tangled black puffs of rough wool to comb” (Morrison, 1994, p. 127). In fact, the white household provides her with whatever she lacks: beauty, order, cleanliness, praise, luxury, and even a nickname. Her sheer obsession with serving the white family prevents her from doing her motherly and spousal duties. “More and more she neglected her house, her children, her man—they were like the afterthoughts one has just before sleep, the early-morning and late-evening edges of her day, the dark edges that made the daily life with the Fishers lighter, more delicate, more lovely” (p. 127). Thus, Pecola and her sister are degraded not only by the white, but also by their very own mother who fails to convey any motherly passion – whatsoever. In fact, she is so preoccupied with the admiration of the white race that the white girl whom she looks after dares call her by her nickname, “Polly” (p. 108), whereas the poor Pecola has to call her mother as Mrs. Breedlove. The unfair treatment Pecola is subject to at her own house can remind us of a poem by Hughes entitled “Empty House”:

It was in the empty house
That I came to dwell
And in the empty house
I found an empty hell.
Why is it that an empty house,
Untouched by human strife,
Can hold more woe
Than the wide world holds,

More pain than a cutting knife? (Rampersad, p. 51)

Yet Pecola is not the sole character who never had the chance to sense the connotation “home” deserves. While her daughter is busy wrestling with “a fear of growing up, fear of other people, fear of life,” Pauline “beats” into her son, Sam, “a loud desire to run away” (Morrison, p. 128). Pecola and Sam, should we define them according to the novel terminology, have been put “outdoors”: for as the narrator distinguishes between being put out and being put outdoors: “If you are put out, you go somewhere else; if you are outdoors, there is no place to go” (p. 17); in
this sense, then, the novel, as Suranyi asserted, is “centered upon the home and the danger of ‘being outdoors’” (as cited in Tally, p. 14). Therefore, even the notion of a welcoming home where is the last resort to stick to from a racist society which casts an accusing eye over them, if not ignoring them, fails Pecola and her brother as well. Hughes himself was looking for such a house “where the white shadows will not fall” in “House in the World”:

I'm looking for a house
In the world
Where the white shadows
Will not fall.

There is no such house,
Dark brothers,
No such house
At all. (Rampersad, p. 138)

Linden Peach (2000) elaborates on the irony that “Breedlove” bears by asking “why a father in the ironically named Breedlove family should impregnate his own daughter” (p. 36). Probably it was one of the woes Hughes is lamenting in the poem above. To Heinert, however, the “rape seems like another attempt for Cholly to re-experience his first sexual experience, to get back and fix the point when everything went wrong in his life” (p. 19); to reach the orgasm which was once halted by the whites. “Cholly loved her,” as Morrison puts it, “But his touch was fatal” (p. 206).

It seems that the notion of the American Dream which once assured the first immigrants to the New World – regardless of their sex, race and finance – a prosperous future to be achieved through perseverance fails Morrison: “This soil is bad for certain kinds of flowers. Certain seeds it will not nurture, certain fruit it will not bear” (p. 206). Hughes also was in search of such Mother Nature with an all-nurturing soil in “Freedom’s Plow”:

First in the heart is the dream.
Then the mind starts seeking a way.

Then the hand seeks other hands to help,
A community of hands to help–
Thus the dream becomes not one man’s dream alone,
But a community dream.

A long time ago,
An enslaved people heading toward freedom
Made up a song:

*Keep Your Hand On The Plow! Hold On!*

The plow plowed a new furrow
Across the field of history.
Into that furrow the freedom seed was dropped.
From that seed a tree grew, is growing, will ever grow.
That tree is for everybody,
For all America, for all the world.
May its branches spread and its shelter grow
Until all races and all peoples know its shade.

KEEP YOUR HAND ON THE PLOW!
HOLD ON! (Rampersad, pp. 263-68)

“In a high penetrating voice with a trace of a Kentucky accent, Lincoln began to speak”; thus Mel Maurer spoke on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the *Cleveland Civil War Roundtable* in 2006 to remind us of Abraham Lincoln’s 19 November 1863 Gettysburg Address:

Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. . . .

That these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

Little did Hughes know, however, that by Lincoln’s perishing, the government he had his word for, a government to advocate all peoples of America regardless of their race and ethnicity was doomed to perish as well; that the soil would not nurture certain black seeds. In Morrison’s world, consequently, no longer do we have a “keep your hand on the plow! Hold on [to the dreams of equality]”; the dream shatters for Morrison and her protagonist. Hughes as a mouthpiece of the blacks in “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” traces the footprints of the blacks
throughout some epoch-making moments in history: “I heard the singing of the Mississippi when Abe Lincoln went down to New Orleans, and I’ve seen its muddy bosom turn all golden in the sunset” (Rampersad, p. 23). This is not, however, the only poem in which he traces such pivotal moments in history; in “Prelude to Our Age,” he calls attention to the Negro’s “shadow” “across the history of our land”:

Across the chapters
Of recorded time
Shadows of so many hands
Have fallen,
Among them mine:
   Negro.

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Papers, stories, poems the whole world knows —
The ever growing history of man
Shadowed by my hand:
   Negro.

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My vote, my labor, lodges, clubs,
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All the way from a Jim Crow dining car
To the United States Supreme Court—
For the right to get a meal on a train.

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All the way from ghetto covenants
To the United States Supreme Court—
For the right to housing free from segregation.

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All this
A prelude to our age:
Today.
Although those of blacks’ were among the many hands whose devotion in building the New World is indisputable, those very black hands are not worth being noticed, even if for a while, by the white store-keeper, Mr. Yacobowski – just to cite one of the many discriminatory instances depicted in the novel.

4.3. Intra-instances of Signifying

Not only does the novel signify on the previous works by Afro-American writers – Hughes, to name one, but also there are some instances in which the younger characters in the novel signify on the older ones:

If my mother was in a singing mood, it wasn’t so bad. She would sing about hard times, bad times, and somebody-done-gone-and-left-me times. But her voice was so sweet and her singing-eyes so melty I found myself longing for those hard times, yearning to be grown without “a thin di-i-ime to my name.” I looked forward to the delicious time when “my man” would leave me, when I would “hate to see that evening sun go down...” ’cause then I would know “my man has left this town.” Misery colored by the greens and blues in my mother’s voice took all of the grief out of the words and left me with a conviction that pain was not only endurable, it was sweet. (Morrison, pp. 25-26)

In the preceding excerpt, Claudia longs to be like her mother; her mother’s mermaid-esque chant is probably the sole thing that mesmerizes Claudia to go for such a painful but at the same time sweet life.

4.4. The Healing Effect of Home and Music

Not all the novel projects a pessimistic view toward the blacks in the New World; in the following excerpt Claudia, as the foil character for Pecola, would rather “feel something on Christmas day” rather than longing for something to own:

“I want to sit on the low stool in Big Mama’s kitchen with my lap full of lilacs and listen to Big Papa play his violin for me alone.” The lowness of the stool made for my body, the security and warmth of Big Mama’s kitchen, the smell of the lilacs, the sound of the
music, and, since it would be good to have all of my senses engaged, the taste of a peach, perhaps, afterward. (p. 22)

4.5. The Significance of the Primer and Its Jazz-like Quality

Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary (2004) defines primer as “a small book for teaching children to read” (p. 986). The primer has been printed at the beginning of the novel as a whole, and later in the novel, the readers can see that it has been divided into many parts and each part has been printed at the beginning of some chapters of the novel. What follows is a part of the primer as it has been printed at the beginning of the novel:

Hereisthehouseitisgreenandwhiteithasareddooritisveryprettypooristhefamilymotherfatherand
dickandjaneliveinthatgreenandwhitehousetheyareveryhappyseejaneshehasareddressshewant
toplayhowwillplaywithjaneseethecatgoesmeowcomeandplaycometrumpetwithjaneandkitten
willnotplayseemothermotherisverynicemotherwillyouplaywithjaneandmotherlaughsmoth
her . . . (p. 4)

The primer, both in form and concept, plays a pivotal role in the novel. The extract is printed first with punctuation and space, then lacks any punctuation, whatsoever, and at last is devoid of any space whereby “all the letters run into each other.” Many researchers have tried to account for such a change from cosmos to chaos: that the very long primer has been divided into many parts and reprinted as an epigraph to some chapters of the novel for Peach (2000) has been considerably significant; the dismembering of the American Dick-Jane mythology in which “the essential features of their world – house, family cat, mother, father, dog and friend – are separated from each other” is very analogous to Claudia’s dismemberment of a white doll in a vain attempt “to discover the superiority of white culture” (p. 38):

I had only one desire: to dismember it. To see of what it was made, to discover the
dearness, to find the beauty, the desirability that had escaped me, but apparently only me.
. . . I fingered the face, wondering at the single-stroke eyebrows; picked at the pearly
teeth stuck like two piano keys between red bowline lips. Traced the turned-up nose,
poked the glassy blue eyeballs, twisted the yellow hair. I could not love it. But I could
examine it to see what it was that all the world said was lovable. (Morrison, pp. 20-21)

Although Morrison is challenging the superficiality of the white characters in the novel in the excerpt above, in a deeper level, however, she is criticizing the white ideology and culture which defines white as beauty and black as ugliness. On tracing the root of this ideology, Morrison
comes to acknowledge how vain and hollow it is – very much like the epiphany Claudia experiences after dismembering the white doll.

If we peruse the primer once again, however, a brand new notion strikes our mind: the primer itself is a piece of jazz music; just as a jazz musician improvises as he plays, so does Morrison, for she does not pay heed to the space between the letters or the words; she just juxtaposes the letters next to each other. Furthermore, should we take every letter for a black individual who has immigrated to Harlem, “the Mecca of black people in the 1920s” as Justine Tally puts it (as cited in Heinert, p. 63), to make their voice heard, we come to acknowledge the significance of these “black prints on the white page”; at the end of the day, the “black prints” become centered as a result of having the reader’s attention, while the “white page” becomes “ex-centric”; moreover, that “the order and apparent logic of the primer gives way to chaos,” Marilyn Mobley McKenzie argued, “foreshadow[s] Pecola Breedlove’s decent into madness after she endures incest, rape, pregnancy, and the illusion that blue eyes will make her beautiful” (as cited in Graham, p. 222).

5. Conclusion
The study was meant to make some intellectual connections between Morrison and Hughes. Through picking out some instances in the novel and comparing them with some poems of Hughes it is revealed that Morrison is repeating the same concerns as those of Hughes in her fiction. In other words, considering Gates’ *The Signifying Monkey*, we can conclude that Morrison was Signifying on Hughes when she penned her novel. The following section aims at highlighting the findings in more detail.

5. 1. Findings
The findings reveal that Hughes has influenced Morrison in both the form and the content of her novel – *The Bluest Eye*. When it comes to the form of the novel, the improvisatory aspect of the primer, which acts as the epigraph to the chapters of the novel, gives it a jazz-like quality – an urge on the part of Morrison to Signify on a musical genre established and practiced by her ancestors especially Hughes.

The recurrence of such themes as the unfair treatment the blacks are subject to, longing for freedom, an urge for unity between the blacks, and the struggle to make one’s dreams come
true, which were once concerns of Hughes, in Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, on the other hand, reveals that Morrison was Signifying on Hughes while she was penning her novel.

5. 2. Suggestions for Further Studies

As the thesis is coming to an end, I still deem it a work in progress, very much like jazz music. If I were to prolong the project, however, I would include other Afro-American writers, such as Alice Walker, whose novels follow the same concerns as those of Morrison’s.

The study elaborated on the ways by means of which Morrison Signified on Hughes’ poetry, and set him as her role model in writing; yet on whom Hughes himself was Signifying – W. E. B. DuBois, Phillis Wheatley, Zora Neale Hurston, … – remains an open question. In other words, not only can the researchers trace a forward-oriented chain of Signifying among the Afro-American writers by investigating how the modern writers are Signifying on the older ones, but also they can trace a backward-oriented chain of Signifying to identify who has been Signified on. The study will still become more alluring especially if we identify the pioneer, the first person in the tradition on whom other black writers have been Signifying directly or indirectly, in one way or another – which has been debatable hitherto.

References


Title
Cohesive Devices in Iranian Research Papers across Social Sciences and Medical Sciences: the Case of Conjunctives in Papers on Biomedicine and Applied Linguistics

Authors

Javad Gholami (Ph.D.)
Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Urmia University, Iran

Roghayeh Ilghami (M.A. student)
Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Urmia University, Iran & Research Center for Pharmaceutical Nanotechnology, Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, Iran

Hassan Molla Hossein (M.A. student)
Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Urmia University, Iran

Farzaneh Tahoori (M.A. student)
Department of English, Faculty of Humanities, Urmia University, Iran

Biodata

Javad Gholami is assistant professor in TEFL at Urmia University, Urmia, Iran. His research interests include critical discourse analysis & syllabus design, integration of focus on form with communicative language teaching & uptake, and English for academic purposes.

Roghayeh Ilghami is an M.A. student at Urmia University, Urmia, Iran. Her research interests include English for academic purposes, English for specific purposes, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and neurolinguistics.

Hassan Molla Hossein is an M.A. student at Urmia University, Urmia, Iran. His research interests include psycholinguistics, emotional intelligence, bilingualism, learning strategies and corpus linguistics.

Farzaneh Tahoori is an M.A. student at Urmia University, Urmia, Iran. Her research interests include psycholinguistics, bilingualism and multilingualism.

Abstract

Cohesion as a major component of language ability plays a significant role in connecting
Cohesion as a major component of language ability plays a significant role in connecting the sentences and paragraphs of texts together. It is the grammatical and lexical relationship within a text or sentence which holds a text together and gives it meaning. It is related to the broader concept of coherence. In this way, there are two main types of cohesion: grammatical cohesion which refers to the structural content, and lexical cohesion that refers to the language content of the piece. The purely linguistic elements which make a text coherent are included under the term cohesion.

Indeed, cohesive devices connect the linear sentences in a text together in order to make it coherent. There are two approaches to analyze cohesion in a text: first is the taxonomy of cohesive devices by Halliday and Hasan (1976) and the second is the lexical analysis by Hoey (1991) which stresses lexical cohesion. Conjunctions are one of the most important explicit
markers of coherence. According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), cohesive devices in ELT taxonomy of categories and subcategories are as: 1) grammatical cohesive devices including:

1. Reference: pronominal, demonstratives, comparatives
2. Substitution: nominal substitution, verbal substitution, clausal substitution
3. Ellipsis: nominal ellipsis, verbal ellipsis, clausal ellipsis
4. Conjunction: additives, adversatives, clausal, temporal, conditional

And 2) lexical cohesive devices including: repetition, collocation

The presence of cohesive devices constitutes “textness” (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). The “textness” of different texts can differ with the use of cohesive devices. Conjunctions consist of additives, adversatives, causals, conditionals, and temporal. These connective forms exhibit the implicit relationships between clauses. Additive is a semantic relationship in textness which is based on the notion of “and”, while adversative is a relation based on the notion of “contrary to expectations”. Causal is a relationship containing general and specific causal relations including those of result, purpose and reason. Temporal indicates a relation of sequence in time. According to them, additives can have four types – simple (e.g., and), complex emphatic (e.g., furthermore, in addition, moreover, additionally), appositive (e.g., that is, for instance, thus, for example) and comparative (e.g., likewise, conversely, similarly). Adversative can be divided into the adversative proper (e.g., however, although, though, but), the contrastive (e.g., in fact, on the other hand), the dismissive (e.g., in any case), and the corrective (e.g., on the contrary). Causal relation can be generally stated by therefore, consequently, so, hence, that of reason (on this account, for this reason), that of result (as a result, in consequence) and that of purpose (with this in mind, for this purpose), conditional (under the circumstances) and respective (with regard to this, in this respect). The different types of temporal are simple (before that, afterwards, earlier, previously, then), conclusive (at last, finally, in the end), sequential (first….then, first….next, secondly, first….second) and summary (in short, to sum up, briefly).

