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Foreword

Welcome to volume nine and the fifth edition of 2013. The Iranian EFL Journal has had strong growth over the last few years with a monthly readership now exceeding 2500 readers. Statistically, readers of our journal are coming from almost eighty countries. For a journal examining the topics of EFL/ESL, Literature and Translation studies, the growth and readership has been pleasing. The bi-monthly Iranian EFL Journal has attracted many readers not only from the Middle East but also from different parts of the world and in this way; the number of our reviewers has also increased. We have increased the number of our reviewers and now, more than ninety five reviewers are cooperating with the journal and evaluate the articles. In this edition, we have presented twenty six articles, discussing different issues of EFL/ESL, literature and translation studies. In the first article, Maryam Bijami and Shohreh Raftari Present an article entitled, product, process, and genre approaches to writing: a comparison. In the second article of the issue, Mohammad Nabi Karimi and Hassan Nejadghanbar, have studied class-wide peer tutoring and students’ reading comprehension achievement. In the third article of the issue, Azadeh Nasri Nasrabad and Mansour Kousha present an article entitled, are false cognates really false friends? In the next article, the relationship between emotional intelligence (EQ) and the EFL learners’ oral translation performance is presented by Pantea Pahlavani and Mohammad H. Asroush. In the fifth article of the issue, Habib Soleimani, Ahmad Moinzadeh and Saeed Ketabi present multiple intelligences theory: a content analysis of Iranian high schools English language teaching textbooks. The next article which is a study of the level of awareness on discoursal aspects of translation process among B.A translation students is done by Davud Kuhi and Saleh Jadidi. In the seventh article of the issue, Roya Farahmandi, Masoud Zoghi and Nader Asadi have presented an investigation of students’ attitudes towards integrating synthetic and analytic approaches in syllabus design. In the eighth article of the issue the most difficult areas in English writing: a study on Iranian and Malaysian students’ and teachers’ perception is done by Atiyeh Kamyabi Gol and Nadia Hani Mabd Rashid. In the next article, the effect of idiom type and individual differences on idiom comprehension and strategy use of Iranian EFL students is studied by Noorolhoda Saberian and Zahra Fotovatnia. In the tenth article of the issue, Saeede Kavoshian, Gholamrez Medadian and Valiolah Yousefi have studied politeness may not always pay: a contrastive study of Iranian and American students’ E-mail requests. In the eleventh article a narrative analysis of The Adventures of Haji Baba of Isfahan is studied by Morteza Masoumnejad and Seyyed Amin Enjavi Nejad. In the twelfth article of the issue, a study of semantic opaqueness of social euphemisms in English via maxims of cooperative and politeness principles is presented by Samad Mirza Suzani and Lotfollah Yarmohammadi.
next article, Fatemeh Pour Ahmad, has presented an evaluation of the spectrum textbooks in Shokuh Language Institute. In the fourteenth article of the issue, discourse markers in the essay writing of EFL learners is studied by Mahboubeh Taghizadeh and Fahimeh Tajabadi. In the fifteenth article of the issue, Hassan Soleimani and Hajar Zanganeh present disposition in teacher education: a case of Iranian EFL teachers in pre-service training programs. In the next article, academic discourse and reading strategies: a contextual study to strategy use is studied by Zahra Zargaran. In the seventeenth article of the issue, Khosro Bahramlou and Hooshang Yazdani have presented using vocabulary profiles to predict academic achievement. The next article which is about designing and developing a native checklist to evaluate general English course books in Iran and comparing it with other existing checklists in the world is presented by Azar Hosseini Fatemi and Hafez Shatery. In the next article of the issue Omid Tabatabaei and Somaye Tajmir Riahi have presented an article entitled construct validity of IELTS reading comprehension module in Iranian context. In the twentieth article of the issue, a contrastive study on the complaint behavior among Canadian native speakers and Iranian EFL learners is presented by Vahid Ghahraman and Mahboube Nakhle. In the next article, a comparative analysis of grammatical cohesive ties in low and high intermediate EFL students' compositions is done by Masoud Zoghi and Fereshteh Asadzadian. In the next article of the issue Zahra Fakher Ajabshir has studied analyzing interactions in Iranian EFL classes from classroom discourse perspective. In the twenty third article of the issue, psycholinguistic processes in bilingual speech production is presented by Abolfazl Khodamoradi, Nasrin Khaki and Abdolmajid Nazari. In the next article, Zeinab Khalilian and Saeed Ketabi have presented an article entitled a semiotic analysis of transnational visual branding in the food industry. In the next article of the issue, a cross-disciplinary analysis of rhetorical structure of dissertation abstracts is presented by Saleh Arizavi, Hossein Shokouhi and Seyyed Ahmad Mousavi. In the last article of the issue, form-focused instruction and understanding bilingual mental lexicon: a case of the hegemony of semantic transfer is studied by Nassim Golaghaei and Firooz Sadighi.

We hope you enjoy this edition and look forward to your readership.
Title

Product, Process, and Genre Approaches to Writing: A Comparison

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Abstract

Writing teachers must concern many issues, such as how to emphasize the importance of correct spelling and punctuation in early draft, how to determine the various steps in the composition process, and how to determine a text for its context and purpose. Different approaches have dealt with these issues in the past decades. These approaches include product approach of the 1970s and the more recent process and genre approaches. This study seeks to analyses the strengths and weaknesses of product, process, and genre approaches to writing in terms of their view of writing and how they consider the process and development of
writing. It considers that the three approaches are supplementary. Moreover, an understanding of the rationales and critiques of these approaches is pivotal for English teachers who want to become effective instructors in writing.

**Keywords:** Process, Genre, Writing strategy, Linguistic knowledge, Familiarization

### 1. Introduction

The formal study of L2 writing, writers and writing instruction has a short but fruitful history going at least as far back as the 1960s. Research on L2 writing has grown over the last 40 years, and during the late 1980s and the early 1990s, second language writing began to evolve into an interdisciplinary field of inquiry with its own disciplinary foundation, i.e. replete with journals, monographs, edited collections, book series, annotated bibliographies, graduate courses and conferences as well as symposia (Matsuda et al., 2003).

Writing is a powerful versatile tool. It can be used to accomplish some goals (Graham, 2006). More to point, this skill is an indispensable index for learning. People use it to gather, maintain and transmit information (Graham et al., 2012). Moreover, studies indicate that writing is cardinal because this skill can improve attention or what cognitive psychologists call ‘working memory’ (Munoz et al., 2006).

It must be noted that the ability to write in English is pivotal for both teachers and students. English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers and students have some problems in teaching and learning writing. The only reason for EFL students in many countries to practice and do exercise in writing is to pass examinations or to get a good grade in the writing class (Yan, 2005). Thereby, this attitude of students to focus only on passing the examinations gives them no real sense of writing purpose (ibid). Since writing is known as an important skill, it seems essential to deal with one of the most important building blocks of writing, i.e. teaching writing. According to Some researchers, little time and attention is invested on the teaching of writing skill or using it as a means to support learning (Gilbert & Graham, 2010; Wyse, 2003).

There are some ways to improve teaching writing skill in order to benefit all writing activities. The main thing worth pointing out is that three main approaches to teaching writing namely, the process approach, the product approach, and genre approach have been advocated and used in the few decades of English language teaching (Hyland, 2003; Silva, 1990). These approaches have had their advocates and detractors over the years and are still under active
discussion and debate (Yan, 2005). These three approaches will separately be discussed in the following sections.

2. Product based approach

Pincas (1982a) posits a brief description of the product approach to writing. As she professes, this approach portrays writing as a skill which is largely about linguistic knowledge with attention focused on correct use of vocabulary, syntax and cohesive devices (pincas, 1982b, cited in Carlson, 2009). According to Gabrielatos (2002) product approach is "a traditional approach in which students is encouraged to mimic a model text which is usually presented and analyzed at an early stage"(p.5).