In order to gain more insights into the issues surrounding cohesive devices in Iranian context, the present study investigates the use of conjunctions as one category of grammatical cohesive devices in biomedical and applied linguistic papers published by Iranian authors in the years 2008-2011 in international journals. The use of these conjunctions in sentence-initial and non-sentence-initial positions is considered, too. It also investigates if there is any relationship between the use of conjunctions and the cohesion of papers.
2. Review of the related literature

Cohesion refers to the relations of meaning which exists within the text. When "interpretation" of one element in the written or spoken discourse is dependent on that of another, cohesion occurs (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). According to Halliday and Hasan (1976), text in linguistics is any written or spoken passage that forms a unified whole. Cohesion is expressed through both grammar and vocabulary. So there are two kinds of cohesion: lexical and grammatical. The conjunction as one categorization is on the borderline of two, mainly grammatical. There is a semantic relationship within a sentence or between sentences. As part of the text-forming component in the linguistic system, cohesion is utilized as a means by which the structurally unrelated elements are linked together through dependence of one element to the other for interpretation.

Application of cohesive devices has been studied from contrastive points of view. Vahiddastjerdi and Taghizadeh (2006) scrutinized their application in Persian texts and their translation to English in contrast. They considered dense use of discoursal elements in Saadi’s Gulistan. They followed the model of Halliday and Hasan (1976) in their study. The results of their study showed some differences, even among the very English versions. Halliday and Hasan (1976) proposed the concept of cohesion and its influence on reading and writing. Cohesion was once known as a predictor of textual coherence but this idea was later rejected by empirical studies and theoretical works in early 1980s (Carrell, 1982; Mosenthal and Tierney, 1984). A more conservative idea is that cohesive ties can contribute to textual coherence though they do not guarantee it. However, in pedagogical atmosphere there is a belief that cohesive devices are the major means to make writing clear.

Cohesion states the continuity that exists between one part of the text and another (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). According to Baker (1992), cohesion is the network of grammatical, lexical, and other relations which links various parts of the text together. These ties or relations almost organize and create a text for example by requiring the reader to interpret expressions and words by referring other words and/or expressions seen or heard. Grammatical cohesion including reference, ellipsis, substitution and conjunction in written English has been investigated in previous studies (e.g., Bennet-Kastor, 1986; Gutwinski, 1976; Stotsky, 1983).

Some researchers followed Halliday and Hasan’s (1979) taxonomy of cohesion to do some empirical studies investigating the use of cohesive devices in students’ writing and their
influence on writing quality and coherence (Witte and Faigley, 1981; Connor, 1984). The results mostly indicated that there was no significant relationship between the quality of cohesive devices used and the quality of writing.

Brown and Yule (1983) pointed out that any of formal markers does not stand in a simple one to one relationship with a particular cohesive relation: 'and’, for example, is used between sentences which indicate any of the four mentioned relationships. It does not mean that present relationships cannot be existed in the absence of formal markers, but it means that it is the underlying semantic relationship which actually has the cohesive power rather than the particular marker.

Wikborg (1990) found that Swedish students had cohesion problems related to misusing or misleading sentence connection, malfunctioning cohesive devices, and finally using too great a distance between the cohesive items in a cohesive chain. Finally all of these factors affected the coherence of the text.

The problematic use of cohesive devices in academic writing draws the attention of some researchers. Crewe (1990) investigated the problems of Hong Kong students and stated two problems and the probable causes of problems. First he mentioned the problem of misuse of cohesive devices in the writings of students. According to him, it might be due to textbook devices which gave students the idea of equivalence of a number of cohesive devices without paying attention to the possible difference among them. The other problem, overuse, seemed to indicate students’ difficulty in managing logical relations between ideas and in producing right ideas about the topic. The reason may lie in the fact that they lacked knowledge in this field or they tried to disguise their poor writing ability by overusing connectives.

Field and Yip (1992) found that on average, Hong Kong students used more connectors (cohesive devices) than Australian students. Also, Hong Kong students used connectors in sentence – initial position more often. Moreover, ’on the other hand’ was used a lot in their writings. The number of additives in their writings was more than that in Australian students’.

More recently, Milton (1999) in a study compared the use of cohesive devices by nonnative and native speakers of English. The texts consisted of examination papers of Hong Kong and UK students. The results showed differences in the cohesive devices used by two groups of students. Hong Kong students (L2 learners) used a narrow range of them and overused
some of them more significantly. The overused cohesive devices were almost the ones that they used sentence – initially.

Meisuo (2000), following the findings of previous studies, conducted a research investigating cohesive devices in the writings of Chinese undergraduate EFL students in two PRC universities. The sample size in his study was larger than those of other studies. Also his study enriched the knowledge of cohesion in the writing. Nevertheless his finding – that there was no statistically significant relationship between the frequency of cohesive devices used and the quality of writing – appeared to be hardly new. He did not explicitly use a criterion for counting and categorizing cohesive ties in the sample essays. He seemed to count cohesive ties in the essays and later categorized them according to Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) categories. He used a qualitative analysis in his study to investigate improper use of three types of cohesive ties (i.e. reference, conjunction and lexical cohesion in the students’ writings). Nevertheless his study did not find any relationship between the specific types of cohesive error and low – quality essays. It is important to mention that in any study, investigating the relationship between the number of cohesive devices and the quality of writing, counting them without paying attention to their proper use distorts the value of study. The reason lies in the fact that using these devices inappropriately makes the contextual meaning ambiguous or misleading to the readers; so improper use of them has a negative effect on writing quality.

In another study by Hinkel (2001), NS and NNS students’ use of sentence – level and logical – semantic conjunctions were investigated. Some English essays from Japanese, Korean, Indonesian, Arabic and English students were collected. The findings revealed that all of the four NNS groups used sentence transitions more frequently than the NS group. However, it became evident that they did not use those transitions properly and effectively. Altogether, these studies showed that Hong Kong students as well as students in Asian countries overused connectives. Compared with NS English writers, the NNS students used fewer categories of connectives. Moreover, NNS students used sentence – initial position for the connectives while NS English writers did not prefer that position.

Bolton, Nelson, and Hung (2003) examined the use of connectors in Hong Kong students’ writings. Bolton et al. (2003) took the subset of professional academic writing from the British Component of International Corpus of English (ICE – GB) as their benchmark. Then he compared some academic writing of British students (from ICE – GB) and essay/ examination
papers of undergraduate Hong Kong students with each other in relation to the benchmark. The findings indicated that although both the Hong Kong and British students’ writings showed overuse of connectors, the Hong Kong students’ writings showed an even higher degree of overuse and deviance from the academic norm. Although both groups used a narrower range of connectors than that used in professional writing, they used different connectors.

These studies indicate that cohesion plays an important role in any type of writing and that L1 and L2 learners of English both face difficulty in proper use of cohesive devices. This study intended to compare the use of conjunctions in sentence-initial and non-sentence initial position in two types of genres which seems that would expand the knowledge about the use of logical connectors in these special types of genres, as it was observed that most of studies were carried out on the compositions and little study was done on the written papers.

3. Method

Cohesive devices have been stated with different expressions such as discoursal elements, connectors, conjunctives, linking words, syntactic devices, and logical connectors in linguistics. They can be situated in different positions in sentences mostly sentence-initial position. These connectors have a key role in meaning construction. The present study intended to investigate the use of conjunctions in published articles. Two corpuses were selected for investigation. 19 original articles published in years 2008-2011 in the field of applied linguistics written by Iranian researchers submitted for publication in International journals indexed in Scopus Database and 19 original articles in biomedical fields with the same characteristics were selected for investigation of the use of conjunctions. Textanz and Word List Expert softwares were utilized for calculating the frequency of conjunctions. These softwares are the advanced letter and word frequency counters. It should be noted that the total number of words in Linguistic papers was 3 times of that in biomedical papers. Their use in sentence-initial position and non-sentence initial position was cared about, too.

3.1. Classification of cohesive devices

For this study, the taxonomy of Halliday and Hasan (1976) was adopted as the basis of investigation. According to them, sentence connectives (cohesive devices) in the form of words and phrases connect two ideas that have a particular relationship. These relationships are: causal, adversative (opposition or contrastive), sequential (time or temporal), conditional, and
additional. They have been classified to four groups: coordinating conjunctions, subordinating conjunctions, sentence connectors (transitions), and prepositions. In each category, the words possess different punctuation and grammar.

1. **Coordinating conjunctions:** are used between clauses and/or between any other equal structures. There is only one possible order in this classification and a comma is used before the conjunction. It is not advised the use of conjunctions in sentence-initial positions in academic writings.
   
   The formula: \( \text{SV, } \text{conj} \text{ SV} \)
   
   Example: He worked hard for the exam, therefore he passed it successfully.

2. **Subordinating conjunctions:** introduce adverb clauses coming at the beginning of dependent adverb clauses. The place of independent and dependent clauses can be reversed.
   
   The formula: \( \text{SV conj SV or Conj SV, SV} \)
   
   Example: After he came, we began our chores.  
   We began our chores after he came.

3. **Sentence connectors (transitions) (in second clause):** Join two sentences separated by a period or two clauses separated by a semi-colon. The transition may appear clause initial, clause final, or between the subject and verb of the second sentence.
   
   The formula: \( \text{SV, Conn, SV. - SV; conn, SV. - SV. S, conn, V. - SV; S, conn, V. - SV. SV, conn. - SV; SV, conn.} \)
   
   Example: We did not expect him to come. But, he came.

4. **Prepositions:** are followed by a noun or noun phrase in which either clause may appear first.
   
   The formula: \( \text{P + N} \)
   
   Example: He didn’t come to class due to his illness.
   
   The instances of connectors for every classification of four relationships have been provided in the following tables.
### Table 1: Instances of Reason and Purpose, Cause and Effect as Causal Connectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subordinating conjunctions</th>
<th>Coordinating conjunctions</th>
<th>Sentence connectors (transitions)</th>
<th>Prepositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>because</td>
<td>So</td>
<td>therefore</td>
<td>because of</td>
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<tr>
<td>as</td>
<td>for</td>
<td>consequently</td>
<td>due to</td>
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<tr>
<td>since</td>
<td></td>
<td>as a result</td>
<td>in order to</td>
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<tr>
<td>in as much as</td>
<td></td>
<td>hence</td>
<td>as a result</td>
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<tr>
<td>now that</td>
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<td>thus</td>
<td>in view of</td>
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<tr>
<td>as long as</td>
<td></td>
<td>with this in mind</td>
<td>on account of</td>
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<tr>
<td>such...that</td>
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<td>for this purpose</td>
<td>for</td>
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<td>so...that</td>
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<td>in order that/to</td>
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<td>in view of the fact that</td>
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<td>due to the fact that</td>
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### Table 2: Instances of Adversative (Opposition or Contrastive) Connectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subordinating conjunctions</th>
<th>Coordinating conjunctions</th>
<th>Sentence connectors (transitions)</th>
<th>Prepositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>even though</td>
<td>but...anyway</td>
<td>however</td>
<td>despite</td>
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<tr>
<td>although</td>
<td>but...still</td>
<td>nonetheless</td>
<td>in spite of</td>
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<tr>
<td>though</td>
<td>yet...still</td>
<td>nevertheless</td>
<td>in contrast to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in spite of the fact that</td>
<td>yet</td>
<td>on the other hand</td>
<td>instead of</td>
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<tr>
<td>while</td>
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<td>in contrast</td>
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<td>whereas</td>
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<td>though</td>
<td>unlike</td>
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<td>where</td>
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<td>instead</td>
<td>different from</td>
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<td>not as .. as</td>
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<td>in fact</td>
<td>regardless of</td>
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<td>-er/more/less...than</td>
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<td>even so</td>
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<td>despite the fact that</td>
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<td>admittedly</td>
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<td>of course</td>
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<td>on the contrary</td>
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</table>
Table 3: Instances of Sequential (Time or Temporal) Connectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subordinating conjunctions (adverb clauses)</th>
<th>Coordinating conjunctions (2 main clauses)</th>
<th>Sentence connectors (transitions) (in second sentence)</th>
<th>Prepositions (within 1 clause)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>until</td>
<td>and then</td>
<td>then</td>
<td>during</td>
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<td>after that</td>
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<td>following that</td>
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<td>before that</td>
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<td>afterwards</td>
<td>until</td>
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<td>since</td>
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<td>meanwhile</td>
<td>upon</td>
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<td>once</td>
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<td>beforehand</td>
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<td>whenever</td>
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<td>(at) first</td>
<td>within</td>
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<td>as soon as</td>
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<td>as long as</td>
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<td>by the time</td>
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<td>first of all</td>
<td>for</td>
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<td>as now that</td>
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<td>originally</td>
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<td>secondly</td>
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<td>in the first place</td>
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<td>Subordinating conjunctions</td>
<td>Coordinating conjunctions</td>
<td>Sentence connectors (transitions)</td>
<td>Prepositions</td>
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<td>or (else)</td>
<td>otherwise</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unless</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>even if</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providing (that)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provided (that)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in case</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whether or not</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>only if</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Instances of Conditional Connectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additional Subordinating conjunctions</th>
<th>Coordinating conjunctions</th>
<th>Sentence connectors (transitions)</th>
<th>Prepositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As...as the same ...as</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not only ... but (also)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neither ... nor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>both ... and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>either ... or</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: Instances of Additional Connectors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prepositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>besides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to such as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Out of the above-cited connectors, 26 were selected to examine their frequency in the research papers across two diverse disciplines. They were selected as though it seemed that they were more professional than the others and their use needed more expertise. Others were either very common or it seemed that they were used rarely in the papers. They have been provided in table 6.

Table 6: Instances of All Conjunction Types in This Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causal</th>
<th>Coordinating Conjunctions</th>
<th>Transitions</th>
<th>prepositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As long as</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consequently</td>
<td>Due to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In order to</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to the fact that</td>
<td></td>
<td>As a result</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adversative</td>
<td></td>
<td>However</td>
<td>Instead of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Although</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nonetheless</td>
<td>Unlike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whereas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Instead</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Through using the Textanz and Word List Expert softwares, the frequency of these 26 logical connecters in both types of articles was calculated. It is worth noting that titles, headings, tables, and figures were excluded from the calculation.

4. Results and discussion

This study investigated the use of conjunctions in two different genres: biomedical and applied linguistics papers. The frequency of 26 randomly selected conjunctions was calculated by "Textanz" and "Word List Expert" softwares. Whole texts in applied linguistics papers were 3 times of that in Biomedicine papers. So, in order to make the papers in two fields balanced and to make the study and the results more reliable, the frequency of biomedicine conjunctions in tables was multiplied in 3. The results are illustrated in table 7.

Table 7: Frequency of Conjunctions According to Their Types in Biomedicine and Applied Linguistics Research Papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row</th>
<th>Cohesive devices</th>
<th>Number of occurrence in 19 biomedical articles</th>
<th>Number of occurrence in sentence-initial position</th>
<th>Number of occurrence in non-sentence initial position</th>
<th>Number of occurrence in 19 linguistics articles</th>
<th>Number of occurrence in sentence-initial position</th>
<th>Number of occurrence in non-sentence initial position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Causal</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adversative</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Temporal</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Conditional</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Additional</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>317</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The chi square analysis was used to find out if the differences in the use of conjunctions between two types of articles (biomedicine and applied linguistics) were statistically significant. As shown in table 8, the analysis indicated statistically significant differences between the two types of articles in the use of conjunctions: $x^2 = 63.902$ (4, $p < .0001$).

Table 8: Chi-Square Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>63.902(a)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>67.406</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>1243</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.00.

The statistically significant results of study showed a direct relationship between the use of conjunctions and the paper writing in two fields. The percentage of conjunctions was also determined.

Table 9: Percentage of Conjunctions According to Their Types in Biomedicine and Applied Linguistics Research Papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Row</th>
<th>Cohesive devices</th>
<th>Occurrence in 19 biomedical articles</th>
<th>Occurrence in sentence-initial position</th>
<th>Occurrence in non-sentence initial position</th>
<th>Occurrence in 19 linguistics articles</th>
<th>Occurrence in sentence-initial position</th>
<th>Occurrence in non-sentence initial position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Causal</td>
<td>2.3671</td>
<td>0.507</td>
<td>1.8586</td>
<td>2.8468</td>
<td>0.9041</td>
<td>1.9381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adversative</td>
<td>3.1743</td>
<td>2.3864</td>
<td>0.7851</td>
<td>3.6215</td>
<td>2.2915</td>
<td>1.3212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Temporal</td>
<td>2.9308</td>
<td>0.2778</td>
<td>2.649</td>
<td>1.0516</td>
<td>0.2508</td>
<td>0.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Conditional</td>
<td>0.0725</td>
<td>0.0362</td>
<td>0.0362</td>
<td>0.1027</td>
<td>0.0207</td>
<td>0.082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>additional</td>
<td>1.8725</td>
<td>0.7401</td>
<td>1.1307</td>
<td>2.0448</td>
<td>0.7823</td>
<td>1.2573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.4172</td>
<td>3.9475</td>
<td>6.4596</td>
<td>9.6674</td>
<td>4.2494</td>
<td>5.3956</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 confirms that conjunctions as one category of cohesive devices were used more frequently by biomedical researchers than the researchers in applied linguistics (10.4172 vs. 9.6674). Also, both biomedical and ELT researchers tended to use them in non-sentence initial position rather than in sentence initial position (6.4596 vs. 3.9475 and 5.3956 vs. 4.2494). Nevertheless, the use of conjunctions in non-sentence initial position was more dominant in biomedical papers. This result didn't confirm the result of research which was done by Wu...
(2006) on another context. He examined in his study the use of 13 connectives on the written papers by professional writers and student corpus including master's theses by student writers. He showed that Taiwanese student writers used more connectives in their writings than the professional writers and they preferred the sentence-initial position for use. The most frequent conjunctions (cohesive devices) and their percentages for this study have been shown in table 10.

Table 10: Percentage of Most Frequently Used Conjunctions in Biomedicine and Applied Linguistics Research Papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ Major</th>
<th>Biomedical</th>
<th>Applied Linguistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most frequent connector during</td>
<td>2.318</td>
<td>however</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most frequent connector in sentence initial position</td>
<td>1.175</td>
<td>however</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most frequent connector in non-sentence initial position</td>
<td>2.037</td>
<td>like</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most frequent conjunction was "during" in biomedical articles and "however" in applied linguistics articles. Also maximally used connector in sentence initial position in both biomedical and applied linguistics articles was "however" and that in non-sentence initial position was "during" in biomedical articles and "like" in applied linguistics articles. It was also observed that the researchers were similar in their uses of conjunctions in both fields as for example they had not used the "as long as" or "afterwards" in their papers. It could be justified that researchers in both fields may were not completely familiar with accurate use of these connectors. From 26 conjunctions, just two of them were used distinctively by researchers, as "all in all" was used in applied linguistics papers and "likewise" was utilized in biomedical papers while not vice versa. It may be concluded that biomedical articles enjoy more cohesion than applied linguistics research articles as far as conjunctions are concerned. However, Vahid Dastjerdi and Hayati's (2011) study showed that there was not significant relationship between the use of cohesive devices and writing quality. They explained that this could be related to the overuse or even the misuse of cohesive devices. In comparison with assessing writings in the case of using cohesive devices such as this study, some researchers have worked on the error analysis of use of cohesive devices as did Hasan and Muhamad Sabir (2010). They found out that the major reason of incorrect use of cohesive devices can be related to the intralingual transfer, common learning strategies such as overgeneralization and simplification, faulty teaching material or techniques, and poor teaching. Their result also showed that students tend high using of lexical cohesive devices in order to achieve cohesion. It could be stated that
application of high number of cohesive devices in general and lexical items in particular can assist in writing more cohesive texts, however our study just worked on the use of conjunctions as one type.

The results of another study carried out by Akindele (2011) confirm our tentative results on the cohesion of text through the use of connectors. Akindele (2011) studied cohesive devices in two academic articles published in Nigeria. The analysis of the cohesive devices used in the articles revealed that a discourse or text can only be meaningful if various segments be put together to form a unified whole. Therefore, a text must be held together by some linguistic devices to be cohesive. So, the various grammatical and lexical cohesive devices relate to the discourse to provide cohesion and make a text function as a single unit.

Our study assessed the written papers submitted to the valid journals; however another study analyzed the impact of instruction of cohesive devices and also teacher written comments on the improvement of quality of expository compositions written by Thai postgraduate students. Tangkiengsirisin (2010) analyzed 60 pre-test and post-test essays written by both experimental and control group by Halliday and Hasan's (1976) taxonomy. His results showed a significant improvement in the cohesion of writings of the experimental group, predominantly referential, conjunctive and lexical cohesive ties. So, it could be stated that cohesion of a text can be improved by instruction of use of cohesive devices, although Tangkiengsirisin believes that even though cohesion is a useful linguistic element which contributes in the well-connected writing, it may not be sufficient as a means of measuring overall writing quality.

5. Conclusion

The results of this study are in line with the previous studies carried out in similar contexts. The researchers in both fields were found to be able to use the conjunctions not only in sentence-initial position but also in non-sentence initial positions. However, the findings revealed that biomedical articles had more instances of conjunctions as cohesive devices than did applied linguistics articles. One should bear in mind that other factors influencing the cohesion of a text such as grammatical or lexical cohesives were not investigated as part of this research. It may be considered that because of more familiarity of applied linguistics researchers with conjunctions, it was assumed that they would employ them more or better than the biomedical researchers, but this study proved that biomedical papers are probably more cohesive than applied linguistics
ones and their researchers are more skillful in using them in non-sentence initial positions. However, some other studies demonstrate that there is no significant relationship between the quality of writing and the use of cohesive devices. As, for example, Meisuo (2000) in his analysis of 107 expository compositions collected from Chinese undergraduates demonstrated that there was no significant relationship between the writing quality of essays and the number of used cohesive devices.

This study did not investigate the malfunction or well-function of conjunctions; so, its investigation is advised for other researchers working in this matter. In this study, only 26 conjunctions were selected and studied. Other researchers are recommended to analyze other cohesive devices including other conjunctions to get more accurate and reliable results.

References


Title

Iranian Foreign Language Learners’ Multiple Intelligences and Their Use of Oral Communication Strategies

Authors

Nasim Shangarffam (Ph.D.)
Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran, Iran

Akram Zand (M.A.)
Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran, Iran

Biodata

Nasim Shangarffam
Assistant Professor at Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran, Iran, where she teaches academic courses on TEFL and Translation. She has been teaching English since 1998 in the field of adult second language teaching. Her research interests are psychology, sociology, and testing.

Akram Zand
M.A. in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in 2009 from Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran and B.A. in English Literature in 2004. She has been teaching English at language institutes since 2004 at Elementary, Upper-Elementary and Advance levels.

Abstract

This study investigated the relation between Communicative Strategies (CS) with a special focus on three of the Multiple Intelligences (MI) namely linguistic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal intelligences or simply put, to discover whether those who were linguistically, intrapersonally, and interpersonally intelligent, would report more strategy use in communicative tasks while listening or speaking English. The participants were senior English language students majoring either in Literature or Translation at Islamic Azad University in Iran. Reliable questionnaires on MIDAS as Multiple Intelligences inventory and OCSI as the inventory for Communicative Strategies were administered to all students, 102 students' responses were studied. To analyze the data Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis were carried out. This study indicated that there is a significant correlation between students' reports on using oral communication strategies and linguistic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal intelligences they possessed. It
was also indicated that there were significant correlations between (a) Interpersonal Intelligence and OCSI's listening strategies; (b) linguistic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal intelligences and the OCSI speaking strategies but (c) statistically no relation between linguistic and intrapersonal intelligences. However, (d) the analysis of the total scores obtained from MIDAS and OCSI reported a significant \( r = .38 \) correlation. The interpersonal intelligence proved to be the best predictor of speaking communication strategies.

**Keywords**: Multiple Intelligences and Communication Strategies.

1. Introduction

Intelligence has always been a controversial issue among learning psychologists. There is a rich literature on intelligence and its relationship with education, learning and in particular language learning. Most of scholars in the field of second language learning believe that there is a close relationship between intelligence and second language learning. Brown (1994) contends that "success in educational situations and in life in general seems to be correlated with high IQ" (p. 100).

There is no single best way to introduce the subject of human intellect. The introduction becomes difficult when one is confronted with various treatments of the notion of intelligence and intellectual development, and thus notion plays a key role in contemporary psychology. The idea of a fixed intelligence has given way to a more flexible perception of gradual intellectual development dependent on external stimulation. We intuitively know that everyone is unique in her interpretation of inputs and her subsequent behavioral outputs. In 1983, Howard Gardner, the creator of the Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory, suggested that all individuals have personal intelligence profiles that consist of combinations of seven intelligences.

But how being intelligent in one of the MI profiles, will facilitate learners to establish an effective communication? There is also a simple problem: how do we manage to communicate when we have a limited command of language? The problem is most apparent for adults trying to speak in a second language which they have not perfectly mastered. It is most apparent in those cases because first, adults tend to make a great fuss about such limitations, and second, because the disparity between what the adult might have said in a native language and what they manage to say in a second language is so striking. Systematic study of this problem for (usually adult)
second language learners has been ongoing and comprises the sub-area of second language acquisition research that has become known as communicative strategies. For most people, the main goal of learning a foreign language is to be able to communicate. It is through communication that people send and receive messages effectively and negotiate meaning (Rubin and Thompson, 1994, p. 30). Nowadays, how to communicate effectively in foreign language learning becomes much more important than reading and writing. As a result, communication strategies have turned into a crucial topic for all foreign language learners and teachers.

Communication requires a degree of reaching beyond the self to understand what another person is feeling. In Brown’s (1994) words "to communicate effectively, you need to be able to understand the other person's affective and cognitive states; communication breaks down when false presuppositions or assumptions are made about other person's state. In order to make those assumptions correctly, we need to transcend our own ego boundaries so that we can send and receive message clearly "(p. 153).

Communicative language teaching builds on the understanding that language use is governed not only by phonological and grammatical rules, but also by sociolinguistic and discourse rules (Canale & Swain, 1980). In other words, natural language use is a complex, creative activity that takes different forms depending on a variety of factors, including the context in which the interaction occurs, the characteristics of the speaker or writer (for example, age, gender, social status, level of education, and geographic origin), the characteristics of the listener or reader, and the purpose of the interaction (Hymes, 1972). Furthermore, the study of communication strategies is important, as it looks at how learners are able to use the L2 in order to convey meaning. Accordingly, a class where there are students of different interests can be a context that may probably be important in the students' progress and their use of certain communication strategies.

With regard to the afore-mentioned points, this research was planned to investigate the existence of any significant relationship between listening and speaking communication strategies and three of the multiple intelligences, i.e. linguistic, intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences.

2. Review of the Related Literature
Proposing the MI concept, Gardner sought to broaden the perception of human potential beyond the confines of traditional IQ scores. Thus, he suggested educators view intelligence as the capacity for solving the problems and fashioning products in context-rich and naturalistic settings rather than place the traditional importance on the ability to produce a large quotient. The theory has encouraged educators to see children as equals regardless of a quotient produced from an intelligence exam. MI theory can be described not only as a philosophy or an attitude toward learning but also as possible techniques to be developed in the classroom (Hatmanto, 2004).

Thus, since MI theory has been considered as a technique for developing best training in the classroom and being acquainted with language learners' abilities in language learning process, the researchers attempted to screen the possible correlation between learners’ use of communication strategies and their marked tendency toward their underlying intelligence.

In order to fulfill the purpose of the study, the following questions were raised:
1. Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners’ multiple intelligences, namely linguistic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal, and their report of using aural communication strategies when facing problems in listening tasks?
2. Is there any significant relationship between EFL learners’ multiple intelligences, namely linguistic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal, and their report on using oral communication strategies when facing problems in speaking tasks?
3. Which of the multiple intelligences, namely linguistic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal, is the significant predictor of EFL learners’ oral communication strategies when facing problems in speaking tasks?
4. Which of the multiple intelligences, namely linguistic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal, is the significant predictor of EFL learners’ aural communication strategies when facing problems in listening tasks?

For better understanding of the study, certain terms were defined as follows:

*Multiple Intelligences*: Gardner (1983) defines multiple intelligences as "the ability to solve problems or to create products that are valued within one or more cultural settings" (p. x). He conceptualizes intelligences as beyond confines of the IQ score as being "biopsychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (1999: p. 34). For the purpose of this research
three of the Multiple Intelligences, namely Linguistic Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, and Intrapersonal Intelligence, out of nine intelligences were considered.

"Linguistic Intelligence involves sensitivity to written and spoken language, the ability to learn languages and to use language to accomplish certain goals" (Gardner, 1999: p. 41).

"Interpersonal Intelligence denotes a person capacity to understand the intentions, motivations, and desires of other people, and consequently to work efficiently with others" (Gardner, 1999: p. 43).

"Intrapersonal Intelligence involves the capacity to understand oneself, to have an effective working model of oneself including one’s own desires, fears, and capacity to use such information effectively in regulating one’s own life" (Gardner, 1999: p. 43).

In this study Multiple Intelligences were operationally defined as the score the subjects obtained on Shearer's MIDAS questionnaire.

**Communication Strategies:** "A systematic technique employed by a speaker to agree, to express his meaning when faced with some difficulties" (Corder, 1977: p. 103).

"A mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures are not shared" (Tarone, 1980: p. 423).

"Potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal" (Faerch and Kasper, 1983: p.36).


Bialystok (1990) states that "although different in detail, the above definitions cover on three features: Problematicity, consciousness, and intentionality" (p. 3).

In this research, communication strategies included the speaking strategies: social affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, negotiation for meaning strategies, accuracy-oriented strategies, message reduction and alteration strategies, nonverbal strategies, message abandonment strategies, and attempt to think in English strategies. The listening strategies consisted of negotiation for meaning strategies, fluency-maintaining strategies, scanning strategies, getting the gist strategies, nonverbal strategies, less active listener strategies, and word-oriented strategies. For the aim of this research, communication strategies were operationally defined as the score subjects obtained on the Oral Communication Strategies Inventory (OCSI) developed by Nakatani (2006).
3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants in this study were all junior undergraduate students majoring in English Language Translation and English Literature at Islamic Azad University, at Karaj and Islamic Azad University, at Central Tehran. The subjects were randomly selected. The total number of subjects who participated in the study was 120 but this number was reduced to 102 students, this subject reduction was due to blank questionnaires which were returned. Both male and female participants took part in the study and their age ranged from 20 to 30.

3.1. Instrumentation

To pursue the study, the following research instruments were used to measure the variables in this project:

1. Multiple Intelligences Development Assessment Scale (MIDAS)
2. Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OSCI)

MIDAS was developed over a period of six years by Shearer (1996) using a combination of rational and empirical methods of test construction using the MI theory as a basis to guide interpretation of empirical results. The questionnaire consists of 119 items in subsections of eight intelligences viz. Musical: skill in the performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns, Spatial: the potential to recognize and manipulate a wide space or more confined areas, Kinesthetic: the potential of using one’s whole body or parts of the body to solve problems, Linguistic: sensitivity to spoken and written language, the ability to learn languages, and to use language to accomplish certain goals, Logical-mathematical: a series of skills and abilities in calculations as well as logical reasoning and problem solving, Intrapersonal: the capacity to understand oneself, to have an effective working model of oneself and use that information in regulating one’s life, Interpersonal: person’s capacity to understand the intention, motivations and desires of other people consecutively, to work effectively with others, and Naturalist: the ability to classify and categorize many different types of plants and vegetation in one’s environment.

For this study, the researchers focused on three of the intelligences as linguistic (20 items), interpersonal (18 items), and intrapersonal (9 items) in order to narrow down the scope of the research and the fact that these intelligences were of more interest to the researcher in regard
to investigating the existence of any possible relationship they might have with communication strategies in a foreign language. Therefore the total number of the questions on the questionnaire used in this study was 47. The rating of the questionnaire of this study was done according to the suggestion of Shearer (2008) through several correspondences, employing a Likert scale. The item response values had to be scaled 1 for Never, 2 for Rarely, 3 for Sometimes, 4 for Often, and 5 for All the Times, Last but not least, The number 6 for I do not know which indicates missing value.

There has been little attention paid to examining accurately how learners use strategies when interacting with their communication peers in actual English as foreign language (EFL) classrooms. To this end, the researcher sought the assistance of the Japanese professor, Yasuo Nakatani, from Nakamura Gakuen University who has developed an inventory for this purpose. To improve the content validity of the analysis based on learners’ self-reports, Nakatani carried out the pilot study with the following two stages. First, he used an open-ended questionnaire to elicit a variety of strategy items. Then, based on this data, he used an initial exploratory factor analysis to select the most reliable items in the survey. For a final exploratory factor analysis, he used data from 400 participants, an appropriate number to develop a reliable survey instrument.