In terms of product approach, teachers concentrate on a final piece of writing and their measurement of the final draft is gained through the criteria of appropriate use of vocabulary, grammar and mechanical considerations such as spelling and punctuation, as well as content and organization (Brown, 1994). According to Badger & White (2000, cited in Chow, 2007, p. 28) learning to write captures four steps: namely, familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing, and free writing. Table1, below depicts these four writing stages.

Table 1: The writing stages of the product based approach

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1</th>
<th>Familiarization</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2</td>
<td>Controlled writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3</td>
<td>Guided writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4</td>
<td>Free writing</td>
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The first stage, familiarization, strives to vividly portray certain feature of a particular text to learners. In fact, students are given the structures of language and specific formats of the written text such as a story, essay or letter, that teachers believe that are pivotal for the students in order to master or reproduce (Al Khotaba, 2010). Learners in the controlled and guided writing stages attempt to practice skill by increasing independence till they get ready for the final step. (Carlos, 2009).

It must be noted that, the product approach received much criticism. Critics hold to the notion that this approach ignores the actual process used by students or many writers to create a piece of writing (Munzo, et al., 2006). In fact this approach is regarded as being inattentive to
the importance of the students' process skills which makes learners' knowledge poorly understood by teacher (Carlson, 2009). More to the point, the focus of this approach is on imitation, even though a few people can produce a perfect product on the first draft (Yan, 2005). Although critics warn that the infiltration of the constant error correction may affects students motivation and self-esteem, this approach has still some credibility because in some cases there will be a final draft that needs considerable attention to grammar, spelling, and punctuation (ibid). Most notably, the strength of product approach is that students are taught the feature they are supposed to create in their draft. In fact, this approach presents language structures in a text, provided by teacher and imitation of the language feature is attempted by students (Carlson, 2009) while ignoring learners’ cognitive activities such as how to form thought and how to practice thoughts (Haiying et al., 2010).

3. Process based approach

The process based approach to writing appeared in the mid-1970s. This approach has been advocated against the product approach of teaching writing by many researchers. According to Flower (1989), process writing was viewed as a reaction to the traditional product based approach, so it provided the need to verify the natural writing process with writing in one's mother tongue. Nunan (1991) contends that process approach emphasizes the steps included in producing a piece of work, moreover, creating a piece of writing cannot be perfect, but rather the writer will get closer to create perfect drafts by producing, reflecting, discussing and reworking successive drafts of a text. According to Graham and Stanley (1993) process approach is a creative act which needs enough time and positive feedback in order to be perfectly accomplished. Tribble (1996) states that process approaches explain writing activities which make learners to move from the generation of ideas and data collection by the publication of a completed text (p.37).Badger and White (2000) state that process approach identifies writing development as an unconscious process which occurs when doing exercise in writing skills are facilitated by teacher. Most importantly, process approach has a monolithic view of writing.

Moreover, a process approach tends to focus more on different classroom activities which promote the development of language use: brainstorming, group discussion and rewriting (Steele, 1992; Hasan & Akhand, 2010).It needs to be said that the process approach captures four steps in writing, namely, pre writing, drafting, revising, and editing .These are cyclical processes so that writers may return to pre-writing (Tribble in Munoz et al., 2006, p.4).
There are many potential advantages to the process writing approach (Graham & Harris, 1997). Some instances to name are as follow:

1) Motivation for students to plan, drafts, and revise.
2) Instruction in writing via mini lessons, conferences, is useful and teachable moments which improve the quality of writing.
3) Motivation for writing should be enhanced as collaboration, personal responsibility, personal attention, and positive learning environment are stressed (Graham & Sandmel, 2011).

Despite the possible advantages, the process approach to writing is not without criticism (Baines et al., 1999). Some critics hold to the notion that instruction provided in process writing classroom is not powerful enough to ensure that students, especially students experiencing difficulty with writing, acquire needed writing skills and processes. Critics claim that not enough attention is devoted to mastering fundamental skills, such as handwriting, spelling, and sentence construction. They also contend that very little time is allocated to teaching students' strategies for doing basic writing processes such as planning & revising.