**OCSI** questionnaire consisted of 32 items for coping with speaking problems and 26 items for coping with listening problems during communication tasks. The 58 items of the OCSI questionnaire were developed into a Likert-type scale that asked students to report the frequency with which they used certain strategies in oral communication to compensate for the problems. Participants were expected to respond on the 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5.

### 3.3. Procedure

First the MIDAS questionnaire was piloted with 60 participants from the same population as the target one and the reliability of it was estimated using Cronbach’s Alpha and the consistency of 0.75 turned out to be significant; MIDAS was then administered to the 102 target participants to specify their level of intellectual development and specific skill areas.

As for the next phase of data collection the *Oral Communication Strategies Inventory*, OCSI was piloted with the same population as with the MIDAS questionnaire piloting phase and with an index of 0.96 it turned out to be reliable. OCSI included 32 items on the speaking strategies: *social affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, negotiation for meaning strategies, accuracy-oriented strategies, message reduction and alteration strategies, nonverbal...*
strategies, message abandonment strategies, and attempt to think in English strategies, and 26 items on listening strategies: negotiation for meaning strategies, fluency-maintaining strategies, scanning strategies, getting the gist strategies, nonverbal strategies, less active listener strategies, and word-oriented strategies. Afterwards the piloted OCSI was utilized to elicit the frequency with which the participants used certain strategies in their oral communication.

4. Results

Considering the design of this study which was ex post facto (correlational), the descriptive and inferential statistical analyses conducted are presented below.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of the Multiple Intelligences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic Intelligence</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>90.00</td>
<td>58.44</td>
<td>11.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal Intelligence</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>83.00</td>
<td>52.70</td>
<td>12.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal Intelligence</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td>27.30</td>
<td>6.63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the frequency analysis of the Measures of Central Tendency in table 1 presents, the highest mean score was obtained on the Linguistic Intelligence (58.44) and the lowest one on Intrapersonal Intelligence (27.30).

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of the Oral Communication Strategies Inventory (OCSI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OCSI Listening Strategies</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>15.91</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCSI Speaking Strategies</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>20.48</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Listening and Speaking Strategies mean scores turned out to be 15.91 and 20.48, respectively.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of the MIDAS and OCSI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MIDAS total</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td>218.00</td>
<td>138.45</td>
<td>26.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCSI total</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>116.00</td>
<td>239.00</td>
<td>195.67</td>
<td>23.86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparing the results of the OCSI listening strategies and the scores obtained from the linguistic, intrapersonal intelligences using Pearson correlation illustrated the fact that there was not any significant correlation between these scores while interpersonal intelligence had a

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
significant correlation with the OCSI listening strategies. Nevertheless, the scores obtained from the concerned intelligences had the significant correlation with OCSI speaking strategies. Regarding the relationship between the two variables of the study, the highest significant correlation was recorded between interpersonal intelligence and OCSI speaking strategies (r=45.3); on the contrary, interpersonal intelligence had the lowest (r=.139) index of correlation with listening strategies.

The analysis of the scores in the subcategories of MIDAS that is linguistic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences and the total MIDAS score demonstrated a significant correlation. Moreover, the scores on listening and speaking subcategories revealed a significant correlation with total OCSI scores. However, MIDAS total score was only significantly correlated with OCSI speaking strategies and the OCSI total score was in a significant correlation with linguistic and interpersonal intelligences. No significant correlations were recorded between OCSI total score and intrapersonal intelligence and also between MIDAS total score and OCSI listening strategies.

**Table 5**
Regression Analysis

<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)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78.644</td>
<td>5.228</td>
<td>.514</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.579</td>
<td>.097</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Excluded Variables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Beta In</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Correlation</th>
<th>Collinearity Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistics</td>
<td>.158*</td>
<td>1.369</td>
<td>.174</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>.545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>-.077*</td>
<td>-.718</td>
<td>.474</td>
<td>-.072</td>
<td>.643</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors in the Model: (constant), Interpersonal  
b. Dependent Variable: Speaking Strategies of OCSI  
Regression Analysis is significant at 0.05 level

The beta value and t value were both significant at level of 0.05 demonstrating that the interpersonal intelligence was considered as the best predictor of speaking communication strategies.
5. Conclusion

5.1. Findings
The answers to primary questions that were investigated in the study clarified that:

1. There is a significant positive relationship among Linguistic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal intelligences and speaking strategies. In other words, if a student was linguistically, interpersonally, and intrapersonally intelligent, he/she used more speaking strategies.
2. There is a positive relationship between Interpersonal intelligence and listening strategies.
3. There is not any significant correlation among Linguistic, Intrapersonal intelligences and listening strategies.
4. There is a positive significant relationship between the total scores obtained from MIDAS (consisting of Linguistic, Interpersonal, and Intrapersonal intelligences) and OCSI (including listening and speaking strategies).
5. There is a positive relationship among OCSI total score and Interpersonal and Linguistic intelligences. So, the more the student was interpersonally and linguistically intelligent, the more he/she used oral communication strategies.
6. There is not any significant correlation between OCSI total score and Intrapersonal intelligences.

The analysis also demonstrated no relation among listening strategies and linguistic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal intelligences.

Taking all these results into account, the first null hypothesis was rejected. Whereas, the second hypothesis could not be rejected. The third null hypothesis was safely rejected and the interpersonal intelligence proved to be the best predictor of speaking communication strategies and the last hypothesis could not be rejected.

5.2. Applications and Implications
It has been mentioned that teachers have to be aware of the diversity in their classroom. They should learn something about their students in order to invest efficiently in the teaching-learning process. So Gardner’s theory can be used as an initial step to investigate these diversities which exist in every classroom to find more about students’ strengths, and weaknesses related to the learning process (Currie, 2003). Furthermore, Pearson (2004) suggests that when multiple intelligences are applied in the classroom, any subject matter can be approached in a variety of
ways using eight distinct pathways; moreover teachers are able to expand on traditional modes of instructions, such as lecturing, by using visual art to illustrate geometric principles or using drama and dance to enhance reading comprehension. Likewise, Green and Tanner (2005) express that they have four reasons for accommodating MI theory into education. Firstly, learners are individuals who have a range of experiences with stronger or weaker intelligences. Being aware of these differences, teachers can individualize instruction. Secondly, an "MI-friendly" course might attract more learners. Thirdly, by using tasks relating to more intelligences we provide more variety in our courses which makes them attractive and memorable. Lastly, by presenting tasks that accommodate several intelligences, the teacher can ease the learning process.

Concerning the communication strategies, the especial features and distinctive constraints that characterize communication in a second language need to be given serious attention and require explicit treatment. Useful adoption of strategies for second language learners can build a framework to address related problems encountered during communication. Knowledge of application of appropriate strategies in the context of communication can help learners to guide their efforts to establish a successful and intelligible communication.

Various researches on L2 strategy use have investigated the relationship between the use of language learning strategies and other linguistic instructional variables. Oxford (1995) argues that strategies are important for two reasons, first for developing communicative competence and second, learners who have developed appropriate learning strategies have greater self confidence and learn more effectively. Owing to this importance of promoting learners language proficiency, there is a need for teachers to be aware of communication strategies which their students may employ to enhance learning and the relationship there may exist between those with multiple intelligences profile that each learner possesses so that teaching process is promoted per learners' needs and students become better language learners. In other words, to increase the use of appropriate communicative strategies and consequently decrease the communication gaps, it is worthy to know the relationship between the use of strategies and the tendency towards each of the multiple intelligences in language learners. Knowing the diversities in the classroom, and suitable application of both the Multiple Intelligences and the Communication Strategies, would serve the teachers to direct learners towards usage of the appropriate communication strategies that best suit their own tendencies.
Using a multiple intelligence approach to teaching can energize a classroom and help every learner achieve success; MI proponents say no matter the grade level or subject, Gardner's theory can have a profound impact on teachers and students, McKenzie (2002). The five non-traditional intelligences, spatial, musical, kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal, have generally been overlooked in education. However, if we can develop ways to teach and learn by engaging all intelligences, we will increase the possibilities for student success and create the opportunity to, in Margaret Mead's (1978) words, "weave a social fabric in which each diverse human gift will find a fitting place."

Many of us are interested in focus on the learner or student on acquiring a new skill. It is clarifying to have such a focus and, indeed, any efforts at educational reform are doomed to fail unless they concentrate on the properties and potentials of the individual learner. Ways of learning are as different as the colors of the rainbow. All people have different personalities, preferences and tastes. Teachers need to be aware of and value these differences. Through observation, teachers can learn what kind of learners their students are. Once they know what kind of learner their student is, they can then develop activities that make the most of their student's abilities.

The theory of multiple intelligences also has strong implications for examining potentials for those adults who have been left behind in their childhood (such as a love for art or drama) but now have the opportunity to develop through courses, hobbies, or other programs of self-development. Armstrong (1994) asserts that the theory of MI makes things a little bit simple for us. By chunking the broad range of human abilities into intelligences, we have a map for making sense out of the many ways in which learners learn, and a blueprint for ensuring their success in school and in life. Observing the extent of the learners’ intelligence profile and the salience of MI theory on teaching and learning second language teachers can exploit that relative useful information in the right place per individuals’ strengths and weaknesses. The theory also assists the teachers to expand their teaching repertoire to include a broader range of methods, materials, and techniques to reach wide and diverse range of learners. If the teacher is aware of the intelligence profile of the class, strategies can be developed to use students’ intelligence strengths to acquire knowledge more effectively.

As far as it is known, communication needs are also numerous and unpredictable. Therefore developing learners’ communication competence is possible by increasing their
strategic competence i.e. their ability to use communication strategies to cope with various communication problems they may encounter. Strategies which involve teaching with, and for, multiple intelligences are of most interesting aspects of implementing Gardner's theory, with MI based practices, students can capitalize on their skills. As Crawford Lange and Lange (1999, p.616) state: "Sensitivity to multiple intelligences may … insure that linguistic intelligence is operating in an optimal fashion with other intelligences that participate in communication process". According to David (1999) being aware and conscious of communicative problems let learners use different types of communicative strategies which enables them to choose more appropriate communicative strategies. They can benefit from strategies to overcome both grammatical and lexical difficulties (like achievement oriented strategies as functional reduction strategies). In general, successful foreign language (FL) learners use a variety of strategies to assist them in gaining command over new language skills (O’Malley, 1987). Ellis (1994) concluded that "the strategies that learners elect to use reflect their general stage of L2 development."

Communication strategies remain an important element in FLL. Teachers can play an important role in conveying communication strategies to students and thereby assisting them to practice the target language so as to value English language learning more meaningful and influential. Teachers should also motivate learners to apply communication strategies as greater motivation relates to higher frequencies of strategy use and to investigate EFL learners' strategy use for oral communication tasks, it is crucial to incorporate strategy training program in the curriculum that focuses on raising learners' awareness of such positive strategies and in Nakatani's (2006) word "they will be able to recognize their strong and weak points concerning the use of OCSs to achieve their communication goals, by checking their performance, they will be able to raise their awareness of efficient strategies which could lead to improvements in their language proficiency". To help students demonstrate their potential intelligences, teachers can help linguistically intelligent students' involvement in debates, oral presentation and reading. To foster students' interpersonal intelligence, teachers can encourage teamwork. To develop students' intrapersonal intelligence, teachers can provide opportunities in which students can work alone and on their own. The key point is that such preclusive developments of students could occur with appropriate strategy training to facilitate communication and hinder the potential language problems while listening or speaking English.
Studying MI we understand that individuals are different, the other fact is that communicative needs are numerous and differ across individuals, in this regard, learners' insufficient knowledge of second language could be compensated through use of CSs and learners' appraisal of the goals of CSs use assist them toward appropriate strategy use.
References


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Title

The Importance of Input in Language Acquisition

Author

Mehry Haddad Narafshan (Ph.D. candidate)
Islamic Azad University, Kerman Branch, Iran

Biodata

Mehry Haddad Narafshan is a Ph.D. candidate of TEFL at Islamic Azad University, Shiraz Branch, Shiraz, Iran and a faculty member at Islamic Azad University, Kerman Branch, Kerman, Iran. Her research interests include first and second language acquisition, teacher education, and language teaching.

Abstract

In the field of language acquisition, there has been a controversy between the theories that attribute a small or no role to language input (nature), and those attributing it a more important role (nurture). Most of language acquisition studies seek to establish the existence of a specific language-learning faculty which determines the course of development. As a result of these perspectives, the linguistic environment has been relegated to a low level of importance in accounts of the language acquisition process. In accordance with the Chomskian hypothesis of an inborn propensity for language acquisition, they make no attempt to describe the importance of the input. But we can not neglect the importance of the linguistic input. Language development is the product of the social uses which language serves in communication; it is undeniable to reconsider the role of input in language acquisition. This paper is trying to answer this question: is input working as a mere trigger or a necessary condition for language acquisition? A case study of two brothers (twins) for a period of 13 months is used to find out if a new born infant is exposed to two languages (Farsi & English) simultaneously, which language will appear as the first language and which language will appear as the second language, considering the amount of the input that is received.

Keywords: Input, Language acquisition, Case study, Farsi, English.
1. Introduction

The human language system is a wonderful one. The elements of this system are the sounds of the language, and the larger pieces are the words, which in turn combine to form sentences. Given the richness and complexity of language, it seems improbable that children could ever discern its structure. The process of acquiring such a system is likely to be nearly as complex as the system itself, so it is not surprising that the mechanisms underlying language acquisition are a matter of long-standing debate. One of the central focuses of this debate concerns the innate and environmental contributions to the language acquisition process, and the degree to which these components draw on information and abilities that are also relevant to other domains of learning. In particular, there is a fundamental tension between theories of language acquisition in which input plays a central role and theories in which input is relegated to the sidelines.

Behaviorist accounts of language acquisition propose a direct relationship between input and output. Because they reject the idea of mind as an object for inquiry, they ignore the internal processing that takes place inside the learner. Input is comprised of stimuli and feedback. Acquisition is controlled by external factors, and the learner is viewed as a passive medium. Mentalist theories emphasize the importance of the learner's 'black box'. Although input is still seen as essential for second language acquisition, it is seen as only a 'trigger' that sets off internal language processing. A common assertion of mentalist theories is that the input is indeterminate. According to cognitive interactionist theories, acquisition is seen as a product of the complex interaction of the linguistic environment and the learner's internal mechanisms, with neither viewed as primary. Input does have a determining function in language acquisition, but only within the constraints imposed by the learner's internal mechanisms.

Theories in which input does not play an important role, language acquisition is considered as an innate ability. Interest shifted to the internal mechanisms that a learner (child or adult) brings to the language-learning situation, with research focusing on innateness and the nature of the innate system. Learners were viewed as creators of language system; and, at least in the case of children, the input they received was of minor importance. If learners only need to discover a limited number of possibilities which are represented in their language, then it is possible that only a few instances of exposure are sufficient to trigger the appropriate language forms. As a consequence of this view, the significance of the input was minimized (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Chomsky and his followers have claimed since the 1950s that the nature of speaker-hearers' competence in their
native language can be accounted for only by innate knowledge that the human species is genetically endowed with. They argue that children come to the task of acquiring a specific language already possessing general knowledge of what all languages have in common, including constraints on how any natural language can be structured. This innate knowledge is in what Chomsky calls the language faculty, which is "a component of the human mind, physically represented in the brain and part of the biological endowment of the species" (Chomsky 2002:1). What all languages have in common is universal grammar. Such knowledge of language goes beyond what could be learned from the input people receive (Saville-Troike, 2006). The child overcomes input deficiencies with the help of the language faculty. It ensures that relatively little evidence is needed for the child to determine that a given principle is operative in the target language. A language is learnable because the child needs to entertain only a small subset of the hypotheses that are consistent with the input data. Without UG, L1 acquisition would be extremely slow and, in some respects, impossible (Ellis, 1994).

Theories in which input plays an important role, language acquisition is considered as an experience-dependent mechanism. In the early part of the twentieth century, conceptualizations or theories of how languages were learned (both first and second) relied heavily on the input provided to the learner. This was particularly the case within the behaviorist period of language study; within the behaviorist orthodoxy, language acquisition was seen to rely entirely on the input that a child received because, within that framework, a child was seen to learn by imitation. In this view, learning a language involved imitation as its primary mechanism, the language that surrounded learners was of crucial importance. The important role of input has not diminished over the years; what has changed, however, is the conceptualization of how individuals process the input and how the input interacts with the mental capacities of those learning a language (first or second). Within second language studies, the general function of input has been treated variably. In many approaches to SLA, input is seen as being a highly important factor in acquisition (Doughty & Long, 2003). If we assume, as Krashen does, that learners progress through 'natural' developmental sequences, we need some mechanism to account for how they go from one point to another. This is one role of the input hypothesis in Krashen's theory. This hypothesis postulates that humans acquire language in only one way-by understanding messages, or by receiving comprehensible input. Krashen (1985) saw research on the effect of exposure to a second language as support for the input hypothesis. Studies show, for example, that the longer people live in a country, the more
proficient their language-unless they live in immigrant communities where they use the second language relatively little and rely on their first language. Thus, for Krashen comprehensible input is the route to acquisition and information about grammar in the target language is automatically available when the input is understood (McLaughlin, 1987).

2. Participants

It is a case study of two brothers (twins) for a period of 13 months. Their mother is a native Australian, she can understand Farsi to some extent, but she can hardly say a sentence in Farsi. Their father is a native Iranian, and he can speak both Farsi and English fluently. They have a grandmother (their father's mother; a native Iranian) whom they are living with, and she can only speak and understand Farsi. Their parents married five years ago in Australia, and it is one year and ten months that they are living in Iran. The twins are their first children. The researcher used observations and interviews for the period of 13 months to see which language will appear as the first language and which language will appear as the second language, considering the quantity of the input that is received.

3. Procedures

The twins were exposed to both languages (Farsi and English) from the first day of their birth. Their mother started speaking English with them from the first moment of their life. Their father started speaking Farsi with them from the first moment of their life, but whenever he was speaking with their mother (his wife), he used English. Their grandmother started speaking Farsi with them from the first moment of their life, and whenever she was speaking with their mother or father, she spoke in Farsi. The television programs were all in Farsi, and most of the time television was on. Their mother listened to English music most of the time. Their relatives, their neighbors, and their friends all spoke Farsi. The following table shows the amount of the input that is received in both languages (Farsi and English).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The input that they received in English:</th>
<th>Their mother speaking with them (morning to night)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Their mother speaking with their father (whenever he was at home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>English music (most of the time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The input that they received in Farsi:</td>
<td>Their father speaking with them (whenever he was at home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Their grandmother speaking with them (morning to night)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Their father speaking with their grandmother (whenever he was at home)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The television programs (most of the time)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Their relatives, neighbors, and friends speaking with them (whenever they visited them)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Results
They were five months that one of them said the first word; maman (it was Farsi). He just said it three times and he did not repeat it again. After that it seemed they were both confused, they wanted to say something but they couldn't; whatever they produced seemed to be a mixture of Farsi and English, but not a meaningful word (it continued for the months 6, 7, and 8). When they got nine months, they both started saying some words in Farsi: maman, baba, dada, bah. It continued, and each month they could say more words in Farsi. But they did not start saying a word in English since they got 13. As they entered 13, they started saying the first words in
English (apple, door, and no). But their comprehension seemed to be different from their production: they could understand Farsi and English when they were 7 months old. When they were seven if you asked them where your ball is? Or toopet kojast? (in Farsi or English); they turned their head to the ball. But before 7, if you asked them the same question in Farsi or English, they could understand neither. If we accept the possibility that infants come to the learning situation with an innate knowledge about language; a small amount of input may cause language comprehension, but language production will be delayed until the learner receives enough amount of input. Language production will emerge only after receiving enough amount of input. In this case study, the language that was subject to the input with high quantity (Farsi) appeared as the first language, and the language that was subject to the input with limited quantity (English) appeared as the second language so the quantity of input that is received is of great importance in language acquisition. It shows that input that learners receive plays a very important role in the language acquisition since the input activates this innate structure.

5. Conclusion

According to the results, the order of language acquisition is determined by the amount of input that is received. There is a direct relationship between the frequency of input and language production rather than that between the frequency of input and language comprehension. The items that emerged early in the learners' output were among the most frequently used language (Farsi). In the case of simultaneous language acquisition, each language will develop independently of the other, and the child will not mix its languages. The input determines the output in this case.

Learning a language is a complex process, and there are many factors which influence the language acquisition. The internal factors include the mental disposition of a learner, the aptitude, the ability to handle communication process and others. The external factors, such as the conditions in which the learner operates might include the time and the frequency available for the exposure to the target language, the quality of the samples of the target language which the learners are exposed to, in other words the input. In the process of language acquisition, both experience-independent and experience-dependent mechanisms are involved. If we accept the possibility that learners (first or second language) come to the learning situation with innate knowledge about language; it is clear that language development is inspired and conditioned by the environment, and it is undeniable that input is highly required for the acquisition of language.
Input that learners receive plays a very important role in the language acquisition since the input activates this innate structure.

There is now substantial evidence to indicate that for language acquisition, the input is of greater importance than has previously been acknowledged. Language acquisition is not only an innate process, and it does not come from language faculty alone, but is due to a complex interaction of input and the internal system, together with many other factors not relevant to the issues discussed in this paper. It is important to consider that the frequency of input is highly significant, there has to be sufficient quantity of the input. A small amount of input may cause language comprehension, but language production will be delayed until the learner receives enough amount of input. If you are exposed to two languages simultaneously, the language that is subject to the input with high quantity will appear as first language, and the language that is subject to the input with limited quantity will appear as second language. Therefore, the input is not merely a trigger which operates the internal mechanisms controlling the language acquisition process, but a necessary condition for successful language acquisition.

But the question that is not answered is that what is sufficient quantity of input? And how do we know whether the quantity is sufficient or not?

References

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Title

Sociocultural Identity in EFL Textbooks of Iranian High schools:
An Attempt to Fill in the Gap

Author

Fatemeh Poorebrahim (M.A)
Maragheh University, Maragheh, Iran

Biodata

Fatemeh Poorebrahim has an M.A. and teaches EFL at Maragheh University, Maragheh, Iran. Her research interests include improving EFL textbooks and teaching methods using cross-cultural materials, discourse analysis, and ESP.

Abstract

Regardless of different points of view, culture has taken an important place in foreign language teaching and learning studies. International communication inevitably involves communicating interculturally as well, which probably leads us to encounter factors of cultural differences. Such kind of differences exists in every language such as the place of silence, tone of voice, appropriate topic of conversation, and expressions as speech act functions (e.g. apologies, suggestions, complains, refusals, etc.). The main purpose of this study was to investigate sociocultural identity of EFL textbooks, which have been prescribed for use in the Iranian high schools by the ministry of Education. EFL textbooks were discussed in detail with reference to sociocultural theory of foreign language acquisition and the five features extracted from different materials evaluation checklists. The findings of the study indicated that the materials used in Iranian English textbooks do not take into account the creative aspect of language (culture) and sociocultural theory. It also showed that the language presented in Iranian English textbooks are still based on the old-fashioned syllabuses that assumed language learning was linear. This study favors use of more authentic and culturally loaded materials that best cover sociocultural theory of foreign language acquisition. It believes that there is a need to take "discourse" into
account in designing our programs and textbooks, and teaching of EFL in our high schools as well. It offers in order to solve communication problems in the target language in the EFL classrooms, the learners need to learn the target culture within syllabus.

**Keywords**: Sociocultural Theory, Culture, Foreign Language Acquisition, EFL Textbooks, Discourse.

1. Introduction

One of the well-known characteristics of modern approaches to foreign language learning is the view that successful foreign language acquisition (FLA) is accompanied by foreign culture acquisition (FCA) (e.g. Hamers& Blanc, 1989). It seems clear that a learner's acquisition of communicative competence must involve more than the command of the grammatical structures of the target language and a mastery of its phonology. The learner must also acquire new cultural knowledge and a set of culture-specific constraints on linguistic behavior. So, cultural context is necessary in foreign language instruction. It is unavoidable as a back-up for good and efficient language teaching and learning. The researcher is also aware of cultural influences in this regard. While language instruction should not be devoid of culture context, culture bias, approval, and disapproval should be seriously taken into consideration since they will surely yield unreliable and undesirable results. While we expect students to realize and understand the target culture, we do not necessarily expect them to adopt a new set of values. Cultural understanding does not mean to behave in accordance with the social conventions of a given speech community, nor does it mean to ask students to be someone else.

Bearing all these in mind, this study attempts to discover the sociocultural identity of EFL textbooks, which have been prescribed for use in the Iranian high schools. The merits and demerits of the textbooks are discussed in detail with reference to sociocultural theory of S/F language acquisition and five critical features extracted from different materials evaluation checklists. It then gives some suggestions as to how to alleviate the shortcomings encountered in the EFL textbooks of high schools.
The researcher will discuss EFL textbooks of high school in terms of following research questions to investigate sociocultural identity of these books. The materials represented in Books 1-4 claims to involve all language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing and seem to be organized in a fixed order throughout the book. Teachers should teach the whole book during the academic year of nine months, on a three-hour weekly basis. The materials are to be used as a pre-constructed format rather than sources upon which learners’ activities and teachers’ instructions can be based.

1. Are objectives and learning a foreign culture explicitly laid out in the introduction sections of the Iranian high school textbooks?
2. Are approaches used in EFL textbooks educationally and socially acceptable to target community?
3. Are there any appropriate cultural visual materials in the textbooks?
4. Are texts (reading passages) of EFL textbooks placed in authentic contexts?
5. Are there any sociocultural strategies for dialogue of cultures in EFL textbooks?

The researcher browsed about ten checklists proposed by different authors and selected the five features which were suitable to the purpose of this study. The following 10 books were consulted to evaluate the 4 textbooks under study.

2.1. The list of 10 checklists


2.2. The Textbooks under Study


2.3. Procedure

After a close examination of the checklists, the researcher will scrutinize the four EFL textbooks against each one of the research questions one by one. The researcher will discuss reading passages (question 4) from two perspectives:

A: Context

B: Authenticity

The results of the scrutiny of all the four textbooks on every feature will be combined under common headings to save space and time.

3. Discussion

1. Are Objectives and learning a Foreign Culture explicitly laid out in the introduction sections?

At the beginning of Book1 there is an introduction that attempts to clarify the intended teaching objectives. However, there is a state of indeterminacy as to the goals toward which the teacher and the learners are to set out. The ultimate goals of the curriculum are not clarified. The authors of the book do not clearly specify the final objectives of the curriculum in vivid words so that the learners know what they are expected to have learned at the end of the program (Long term objectives). Likewise, the short term objectives remain unspecified in the introduction. Also, there are no words about introducing foreign culture
such as geographical factors and their influence on daily life, major historical periods, how the society is organized, production, transport, buying and selling, aspects of city and country life, the history of art, music, film and so on.

‘Introduction section’ is totally omitted from Book 2 and 3, probably on the grounds that it is included in Book1. The authors might have assumed that if a teacher teaches Book2 or 3, he/ she must definitely be aware of the contents of Book1. There is an introduction section in Book 4 which is totally different from that of Book1 in terms of the objectives that it specifies as the goals of the lessons and the course.

Part (A) of the introduction is concerned with why the section “New Words” is included in the book and how it must be instructed by the teachers. It reads, “The purpose of this section is to familiarize learners with the new vocabulary in the Reading Comprehension section.” However, this is not implemented in the books because the number of the new words introduced in the New Words Section is considerably less than the number of the new words in the Reading Comprehension section. The question that rises is how and where those missing words are to be taught? For example, in book1(B)1, lesson (L)1, 22 new words are introduced in the Reading Comprehension but only 10 of them are included in the New Words Section. Likewise, in B2- L3, almost 24 new words are introduced, whereas, only 12 of them are included in the New Words Section. B3-L4 contains almost 43 new words in the Reading Comprehension and only 11 of them are clarified and practiced in the New Words Section. The New Words Section is totally excluded from B4 and nowhere in the introduction have the authors explained why. Other parts of the introduction related to objectives specification mainly concern the activities and techniques that the teachers should not do and is less concerned with what they should do.

In sum, the final goals of the EFL program as well as the behavioral objectives which are aimed at by the curriculum designers are obscure and remain to be delineated. This may have various ramifications across the different phases of the curriculum i.e. classroom implementation and evaluation. Teachers actually dissent as to what teaching methodology to be employed, which skills and psycholinguistic abilities to emphasize and what to include in their exams. Now, the nationwide exams which are administered by the officials for third graders is playing the role of an agreement document among teachers, which in turn, has its own negative effects known as the ‘wash back effect’.
Consequently, teachers teach in a way that their students can pass the tests which are administered at the final year of high school education and University Entrance Examination rather than executing the actual curriculum worked out by the academic specialists. In fact, there is now a hidden curriculum among learners and teachers which determines what they must do in the classroom.

2. Are approaches educationally and socially acceptable to target community?

According to White (1988, p. 92) “A complete syllabus specification will include all five aspects: structure, function, situation, topic, skills. The difference between syllabuses will lie in the priority given to each of these aspects.”

It seems that the authors of the books have sequenced the linguistic content of the materials according to the structural complexity, starting from less complex structures to more demanding ones. Even the reading passages are selected or, probably manipulated, so that they reinforce a particular grammatical point included in the grammar section of the books. However, the question of how and in what order the structures must be arranged in a structural syllabus is a controversial issue. Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p.88) pose the same question as writing, what assumptions underlie the ordering in the structural syllabus? Does the verb ‘to be’ come first, because it is easier to learn if so, in what sense? Structurally, it is the most complex verb in English. Does it come first because it is needed for later structures, for example the present continuous? Is it considered conceptually simpler? For many students, for example Indonesian students, it causes conceptual problems, since in Bahasa Indonesian it is frequently omitted. Alternatively, is the syllabus ordered according to usefulness? The verb 'to be' is more useful than, say, the present simple tense of the verb 'to go'. If we are operating the criteria of usefulness, what context are we referring to? Do we mean usefulness in the outside world or usefulness in the classroom?

Although the reading skill, among others, looks to be of first priority in the design of the books, a big share of the lessons is devoted to grammar drills and the various forms of grammatical exercise throughout B1, B2 and B3. Fortunately, this problem is rectified in B4 of the series. About 50% of the content of each lesson in B1 to B3 is occupied with grammatical drills. This allocation seems to be unjustified as far as the findings of research on SL reading is concerned. Researchers have noticed the need for extensive vocabulary for
reading and that grammatical knowledge is called upon in advanced levels of reading proficiency for complex and embedded structures as a last resort (see Alderson and Urquhart, 1984a). Also, Lewis (1993, p.17) says that “vocabulary (or lexis) carries more of the meaning of a text than does the grammar”.

3. Are there any appropriate visual materials?

Visual materials can be defined as the facilities that can be employed by teachers and learners to enhance language learning in classrooms. They may range from simple handmade regalia, charts and pictures to electronic and digital materials. There are not any authentic English pictures in all of these books. Students have to look at culturally different pictures (Persian), but read and speak English. For example, there are pictures of Muslim men and women, pictures of Iranian places, etc. Is this kind of learning acceptable according to the principles of language teaching and learning?

4. Are texts (Reading passages,...) placed in meaningful cultural and authentic contexts?

4.1. Context

The researcher in analyzing reading passages first concentrates on the notion of 'context'. The importance of context for the interpretation of sentences, teaching culture, the diversity of goals and perspectives in studying it, have resulted in the lack of consensus on an adequate definition of it. In this research for definition of the notion of context we will see that different authors have defined, analyzed, and used it differently. And we will find how different models have stressed different contextual features.

Valdes expresses that "it is generally accepted that knowing the language is a lot more than knowing the structure and even the meanings of expressions in the language" (1986, p.1 ; Widdoson, 1976). This is because of the notion of context, knowing a language implies an awareness of the totality of associations carried by expressions in the language, particularly in "the context of culture" and "context of situation" (Malinowsky,1935; Firth, 1957) or the "immediate situation" (Yule,1985, p.98) which is defined as the factors relevant in the speech situation, and the "wider situation" (Ellis, 1966, p.80) as the factors relevant and specific to a given culture and its language.