Approximately, all current composition theorists make a distinction between process oriented and product oriented writing. Murray (1980) mentions it as a distinction between internal and external revision. It means that revision for clarifying meaning for oneself versus revising for clarifying meaning for the reader. More to the point, Nunan (2001) explains, product approach focuses on writing task which the learner imitates, copies and transforms teacher supplied models, and process approach focuses on the steps involved in creating a piece of work. Steele (2004) cited in Hasan & Akhand, (2010, p.80) summarized the comparison of these two approaches. Table 2, shows product and process writing comparison.

Table 2. Product and process writing: A comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process approach</th>
<th>Product approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text as a resource for comparison</td>
<td>Imitate model text</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ideas as starting point</td>
<td>Organization of ideas are more important than ideas themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than one draft</td>
<td>One draft</td>
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</tbody>
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More global, focused on purpose, theme Features highlighted including
text type i.e. reader is emphasized
controlled practice of those features
Collaborative
Individual
Focus on creative process
Focus on end product


Despite the fact that the explanations of the distinction between process approach and product approach among these theorists differ, there is one pivotal point upon which they all agree: good product depends on good process (Sun and Feng, 2009).

4. Genre based Approach

Genre based approach as mentioned in the introduction is the third main approach to writing instruction. The notion of genre and its application in language teaching and learning received much attention in the last decade (Hyland, 2007). According to Hyland (2007) Genre refers to abstract, socially recognized ways of using language. Martin (2009) also explains genre as a staged goal- oriented social process. This definition captures (i) staged: because it usually takes us more than one phase of meaning to work through a genre, (ii) goal-oriented: because unfolding phases are designed to accomplish something and we feel a sense of frustration or incompleteness if we are stopped, and (iii) social: because we undertake genres interactively with others. According to Swales (1990) genre is defined as "a distinctive category of discourse of any type, spoken or written" (p.33) which renders as "responses by speakers, or writers to the demands of a social context" (Johns, 2002, p.3).

It must be noted that, there are strong similarities between genre and product approaches. In fact, genre approach shares many common features with Product approach. Genre approach can be regarded as an extension of product approach (Badger and White, 2000). Genre approach, like product approach, portrays writing as mainly linguistic, but unlike product approach, it stresses that writing is different from the social context in which it is produced. There are different kinds of writing, namely sales letters, research articles, and reports which are linked with different situations (Flowerdew, 1993). According to Carlson (2009) genre approach focuses on linguistic knowledge but considers writing in different social contexts. In genre approach, writer is supposed to have a relationship with the audience and the structural draft.

More importantly, this approach considers toward whom the piece of writing is directed, what the product looks like, and if the style is suitable for the purpose or not (ibid).
Hammond (cited in Carlson, 2009. p.23) claims that the genre based approach to writing is dealt with the context in which children write, the texts they create, and the linguistic system which underlies oral and written texts. That is, it emphasize on how students’ written texts are related to culture and situation in which they are produced.

It must be stated that the concept of genre and the potential pedagogical value of genre based writing pedagogies have been emphasized by a number of composition schools (Belcher, 2004; Byrnes, 2009; Byrnes et al., 2006; Cheng, 2006, 2007, 2008a, 2008b; Dovey, 2010; Johns, 1997, 2003, 2008; Matsuda et al., 2003; Tardy, 2005, 2006). Based upon genre pedagogy, the purpose and the audience of a text are the two important variables that writers must consider to perform social actions (Pasquarell, 2006). According to writing researchers, writers need to consider the vicinity of purpose setting and audience selection (p.7).