The reading text is of two parts: Part one presents one or two isolated sentences followed by one or two questions sometimes along with some related pictures. We will see, first, what is there in the sentences and then analyze their questions.
Now, let us have the following sentences and questions that come from Book1 and Book2 (Birjandi, et al., 2007):

1. A servant works for them. She cleans their rooms and washes the dishes.
   Who works for them?
   What does she do? (Book1, p.34)

2. I don’t remember his telephone number. I forget numbers very easily.
   Do you forget things easily? (Book1, p.34)

3. We pushed the table nearer the wall.
   What did you do?
   Where is the table now? (Book1, p.45)

4. You can play outside, but you mustn’t leave the yard.
   Where can I play?
   Can I leave the yard? (Book1, p.45)

5. The book was too difficult. She couldn’t finish it.
   Why couldn’t she finish the book? (Book1, p.45)

6. The snow was very deep. The bus came late.
   Did the bus come early or late? (Book1, p.45)

7. They don’t have enough money to buy a car.
   They have to buy something else.
   Why are they going to buy something else? (Book1, p.68)

8. The entire village was destroyed by the soldiers.
   What did the soldiers do? (Book2, p.1)

9. Thousands of small light bulbs made the city glow?
   How was the city lit up?
   Why did the city glow? (Book2, p.44)

These, and still many others, are all grammatically correct English sentences. These seemingly correct sentences, selected at random here, have been presented without pictures. As sentences they are correct and meaningful. But as utterances, they are artificial; they are not normal since, in one sense, they do not convey any communicative purposes. These isolated sentences might have been presented so because of the easy access to their meaning on the part of the learner, i.e. they have been simplified.
Traditionally, it was believed that the language presented to the learners of foreign language should be simplified in some way, but nowadays that belief has changed in favor of authentic use of the target language. We shall take this point, i.e. simplification, up again in our discussion of the second part of the reading passages.

The sentences used in this kind of reading are not, according to Brown and Yule (1983), dynamic; rather they are static since they are not the result of ordinary language behavior, in their words, “unless we believe that language users present each other with prefabricated chunks of linguistic strings (sentences)’’ (p.23). They argue that such sentences are not the result of active processes and term such strings as ‘sentence-as-object’ since, in fact, as they put it, “such sentence-objects have no producers and no receivers” (p.23). The combination of such sentences will lead to, according to Brown and Yule again, ‘text-as-product’.

In contrast to text-as-product which is the result of artificially combined sentences, they mention other types of language behavior as ‘discourse-as-process’ which is the result of ‘utterances’. In this type of textualization, words, phrases, and sentences, as they appear in the textual record of a discourse, are evidence of an attempt by a producer (speaker/ writer) to communicate his message to a recipient (hearer/ reader). This approach takes the communicative function of language as its primary concern and consequently sees a linguistic form not as static objects, but as a dynamic means of expressing intended ‘meaning’.

It is time we turned to the second part of the reading passage which is rather lengthy. As the first example, look at the following passage that comes from book1 (p. 5)

Today is Friday. It’s 7 o’clock in the evening. We don’t go to school on Fridays. I am watching TV now. I like cartoons very much, but my father doesn’t like cartoons. You can see him in the picture. He has a newspaper in his hands. He’s reading it. He usually reads the newspaper carefully, but sometimes he reads some pages very fast. He usually gets up early in the morning. He says his prayers, eats his breakfast at about 6 and then goes to work. He comes back home in the evening.
It is virtually a passage within Iranian social context. As Iranians having the same background knowledge, we all share the same schematic knowledge about it. The text, too, contains correct English sentences. But as we will find, this passage creates, as it has been seen, some learning problems.

Briefly speaking, our knowledge of Iranian Fridays will lead us to assert that on all Fridays cartoons are shown on TV from 2:30 to 4 and not at 7 o’clock in the evenings. Thus, sentence 4 violates one of Gricean Principles, i.e. quality, which states that ‘do not say what you believe to be false’; similarly, sentence 3 violates some other Gricean principles, i.e. quantity, for example, which states that ‘make your contribution as informative as is required, but not more or less than is required.’ This passage is ‘cohesive’ because of some grammatical devices that link the sentences together, but as an instance of discourse the text is not well-formed, i.e. it is not ‘coherent’. Producing both cohesive and coherent texts, depends crucially on knowledge of something more than language, knowledge of the world. In a text as an instance of discourse, the sentences do not have the same value; they are not of the same status. Some have thematic information and others play the supporting role. They, thus, cannot be represented simply in a linear fashion. There is, of necessity, a need for hierarchical relationship. The reader should recognize their illocutionary relationships, beside knowing their propositional meanings. That is to say, he should know what speech function each sentence performs, i.e. whether a sentence is an example of generalization, clarification, exemplification, etc (Widdowson, 1979, pp. 183-191). What we can, in short, say about such a text is that we know the meaning potential of each separate sentence, but we cannot get the intended meaning as a discourse since we do not know what is all about; whether it is about Friday, the author, his activities and interests, his father, his father’s daily or Friday’s activities. One other example will suffice to clarify the point more. The following text is used for teaching the past tense form:

My father didn’t go to work this morning. He had his breakfast at about 8. But my mother was very busy this morning. We had some guests. My mother was cleaning the kitchen when they arrived. They left before noon. They didn’t have lunch with us. (Book 1, p.6)

What we said earlier against using the aforementioned texts, and the sample isolated sentences, and the points and problems we brought to the fore, will apply to this text, too.
we will make no attempt to repeat them. But the researcher will merely mention two other points. One is that these kinds of texts are absolutely uninteresting; they are not pleasurable at all; a very important factor to get the students highly motivated in reading in English at least. The other point deals with the truth value of such sentences. Besides, the language itself is not communicatively meaningful; the students have the feeling that truth cannot be at all assigned to such linguistic sentences. To us, Iranians, having guests means serving some food. It is unheard of, in Iran, to visit someone without being served some kind of refreshment at least. It is a shock for an Iranian to visit someone (in Iran) and not be offered even a cup of tea or a soft drink. In conclusion, the researcher will avail herself of a quotation from Hymes (1974, p. xix): “the key to understanding language in context is to start not with language, but with context.”

The choice of an appropriate form of language is influenced not only by the contextual features mentioned earlier, but also, according to Holmes (1992, p.281) the “formality” of context. For example, in a classroom, as a formal setting, when the child’s mother or father is the teacher, the child calls his or her parents Mrs. Grady or Mr. Davis rather than Mum or Dad.

In foreign language classes, all learning activities should carry meaning. And with regard to texts, distinction should be made between meaning as formally and isolatedly encoded in language and meaning which is achieved in context by the exploitation of these formal properties. There are, however, occasions when words do very well on their own. This is when there is a context of highly shared knowledge (Widowson,1990). Teaching a language is teaching how to shape the context of the lesson as an individual learning event and as a social encounter with regard to its setting, its participants' roles, the purpose of its (i.e. lessons) activities, topics of conversation, its tone, modalities, norms of interaction, etc. the way context is shaped through the foreign language determines the types of meaning the students will be allowed to explore, discover, and exchange. According to Kramsch (1993, p. 67), "the more potential meanings students are encouraged to discover, the richer the opportunities for learning".

In the classroom the success of any communicative activity is heavily determined by the way student (which are the participants in the activity) perceive the context of situation and shape it accordingly through their verbal and non-verbal behavior.
4.2. Authenticity

When considering the use of authentic materials, Widdowson (1990, p.67) wrote:

> It has been traditionally supposed that the language presented to learners should be simplified in some way for easy access and acquisition. Nowadays there are recommendations that the language presented should be authentic."

The concept of authenticity is central to SCT and CLT of language learning, with the learner being exposed to the same language as a native speaker. Four types of authenticity within the classroom have been identified and in particular to the use of authentic texts:

1. **Authenticity of the text which we may use as input data for our students:**
2. **Authenticity of the learner's own interpretations of such text:**
3. **Authenticity of tasks conductive to language learning:**
4. **Authenticity of the actual social situation of the classroom language.**

Widdowson (1990) has a process-orientated view of authenticity, making a distinction between "authentic" and "genuine". Genuine is an example of native speaker language, while authentic is a native speaker response (it can also include the response the writer intended upon when writing the text.):

> "The language presented to them may be a genuine record of native speaker behavior, genuine, that is to say, as textual data, but to the extent that it does not engage native speaker response it cannot be realized as authentic discourse." (p.45)

Authenticity can therefore be considered to be the interaction between the reader and the text and not just the text in itself. Reading is considered to be an ongoing interaction, going beyond the physical context of the text, looking for meaning as well as processing information. Goodman takes this even further claiming that reading is "…an essential interaction between language and thought…” (1988, p.12) where the writer encodes his thoughts as language and the reader decodes the language into thought.

Even if true, the learner is still exposed to real discourse and not the artificial language of course textbooks, which tend not to contain any incidental or improper examples. They also tend to reflect the current teaching trend. Authentic materials also give the reader the opportunity to gain real information and know what is going on in the world around them.
More times than not, they have something to say, be it giving information, a review. They also produce a sense of achievement. Extracting real information from a real text in a new/different language can be extremely motivating, therefore increasing students’ motivation for learning by learning by exposing them to 'real' language (Guariento and Morley 2001). They also reflect the changes in language use, (again something that does not occur in textbooks, which become very dated, very quickly) as well as giving the learner the proof that language is real and not only studied in the classroom.
The wide variety of different types of text means that it is easier to find something that will interest the learner and may even encourage further reading or reading for pleasure. An advantage of taking a complete newspaper or magazine into classroom, rather than photocopies of an article, is that students can actually choose what to read. The more the learner reads, the better a reader he will become, not only is improving his language level but also confidence. If the text interests the learner it can also be related to his own experiences. One of the aims of authentic materials is to help the student react in the same way L1 speaker react in their first language (L1). Learners who live in the target language environment, once outside of the classroom will encounter a variety of situations in which different reading purposes/skills are required. We can claim that learners are being exposed to real language and they feel that they are learning the 'real' language. The main advantages of using authentic materials in the classroom therefore include:

- Having positive effect on student motivation;
- Giving authentic cultural information;
- Exposing students to real language;
- Relating more closely to students’ needs;
- Supporting a more creative approach to teaching.

These are what make us exited and willing to use authentic materials in our classrooms, but while using them, it is inevitable that we face some problems. Richards (2001) notes that authentic materials often contain difficult language, unneeded vocabulary items and complex language structures, which can often create problems for the teachers to.
The topics of readings in EFL textbooks vary from factual to anecdotal ones and sometimes are funny stories. It is difficult to judge on behalf of the learners whether those are
interesting for them or not and it needs research. But it would be better if the topics are adapted to become more congruent with the taste of the new generation which might be a bit different from that of the authors who designed the books at last ten years ago. Nowadays, learners' needs are different from what they used to be and; hence it looks better to include text more related to computer games, internet and literature.

Now let us look at the examples:

- My name is Bahram. I'm a student. I'm 15 years old. I go to school in the morning. I am a good student. (B1, p. 5)
- What's your first name? My first name is Ali. (B1, p. 17)
- Ahmad is a wise boy. He never derives when he feels sleepy. (B1, p. 35)
- I always sit beside Reza in the classroom. (B1, p. 45)
- Javad is a short boy. He lives on Hafez street. (B2, p. 24)
- Mina is two years old. She is very lovely. (B2, p. 56)
- Mr. Hamidi was very worried about his son who was at the front. But when he saw his son on TV, he was quit relaxed. (B3, p.5)
- You know Reza. He has a photographic memory. (B3, p. 38)
- Which one is Mrs. Akbari? She is the tall woman. (B3, p.65)
- We have a lot of snow in Tehran and some other cities. The Alborz Mountains are almost always snow covered. (B3, p. 53)
- Tabriz is in the north and Zahedan is in the south. (B3, p. 66)

There are a lot of artificial examples in these books. The researcher suggests the use of more authentic texts in EFL textbooks of high school, language is better to be taught or learned in within authentic cultural contexts. This, however, does not mean that we teach whatsoever language along with whatsoever context. But, on the contrary, we seek to select those fully contextualized pieces of the target language that most contribute to learning and teaching process; those that are of no danger to our religion and political ideologies and policies; those that are most pleasurable and interesting for both learners and teachers. The resort to authenticity is not to step down on ones national mores, nor is it to espouse blindly other cultural values and ideologies. But it is, on the contrary, a two way road in which one has much maneuvers to do in the process of learning a foreign language. In Iran, in high schools at least, we are in fact teaching not English but "Penglish" (Persian+ English).
5. Are there any sociocultural strategies for dialogue of cultures?

Given the increasingly dynamic nature of culture in the 21st century, a major concern to emerge for L2 teachers has to do with the content of teaching materials and the relation of those materials to the culture of the future. The problem with representing a culture of the future is, of course, that of foreseeing, a particularly individual and subjective phenomenon. This problem makes it impossible to select teaching materials that adequately reflect the future. Moreover, any given L2 culture may not be the only culture with which learners will come into contact during their lives. In the global community of tomorrow, electronic means of communication and population mobility will make contact between representatives of different cultures a daily reality. Thus, the teaching of sociocultural strategies is a major goal of L2 sociocultural education. According to Savignon (1972), to suggest a need for strategy training does not mean that participants in intercultural communications are expected to act in a prescribed manner. To the contrary, they should be encouraged to act in a way that they themselves consider appropriate. In so doing, they will develop the skills needed for participating in a variety of social and cultural contexts.

In addition to sociocultural portraits of a given L2 context for the purpose of enhancing intercultural contacts, scholars use the term sociocultural strategies to designate techniques useful for establishing and maintaining international contact in a spirit of peace and dialogue of cultures. There are numerous taxonomies of communicative strategies (Bialystok, 1990; Dornyei, 1995).

However, although sociocultural competence is generally considered to be inseparable from overall communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980), none of the existing taxonomies of L2 communicative strategies having to do specifically with cultural performance. Sauvignon and Sysoyev (2002) presented taxonomy of sociocultural strategies that teachers can use this for teaching culture as follows.

**Strategies for Establishing and Maintaining Intercultural contact**

1. Initiating and maintaining intercultural contact for the purpose of learning about the values, norms, spiritual heritage, and so forth of a L2 culture; acting as a representative of your own culture.

2. Anticipating sociocultural lacunae that can result in misunderstanding, creation of false stereotypes and intercultural conflict.
3. Taking initiative and responsibility for avoiding intercultural misunderstanding, explaining features of one's own culture; asking interlocutors to explain features of their culture.

4. Using diplomacy for the purpose of maintaining a dialogue of cultures in the spirit of peace and mutual understanding; redirecting a discussion to a more neutral topic; dissimulation of personal views to avoid potential conflict.

**Strategies for creating sociocultural portraits of an L2 context and the participants in the intercultural communication**

5. Making analogies, oppositions, generalizations, and comparison between facts and realities of L1 and L2 cultures.


7. Classification, compilation, generalization of sociocultural information when working with mass media, including the Internet, and informational-reference literature.

8. Review of authentic cultural material.

Regarding the components of the learner training in the series, the revised edition of book 4, characterize the futures of a good reader in the introduction section as follows: “A good reader is the one who is active and has specific goals in mind before starting to read. He/ she continuously checks his/ her understanding of the text and the text itself against the predetermined goals.” [Translated from Persian]. The authors continue, "A good reader usually browses the whole text before starting to read and pays attention to the organization and structure of the text as well as other parts which are relevant and compatible to the goals of the reading. In the process of reading, he/ she often tries to predict the incoming data in the text. He/ she reads selectively, and continuously revises his decisions as to what to read with close attention, what to read quickly, what to read again, and what not to read and etc. [Translated from Persian]

From the above quotation it is understood that the authors are attempting to familiarize the learners with cognitive and behavioral strategies or, at least, raise their consciousness about learning strategies. Moreover, throughout the lessons learners occasionally come up with certain vocabulary learning strategies such as building up semantic trees which relate different words from a common semantic field. It is worth mentioning that nowhere in the
books 1-3 is there a part explicitly addressing the issue of strategy training whatsoever. Unfortunately, EFL textbooks of Iranian high schools introduce neither sociocultural strategies nor other strategies. But, the researcher hopes, they use these strategies for teaching English in the classroom.

4. Conclusion

The researcher concludes that there are following problems in EFL textbooks of Iranian high schools.

1. Simply, the language used in our English textbooks taught in Iran is certainly decontextualized. Language is not used in a vacuum, and can not be learned so, but it is used by one person to another in order to communicate message. It is obvious that the materials and activities of our own on-going traditional language classes have ignored this aspect of language. The language of the textbooks, being decontextualized, is not used to communicate meaning, and the most important purpose of learning such "English" for Iranian students is to pass exams, and for teachers to examine the language per se. And in the classroom, all the grammatical and conversational exercises involve students articulating what the teacher already knew, and the students are forced to read incoherent sentences or some factual texts in order to answer some questions about such sentences and texts.

2. The materials and contents used in the process of learning are not linguistically or culturally appropriate.

3. English textbooks have, for years, been written individually and haphazardly along the lines that hardly meet the requirements of progressive educational systems across the world; linguists, sociolinguists, applied linguists, psycholinguists, etc who are expert in language (learning, teaching, planning, etc) have not been consulted as how to incorporate extra linguistic features in the textbooks hence contributing to students' failure in learning English.

4. The language presented in our Iranian English textbooks are still based on the old-fashioned syllabus that assumed language learning was linear. While in contrast, language learning should be considered cyclical. There are occasions when students need to study a certain linguistic item again and again since they always forget something, or the
linguistic item might be too difficult to grasp in one session, or more importantly as they advance, they need to deepen their understanding. What appears in our English textbooks is that each lesson deals with certain groups of sounds and words which are rarely repeated in the following pages of book.

5. Our educational decision makers, unfortunately, have not made it clear which linguistic skill they have in mind as the purpose of learning EFL in Iran. Choosing an eclectic approach which equally incorporates all linguistic skills at the same length, seems a good excuse for such decision makers.

From what we said above and what is implied from the findings we achieved throughout the present study is the fact that language can be learned and used merely through memorization of certain words and set of rules is not tenable, a very simplistic view of language learning that has caused drastic and regrettable changes in the programs and methods of foreign language learning and teaching in Iran.

A major goal of most Iranian students should be to understand English as it is used among native speakers; should be able to read books and magazines intended for native speakers; should be able to understand the radio and TV programs that native speakers listen to. This is what the educational policy as well as the textbook writers do not have in mind. There is an urgent need for a thorough reconsideration of (the learning and teaching) EFL programs and policies.

Learning foreign language in countries where the target language is not spoken is types of quasi-interactional experience in which learners encounter new lifestyles, way of thinking, behavior, and types of interaction represented by the language. So language teachers are responsible for explaining cultural behavior as well as language skills: the reason why people of the target language use this or that phrase at a certain time and how. The links between language, communication and interaction should be taken into account to adjust and lead learners into this new world.

Another point that needs to be addressed is that if we wish the learners to master another language, we need to help the learners become communicatively competent in that language as much as possible. Namely, successful speaking is not just to master of using grammatically correct words and forms but also knowing when to use them and under what
circumstances. Communicative competence should incorporate grammatical competence, discourse competence, and sociolinguistic competence.

In other words, if the goal of the language course is to enable students to reach a level of communicative competence, then all three components are necessary. The sociolinguistic component of communication refers to rules of speaking which depend on social, pragmatic, and cultural elements. Thus, which linguistic realization we choose for making an apology or a request in any language, might depend on the social status of the speaker or hearer, and on age, sex, or any other social factor. Besides, certain pragmatic situational conditions might call for the performance of a certain speech act in one culture but not in another.

The other issue that should be focused is that before learning about culture, students must be receptive to the concept of learning about cultures other than their own. To achieve culture goals, often teacher has to play a role in breaking down cultural barriers prior to initiating teaching-learning activities. One way to begin teaching culture on a positive note is to emphasize similarities between people. Such a beginning should be followed by a discussion of differences between members of students' family, between families, between schools and between cultures.

Moreover, the topics to be used to teach the target language should be presented in the contexts accompanying the native ones. That is to say, while teaching a culture specific topic first language equivalent can also be given in order to enhance learning. The use of culture-based activities abundantly in the classroom help learners be familiar with the target culture. The activities in the materials should involve the cultural values of the target language designed for every level.

References


Title

Cross-Linguistic Influence in Iranian EFL Learners:
The Case of Relative Clauses

Author

Seyed Jalal Abdolmanafi (Rokni) (Ph.D.)
Golestan University, Gorgan, Iran

Biodata

Seyed Jalal Abdolmanafi (Rokni) is an assistant professor at Golestan University, Gorgan, Iran. He has been teaching English at different universities for over ten years. He has published some articles and attended conferences at international levels. His areas of interest lie in second language acquisition, form-focused instruction and language teaching methodology.

Abstract

Due to their complex structures and hence the learning problem to the language learners, relative clauses have attracted the attention of a lot of SLA researchers and ESL/EFL educators. This paper attempted to investigate the rank order of mastery over the four types of relative clauses and also the rank order of mastery over four types of common errors of relative clauses determining the role of cross-linguistic influence as one of the widest areas of second or foreign language acquisition research in the case of English relative clauses by Persian EFL learners. 110 EFL learners from two classes at Sari Applied Science University (Elmi Karbordi), Iran were administered a test containing Sentence Combining Test and Grammaticality Judgment Test. The rank order of mastery over the four types of English RCs, the rank order of mastery over the four types of common errors of English RCs and the role of cross-linguistic influence on the acquisition of English RCs were discussed in detail in the present study.

Keywords: Cross-linguistic influence, Avoidance, Relative clause, Language transfer.

1. Introduction

The acquisition of relative clauses (RCs) by L2 learners has been investigated in order to examine the implicational universals of language (Keenan & Comrie, 1977) which reflects the ease of relativization or the difficulty order of different types of relative classes (e.g., Doughty,
to examine the effects of L2 instruction on RC as a target item (e.g., Ammar & Lightbown, 2004; Doughty, 1991; Eckman, Bell, & Nelson, 1998; Gass, 1982) and to study the cross-linguistic influences on L2 relative clause acquisition. The formation of RCs appears as a grammar item in second-year high schools in Iran only briefly for the first time. Relativization is often considered to be the last hurdle for students to overcome since it involves complex grammatical rules (Yabuki-Soh, 2007). Moreover, since L2 learners can convey information in their basic communication without RCs, they tend to avoid using them (Schachter, 1974).

Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) in their book entitled *the grammar book* present four common types of RC structures that relate the function of the head noun/antecedent in the main clause with the function of the relative pronoun in the adjective clause (p. 577). These four types of RCs are as follows:

1. Object-Subject (OS): *I know the girl [who speaks Persian].*
2. Object-Object (OO): *I read the book [that you mentioned].*
3. Subject-Subject (SS): *The girl [who speaks Persian] is my cousin.*
4. Subject-Object (SO): *The man [whom you met] is my teacher.*

In SLA, the rank order of mastery over the four types of English RCs, SS, SO, OS, and OO, has been investigated (Celce-Murcia & Larsen-Freeman, 1997). Schumann (1980) examining the production data of seven ESL learners has proposed the rank order of frequency of RC as OS, OO, SS, and SO. In addition, Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999) have suggested that there would be an obvious correlation between the frequency of occurrence of the different types of RCs used by native speakers and the rank order which is observed in second language acquisition. For this reason, by measuring the percentages of correct answers on the four above-mentioned types of English RCs, the present study examined which type of RCs would be the easiest or the most difficult by Iranian EFL learners when producing RCs on the basis of result of the grammaticality judgment test (GJT). Further, this study investigated the rank order of mastery over the four types of RCs in English based on the results of the sentence combining test (SCT) in the three tests in both groups.

Furthermore, in SLA another controversial issue on the rank order of mastery over the four types of common errors of English RCs has also been investigated (Gass, 1982; Izumi,
In his study, Izumi (2001) stated that there are four common error types of RCs that L2 learners most commonly commit in their judgment of RCs as follows:

1. Pronoun Retention: *The job that I have it gives me a lot of satisfaction.*
2. Incorrect Relative-Marker Morphology: *The birds whom Anna’s cat catches are very terrified.*
3. Inappropriate Relative-Marker Omission: *I liked the people sat next to us at the basketball game.*
4. Non-Adjacency: *The hotel had two bedrooms that we wanted to reserve.*

Therefore, this research study also investigated which error type of RC in English was most frequently committed by Iranian EFL students when judging RCs. Moreover, the study examined the rank order of mastery over the four types of common errors of RCs in English based on the results of the GJT in three tests in both groups.

### 1.1 The Role of L1

The role of the native language in L2 learners’ second language acquisition process has been investigated among researchers. Studying languages contrastively (contrastive analysis) and examining L2 learners’ errors (error analysis), researchers have been trying to have a better understanding of the influences of L1 on L2 acquisition for the pedagogical purposes. Debating the role of L1 in second language acquisition and in reaction to the Contrastive Analysis (Lado, 1957; Ellis 1996a), some researchers downplayed the role of L1 in the process of L2 acquisition. The studies have shown that the second language acquisition is a process of Creative Construction (Ellis, 1996b) in which learners are controlled by innate universal principles instead of old habits from their native language.

Cross-linguistic influence (CLI) is a generic term for different ways in which different language systems in the mind interact and affect either the linguistic performance or the linguistic development (or both) of the individual concerned (Sharwood Smith, 1983). Cross-linguistic influence is a term proposed by SLA researchers in the 1980s to include such phenomena as "transfer", "interference", "avoidance", "borrowing" and L2-related aspects of language loss' (Sharwood Smith & Kellerman, 1986). As the cross-linguistic influences may occur in almost every aspect of the (deep and surface) structure of language (i.e., pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and pragmatics, etc.) and the effects can be both positive (*facilitative*) and negative (*inhibitive*) (Ellis, 1993), one such area is the acquisition of English relative clauses by Persian learners.
Negative transfer impedes mastering new knowledge and is commonly referred to as *interference*, while positive transfer expedites the acquisition of new material. Interference may occur when the pattern transferred is unlike (though at times *superficially* bears affinity to) the corresponding target language pattern, resulting in the emergence of erroneous forms. If the learner finds the different structure difficult, it may also lead to *avoidance* (Schachter, 1974); thus, effects of the L1 manifested not in what the learner does (i.e. errors), but in what s/he *knows* but does *not use* (Seliger, 1989; avoidance of a structure may here mean avoidance of error). Avoidance of one difficult structure may also result in an *overuse* or overproduction of another (e.g. Schachter & Rutherford, 1979); though it may be more straightforward, e.g. at the discourse level where native speakers of English transfer their more direct expressions of apology into L2 (Olshtain, 1983).

It is worth mentioning that researchers recently believe that native language transfer is not necessarily associated with behaviorism but a process of Creative Construction (Gass & Selinker, 2001; Ellis, 1996b). Broadly speaking, transfer is viewed as phenomenon such as avoidance, delayed rule restructuring, or different paths of acquisition (Ellis, 2003; Gass & Selinker, 2001).

Avoidance is defined in two ways in different areas of SLA. Avoidance can be considered as one of the communication strategies that are seen as “attempts to bridge the gap between the linguistic knowledge of the second-language learner and the linguistic knowledge of the target language interlocutor in real communication situations” (Tarone, 1981). Moreover, avoidance may be employed when the gap seems to be “unbridgeable” (ibid, 288). There are several types of avoidance mentioned by Brown (1994): Syntactic and lexical avoidance, phonological avoidance, topic avoidance, and message abandonment. In addition, according to Ellis (1994), avoidance has been considered as one of the manifestations of language transfer. Manifestations other than avoidance include errors (negative transfer), facilitation (positive transfer), and over-use. Finally, Ellis (1994) defines avoidance as follows: “Avoidance is said to take place when specific target-language features are under-represented in the learner’s production in comparison to native-speaker production. Learners are likely to avoid structures they find difficult as a result of differences between their native language and the target language”. (693)
1.2 Comparison & Contrast between RCs in English & Persian

Persian (L1) is different from English (L2). In general, English has the basic language order of 'subject (S) + verb (V) + object (O)', while Persian has the basic language order of 'subject (S) + object (O) + verb (V)' (Greenberg, 1963; Dabir-Moghaddam, 1982; Karimi, 2003). Unlike English, Persian is also a null-subject language in which it allows superficially subjectless finite clauses (Taghvaipour, 2005). Although Persian is a verb final language, it has certain head-initial constructions such as Noun-Possessor, Noun-Adjective and Noun-RC constructions (ibid), as shown below (it is an instance of a complex sentence which contains a RC in Persian).

\[ 1. \text{ust} \quad zœn-i \quad ke \quad mœn \quad dust.darœm. \]
She.be-PRES-3sg woman-RES COMP I love-PRES-1sg
“She is [the woman that I love].”

A restrictive RC is the one that "determines and restricts the extension of the head", whereas a non-restrictive (or descriptive) RC "merely gives some additional explanation of it" (Gren-Eklund, 1978: 53). Thus, a restrictive RC restricts one or several objects from among a generic unit or a plurality at hand by first specifying a larger set, the domain of relativisation, and then restricting that domain "to some subset of which a certain proposition is true" (Fabb, 1994: 3520). In Persian there is a formal distinction between restrictive and non-restrictive clauses as English (Comrie, 1983). These two types of RCs are distinguished semantically. Restrictive RCs use presupposed information to identify the referent of a noun phrase, while the non-restrictive RC is a way of presenting new information on the basis of the assumption that the referent can already be identified.

(2)a: Restrictive
\[ \text{Danešji-u} \quad ke \quad be \quad širaz \quad rœfteh.bud], \quad bœrayœm \quad nameh \quad nevešt. \]
Student-RES COMP to Shiraz go-PP-3sg, for.me letter-IND wrote-PAST-3sg
The student who had gone to Shiraz wrote me a letter.

(2)b: non-restrictive
\[ \text{Ali, [ke \quad be \quad širaz \quad rœfteh.bud], \quad bœrayam \quad nameh-i \quad nevešt.} \]
Ali COMP to Shiraz go-PP-3sg, for.me letter-IND write-PAST-3sg
Ali, who had gone to Shiraz, wrote me a letter.

Restrictive RCs are formally distinguished from the non-restrictive ones in Persian by two main features: (i) comma intonation, i.e., the obligatory pause after the noun modified by a
non-restrictive RC, and (ii) the suffix -i on the noun modified by a restrictive RC (Taghvaipour, 2005).

Moreover, the Persian RC construction that modifies head-nouns is different from its English ones in three ways (Karimi, 2001). First, there is a relative particle -i attached to the head noun in Persian, while English lacks this particle. This particle is traditionally called *indefinite article* (Lazard, 1957). However, traditional Persian grammarians were also informed of another kind of -i coming with the noun modified by a restrictive RC. This -i is referred to in the literature as *demonstrative -i* (Taghvaipour, 2005). This naming is due to the fact that in early stages of Persian, demonstrative *an* (that) and *in* (this), and the demonstrative -i were mutually exclusive before RCs (Lazard, 1966). Second, there is no relative pronoun in Persian. In fact, Persian RCs are more similar to English [that CP] constructions. In Persian, the RC is always introduced by the invariant relative complementizer *ke* (Aghaei, 2006). Finally, Persian allows either a gap or a clitic pronoun, representing the missing head noun, within the CP (Taghvaipour, 2005).

In addition to main differences between Persian and English RCs proposed by Karimi (2001) above, there is another difference between them in which branching does not exist in Persian. Persian is a null-subject verb-final language with SOV word order, and therefore, the final constituent in any Persian sentence is a verb phrase. Consequently, RC structures are always embedded within the matrix clause and right-branching is not allowed (Marefat & Rahmany, 2009). Based on a count of discontinuities created by center-embedding, and phrasal boundaries within the RC that separate the relative pronoun and the trace (Hamilton, 1994), Persian SO and OO RCs are predicted to be the difficult ones, while SS and OS RCs are the easier ones. Thus, the hierarchy of difficulty of the four RC types in Persian as mentioned in Marefat and Rahmany (2009) is SS = OS > SO = OO, which agrees with the hierarchy obtained in the present study (OS > SS > OO > SO) in that SO and OO RCs in both hierarchies are the two more difficult RC types.

**English:**

(1) SS: The boy [CP that [IP__ [VP sees the girl]]] likes the artist

*3 discontinuities (2 within the RC and 1 caused by center-embedding)*

(2) SO: The boy [CP that [IP the girl [VP sees __]]] likes the artist

*4 discontinuities (3 within the RC and 1 caused by center-embedding)*

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(3) OO: The boy sees the girl [CP that [IP the artist [VP likes __ ]]]
3 discontinuities (3 within the RC)
(4) OS: The boy sees the girl [CP that [IP __ [VP likes the artist]]]
2 discontinuities (2 within the RC)
Persian:
(1) SS: sæg-i CP[ke IP[ ___ VP[gorbe ra mibenæd]]] æsb ra hol midæhæd
dog-RM that cat OBJECT MARKER sees horse OBJECT MARKER pushes
3 discontinuities (2 within the RC and 1 caused by center-embedding)
(2) SO: sæg-i CP[ke IP[ VP[gorbe u ra mibenæd]]] æsb ra hol midæhæd
dog-RM that RP OBJECT MARKER sees horse OBJECT MARKER pushes
4 discontinuities (3 within the RC and 1 caused by center-embedding)
(3) OS: sæg gorbe-i CP[ke IP[ ___ VP[æsb ra mibenæd]]] ra hol midæhæd
dog cat-RM that horse OBJECT MARKER sees OBJECT MARKER pushes
3 discontinuities (2 within the RC and 1 caused by center-embedding)
(4) OO: sæg gorbe-i CP[ke IP[ VP[æsb u ra mibenæd]]] ra hol midæhæd
dog cat-RM that horse RP OBJECT MARKER sees OBJECT MARKER pushes
4 discontinuities (3 within the RC and 1 caused by center-embedding)
These differences between the L1 and L2 can cause negative transfer that makes it
difficult for Iranians to acquire English RCs. Research studies examining Persian and English
relative clauses contrastively and how the differences between Persian and English relativization
affect the acquisition of English by Persian learners of is rare. The purpose of the present study is
to analyze and describe the difficulties that Persian learners of English encounter in acquiring the
relative clauses. Thus, three questions are raised as the focus of the paper:

1. What is the rank order of mastery over the four types of English RCs − OS, OO, SS,
and SO − in Iranian university learners?

2. What is the rank order of mastery over the four types of common errors of English RCs −
pronoun retention, incorrect relative-marker morphology, inappropriate relative-marker
omission, and non-adjacency − in Iranian university learners?

3. Do Iranian learners of English transfer the use of Persian RCs into English concerning
the acquisition of English RCs?
2. Method

2.1 Participants
The participants were 110 Iranian EFL learners studying English at Sari Applied Science University (Elmi-Karbordi), Iran during the academic year, 2011. They were homogenized following a proficiency test. In addition, they were all freshmen (first-year university students) who studied English for at least seven years. In order to control the participants’ gender as a moderator variable, the present researcher invited both genders into this study.

2.2 Instruments

2.2.1 Proficiency Test
In order to make sure of the homogeneity of the control and experimental groups in terms of English language proficiency, a test of NELSON, series 400B, after being piloted on a similar group of fifteen students, was administered one day before the pretest. It consisted of 50 multiple-choice items in four parts of cloze tests, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. The time allotted was 40 minutes.

2.2.2 Sentence Combining Test (SCT)
Sentence combination is a typical type of elicitation which researchers use in eliciting RCs. Quite a number of previous studies adopted this kind of test to collect data concerning RCs (Eckman, Bell, & Nelson, 1988; Gass, 1979; Hamilton, 1994; Izumi, 2003). In these tests, 20 sets of two sentences which could be combined into one sentence by using one of the four basic types of RCs namely, SO, OO, SS, and OS were administered.

2.2.3 Grammaticality Judgment Test (GJT)
Grammaticality judgment in this study also compensates what sentence combination test cannot do to reveal what is lacking in learners’ interlanguage (Gass & Selinker, 2001). The GJT consisted of 24 sentences for each test. Out of 24 items, 12 sentences were ungrammatical, while the rest were grammatical. In ungrammatical sentences, the four types of common errors of RCs as suggested by Izumi (2001) were involved: (1) pronoun retention, (2) incorrect relative-marker morphology (3) inappropriate relative-marker omission, and (4) non-adjacency.

2.3 Procedure
To achieve the aim of the study, the learners from two classes were administrated three different tests in three different times with an interval of one month. Moreover, to have homogeneous groups of learners, a proficiency test was carried out before the first test. Afterward, the second
test was conducted one day after one month, and the last test was administered one month after the second one. All tests consisted of both the sentence combining test and the grammaticality judgment test.

3. Results

3.1 Rank Order of Mastery over the Four Types of RCs

To assess what the rank order of mastery over the four types of RCs—OS, OO, SS, and SO—in Iranian learners was, the percentages of correct answers on the four types of RCs, OS, OO, SS, and SO, in the learners were calculated (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relative Clause Types</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OS</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OO</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SS</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The major findings show that the university students almost consistently had the same rank order of mastery over the four types of RCs: OS > OO > SS > SO. Therefore, as shown in Table 1, the combined results demonstrate that the most common rank order of mastery of RCs found in this study was OS (58.3 %) > OO (46.5%) > SS (37.4%) > SO (34.1%), and that the easiest of the four RC types found in this study for mastery was the OS RC type (58.3%), while the most difficult of the four RC types for mastery was the SO RC type (34.1%). These results show consistency with Doughty’s (1991) Ioup & Kruse’s (1977), Kuno’s (1974), Ioup and Kruse’s (1977), Schumann’s (1980), Stauble’s (1978) and Wong’s (1991) findings, in which the rank order of the acquisition or frequency of the four types of RCs was OS > OO > SS > SO, and that OS and OO RC types would be easier to acquire than SS and SO types.

3.2 Rank Order of Mastery over the Four Types of Common Errors of RCs

To examine the rank order of identification of the four types of common errors of RCs—pronoun retention, incorrect relative-marker morphology, inappropriate relative-marker omission and non-adjacency—in Iranian EFL learners, the percentages of correct answers on identifying the four types of common errors of RCs were calculated (Table 2).
Table 2 Correct Percentages of the Four Types of Common Errors of RCs in the Two Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Error Types</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ET-1</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ET-2</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ET-3</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ET-4</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings display that the university students had the same overall rank order of accuracy of the four error types of RCs, ET-1, pronoun retention, > ET-2, incorrect relative-marker morphology, > ET-3, inappropriate relative-marker omission, > ET-4, non-adjacency. Moreover, the combined results found from overall learning outcomes in this present study indicate that the rank order of identification of the four types of common errors of RCs in this study was ET-1, pronoun retention, (65%) > ET-2, incorrect relative-marker morphology, (53.1%) > ET-3, inappropriate relative-marker omission, (44.8%) > ET-4, non-adjacency (36.9%). As a result, the easiest of the four types of common errors of RCs for identification was ET-1, pronoun retention, (65%), while the most difficult type for identification was ET-2, non-adjacency, (36.9%). These findings are consistent with Gass’s (1982) and Izumi’s (2001) findings that in the rank order of frequency of the four common error types of RCs, the most frequent of the four common error types of RCs found in ESL/EFL learners was ET-4, non-adjacency, while the least frequent error type was ET-1, pronoun retention.

4. Discussion
In SLA, behaviorist theories of L2 learning have emphasized the idea of ‘difficulty’, which is defined as the amount of effort required to learn an L2 pattern (Ellis, 2002). The degree of difficulty depends primarily on the extent to which the L1 features were similar to or different from the L2 features. According to Ellis, where L1 and L2 features are identical, learning can take place easily through positive transfer of the L1 features, but where L1 and L2 features are different, learning difficulty can arise, and errors resulting from negative transfer are more likely (ibid).

In the field of SLA, many researchers (Ioup & Kruse, 1977; Kuno, 1974; Schumann, 1980; Stauble, 1978; Wong, 1991) have investigated RCs – relativization – in the ESL, EFL, or native contexts, especially the rank order of mastery or difficulty over the four types of English
RCs – OS, OO, SS, SO. Replicating the previous studies and to examine whether or not the rank order of mastery in Iranian university students were consistent with those of the previous studies, this study also investigated the rank order of mastery over the four types of RCs – OS, OO, SS, SO – in terms of the SCT testing the productive knowledge of the RCs by Iranian university learners.

In the current study, the findings showed that the rank order of mastery over the four RC types was OS (72.1%) > OO (34.8%) > SS (30.7%) > SO (26.7%), and that the easiest type was the OS RC type, while the most difficult type for mastery was the SO RC type. Kuno (1974) and Ioup and Kruse (1977) have suggested that the OS and OO RC types would be easier to acquire than SS and SO types as the two types of RC types – SS and SO – which embed the RC inside the sentence, interrupt the main clause by coming directly after the subject of the main clauses. Therefore, SS and SO RC types would be more difficult to process than SO and OO RC types that are placed at the end of the sentence and modify the object of the main clause. The findings of this study and previous studies are consistent since they show the same rank order of mastery over the four RC types.

Based on the results of the current study, students also experienced more cognitive processing constraints on the mastery over the SS and SO RC types than over the OS and OO RC types. In English, two types of RCs – the SS and SO – usually involve center embedding, so participants in this study must cognitively have more difficulty for the mastery than the SO and OO RC types. Kuno (1974) has also found that relativized subjects are more accessible than relativized objects, so the SS and OS RC types would be more accessible than the SO and OO RC types. The results of this study are consistent with those of Kuno by showing that the SS type was easier than the SO, and the OS type was easier than OO. Further, Schumann (1980) and Wong (1991) who have examined the percentage of times of the use of the four RC types produced by ESL learners have reported that the rank order of frequency of the use of the four RC types was OS > OO > SS > SO. In addition, Stauble (1978) who has investigated the frequency of these four types of RCs in samples of native speaker discourse has suggested that the rank order of frequency of four RCs was OS > OO > SS > SO. Therefore, the findings in the current study indicate that the rank order of mastery or frequency of occurrence over the four different types of RCs is identical among Iranian university students, ESL learners, and native speakers.
Many studies have focused on the context by which L2 acquisition was the result of L1 transfer (interlingual) or of creative construction (intralingual) (Ellis, 2002). Gass (1982) has also found the four types of common errors when L2 learners produced RCs: (1) pronoun retention, (2) inappropriate relative-marker morphology, and (3) incorrect relative-marker omission and (4) non-adjacency. Moreover, in their studies that investigated learner’s judgment of English relativization by using the four types of common errors suggested by Gass (1982) and Izumi (2001) reported the rank order of judgment of the four common error types of RCs in adult L2 learners: Pronoun retention > incorrect relative-marker morphology > inappropriate relative-marker omission > non-adjacency. For this reason, to investigate whether the rank order of mastery of the four types of common errors of RCs in Iranian EFL students was the same as the previous studies or not, this study examined what the rank order of mastery over the four types of common errors of RCs in Iranian EFL students was by the GJT, which tested the receptive knowledge of RCs. The results of overall learning outcomes on the GJT in both groups were consistent with those of Gass, and Izumi, showing that the rank order of mastery over the four types of common errors of RCs in Iranian EFL students was pronoun retention > incorrect relative-marker morphology > inappropriate relative-marker omission > non-adjacency.

Furthermore, the results of this study can be explained by language transfer. According to Ellis (2002), the L1 could both impede and facilitate the acquisition of the L2 with positive and negative transfer. Conducting a study to investigate the RC errors between two groups – one Arabic and Iranian, and the other Chinese and Japanese – Schachter (1974) has found that the first group of learners made more errors than the second group, despite the fact that RC structures existed in L1 languages of the first group, but did not exist in Japanese and Chinese (as cited in Ellis, 2002). In addition, the first group made the most frequent errors of the non-adjacency type, in which RCs are inappropriately embedded (Schachter, 1974). In addition, she has reported that for the Arabs and Iranians, L1 functioned as an impediment, while for the Japanese and Chinese, in spite of no L1 transfer, English RCs were better acquired.

As mentioned above, Persian does not have the same structures as English RCs. Therefore, according to Schachter (1974), this can be negative transfer by serving as an impediment that has caused the inherent difficulty of the acquisition of RCs. However, Persian partly has some similar syntactic features to English RCs, which serve as impediment or facilitator of L2 acquisition. To elaborate on this issue in detail, the following points are worth
mentioning.

First, the pronoun retention is permitted in Persian. Thus, if an Iranian EFL student makes this error when he judges English RCs, this error is from L1 transfer; then, this is negative transfer. But, in this study, the results of the rank order of mastery over the four common error types showed fewest errors in identifying the pronoun retention error type. Therefore, although Persian unlike English permits pronoun retention, it was the easiest error type for identification for Iranian students which means this error could not be transferred from their L1 (negative transfer). Thus, according to Heinrichs (2002), pronoun retention in RCs seems to be part of the developmental process for English learners and not to be related to their L1 at all.

Second, errors of incorrect relative-marker morphology could be transferred from L1 because Persian has one simple RC particle *ke*, while English has various types of RC markers, such as *who, which,* and *that.* Moreover, unlike English in which RC markers should be matched with the antecedent, Persian does not have these syntactic rules. Therefore, these inherent differences and the negative transfer between L1 and L2 RC markers can cause learning difficulty by making errors of incorrect relative-marker morphology due to cognitive processing constraints to the Iranian EFL learners when they judge English RC markers. Thus, in this study, it can be explained that both groups might have more errors judging the correct relative-marker morphology in the given sentences than in pronoun retention.

Third, errors of inappropriate relative-marker omission were not transferred from L1 (negative transfer). In Persian, RC particles should not be omitted. This means that in Persian, all RCs have RC particles as RC markers. If in Persian, RC particles are omitted, it can cause cognitive processing constraints. In addition, English puts RC markers in front of RCs; however, this is the case for RC markers that function as a subject of the RC, whereas no RC particles can function as a subject or object of the RCs in Persian. In English, the double function of RC markers – RC marker and subject or object of the RCs – can be one important negative transfer that causes more inherent difficulty by making more cognitive processing constraints than other error types. In this study, subjects also had much trouble judging errors of inappropriate relative-marker omission because of these various inherent differences and the negative transfer between L1 RC particles and L2 RC markers.

Fourth, errors of non-adjacency were not from L1 (negative transfer). Unlike English, Persian does not have the non-adjacency error type of RC. Moreover, in English, the position of
RCs depends on matching the antecedent that is modified by a RC and its function as a subject or object. For this reason, English RCs can be center embedding or at the end of the main clause. As assumed by Kuno (1974), when the embedded RCs interrupted the sentence by coming directly after the subject of the main clause, they would be more difficult to process than those RCs that modify the object of the main sentence and thus come at the end of the sentence. In the current study, the results support Kuno’s assumption. Based on the results of the GJT, center embedding could be one of the most important inherent differences that caused subjects’ cognitive processing constraints over any other factors because subjects had the most difficulty judging this error type.

5. Conclusion
As Ellis (2002) has stated where L1 and L2 features are identical, learning can take place easily through positive transfer of the L1 features, but where L1 and L2 features are different, learning difficulty can arise, and errors resulting from negative transfer are more likely. The overall learning outcomes showed for Iranian EFL learners the easiest type was the OS RC type, while the most difficult type for mastery was the SO RC type, which embed the RC inside the sentence. Therefore, SS and SO RC types would be more difficult to process than SO and OO RC types that are placed at the end of the sentence and modify the object of the main clause. The participants also experienced more cognitive processing constraints on the mastery over the SS and SO RC types than over the OS and OO RC types.

Regarding the role of transfer in this study, we can say L1 could impede or facilitate L2 acquisition for the judgment of the four types of common errors of RC. Although the two error types – pronoun retention and incorrect relative-marker morphology – could be more from L1 negative transfer, for the Iranian students they do not have more cognitive constraints than the other two error types – non-adjacency and inappropriate relative-marker omission. Further, it seems that morphologically simple error types such as pronoun retention and incorrect relative-marker morphology can enhance more students’ input than structurally and functionally difficult error types such as non-adjacency and inappropriate relative-marker omission. Moreover, the rank order of mastery over the four common error types of RCs are consistent with that of frequency suggested by Gass (1982), and Izumi (2001), in which error type of pronoun retention
showed the least error frequency, while error type of non-adjacency displayed the most error frequency.

References