Genre based approach has some advantages. The essential advantage of genre based approach over other writing pedagogies for L2 writers is that this approach strives to promote L2 writers' understanding of the relationship between the communicative purpose and the features of a text at every discourse level (John, 1997); moreover, this approach helps writers become aware that texts are composed for different types of readers in response to particular social situations and to accomplish certain social goals. Most importantly, the main advantages of genre pedagogy according to Hyland (2004, cited in Hyland, 2007, p.150) are mentioned in table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Advantages of genre approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Systematic</td>
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<td>Needs-based</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supportive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empowering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical</td>
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<td>Consciousness: increasing teachers' awareness of texts to confidently advise students raising on writing</td>
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5. Conclusion
Throughout the years, different approaches have proposed how to teach writing. After the product approach was discredited, two interactive and dynamic process and product approaches came to appear. Although they have advantages and disadvantages, process and genre approaches have made valuable contributions to the writing class. In fact, their techniques become even more effective when merged to create the process genre approach, which helps students their individuals writing processes to construct a text in a familiar genre.

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Dovey, T. (2010). Facilitating writing from sources: A focus on both process and product.


Title

Class-Wide Peer Tutoring and Students’ Reading Comprehension Achievement

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Abstract

The main objective of the present study was to investigate the impact of class-wide peer tutoring on students’ reading comprehension achievement in English as a foreign language (EFL). In so doing, two third-grade intact classes (n=60 students), in an Iranian junior high school, were randomly assigned to control and experimental conditions. The experimental group was divided into six groups of five, a tutor was assigned to each group and students worked in their groups by following the steps involved in peer tutoring cycle, whereas the control group followed the conventional method in which students followed an individualistic instructional approach. Two different domain-referenced multiple-choice reading comprehension tests were used to assess the reading comprehension ability of the students on a pretest and posttest. The results of independent samples T-test showed a statistically significant difference at P≤0.05 that can be attributed to the effect of working in groups on the reading comprehension.

Keywords: Peer tutoring; Reading comprehension; Conventional method
1. Introduction

Reading comprehension, the construction of meaning from text is generally considered one of the central cognitive skills young students acquire during their school years (Mason, 2004). Reading comprehension which is a significant requirement for permanent learning in adulthood, lays the ground for knowledge acquisition in different fields of study taught at primary and secondary schools (Alvermann & Earle, 2003). It is widely acknowledged that reading plays an important role in improving the overall language competence in English and is regarded as the core of English teaching (Zuo, 2011). Conventional methods of teaching reading comprehension devote the major share of class time to structural analysis of the readings, rigid vocabulary memorization and translational practices and usually view reading as a passive skill (Marzban, 2011). Teachers mostly do not have the time to devote individual attention to students. Both Vygotsky and Piaget took notice of the importance of social interactions as having positive effects on students learning (Ormrond, 2004). The social constructivism claims that people “work together to make sense of their world” (while) “helping one another, they may be able to interpret and understand the book in ways that they may not have been able to do on their own” (cited in Ormrond, 2004, p, 180). Along the same lines, Day (1983) argued that when children interact with adults or more able peers, their learning is mediated so that they can mostly do tasks that they would not be able to do on their own. The Piagetian theory of cognitive development (Piaget, 1926) posits that interaction with others enhances the learning of social-arbitrary knowledge such as language whereby learners acquire higher order skills and concepts. Furthermore, “CL (cooperative learning) correlates to language acquisition theory in the domains of comprehensible input and output, i+1 discourse, low affective filter, bridging social language and academic language, and combining language and content learning”’( Ghaith, 2001. p, 2). Also, Kagan (1996, p. 1) argued that “language acquisition is determined by a complex interaction of a number of critical input, output, and context variables” and that cooperative learning “has a dramatic positive impact on almost all variables critical to language acquisition.” Gillies (2003) noted that when children work cooperatively together, they learn to give and receive help, share their ideas and listen to other students’ perspectives, seek new ways of clarifying differences, resolving problems, and constructing new understandings and knowledge. The result is that students attain higher academic outcomes and get more motivated to achieve than they would be if they worked alone. It is a basic tenet of cooperative learning that when group members are linked together, they will actively assist each other to ensure that the task
is completed and the group’s goal obtained (Deutsch, 1949). They achieve this by providing help and assistance with the task, sharing resources, and encouraging each other’s efforts. As a consequence, group members who work cooperatively outperform students who work by themselves or in competition with each other (as they do in traditional classrooms) (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Much along the same lines, Shirk (1995) believes that collaboration increases motivation and learning because it provides for experiential problem solving. Furthermore, children can take greater responsibility for their learning while teachers serve as facilitators by arranging the learning environment and curriculum to enhance learning (Abassi, 2004). In contrast to the situation in which the teacher is the only person who teaches and conveys the information, in peer tutoring programs, students help each other to learn the material. “Due to the intimacy and friendship among students they can talk to each other without inhibition, and understand each other better.” (Furthermore) “they can ask questions when they are confused, without fear of being embarrassed in front of the whole class” (Nejadghanbar & Mohammadpour, 2012. p. 24). While some teachers feel that peer tutoring may lead to giving up classroom control and creating too much noise in the classroom, some others believe that, students are not actually screaming or yelling. They are explaining a subject or concept in a normal tone of voice. Contrary to what was stated above, most classes in Iran are teacher dominated, with the teacher expected to be the only source of knowledge conveying all the information. The mindset that the best teaching comes from the teacher still exists. Mostly fed by this mindset, few studies have been conducted to examine the effectiveness of peer tutoring on students’ reading comprehension in the Iranian context, so the present study aims to investigate whether peer tutoring is of any significance in promoting students’ reading comprehension. In so doing, the following research question was addressed:

- Is there any relationship between peer tutoring and students’ achievement in reading comprehension?

2. Review of literature

Andrew Bell developed the first systematic use of peer tutoring in 1789 (Topping, 1988), by which students could teach each other (Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes, & Simmons, 1997). Ghaith and Yaghi (1998) attempted to investigate the effect of cooperative learning on the acquisition of English as a Second language (ESL) rules and mechanics. There were experimental groups which received instruction according to cooperative learning methods of student teams achievements division (STAD), whereas the control groups followed an individualistic
instructional approach, the students were pre-tested and post-tested. Finally, the results demonstrated that there was no significant difference between the control and experimental groups on the post-tests. Moreover, Delquadri (1989) conducted a longitudinal investigation in which an experimental low-socioeconomic status (low-SES) group received class-wide peer tutoring implemented by their teachers during each grade from first through fourth while a low-SES control group and a high-socioeconomic status (high-SES) comparison group received teacher-designed instruction. Results indicated that the experimental group and the comparison group, with distinctly different ecological arrangement and significantly higher levels of academic engagement, gained significantly better results than did the control group.

In a study by Gillies (2003), the effect of cooperative learning on junior high school students who worked in structured and unstructured cooperative groups was probed. The results showed that the children in the structured groups were more willing to work with others on the assigned tasks and provided more elaborate help and assistance to each other than their peer in the unstructured groups. Cramer (2004) also conducted a study to see whether adoption of peer tutoring programs at middle school levels would lead to increased reading comprehension of Hispanic ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) learners. There were two experimental groups, in comparison with two control groups. After a nine week experiment, the results showed the effectiveness of the treatment. In another study, Cheng and Ku (2009) investigated the effects of reciprocal peer tutoring (RPT) on students’ achievement, motivation and attitudes. To do so, four sections of an educational technology course were randomly assigned to groups to tutor and support each other, while participants in non-PRT group worked individually. The results indicated that the PRT and non-PRT groups did not differ on student achievement and motivation. As an example of a study in an Iranian context, Jalilfar (2010) attempted to examine the effect of student team achievement divisions (STAD) and group investigation (GI) on students’ reading comprehension of English as a foreign language. The results of his study showed that student team achievement divisions’ technique was more effective than conventional instruction (CI) and GI technique in improving EFL reading achievement of college students at the pre-intermediate level of English. Finally, Fisher (2001) carried out a secondary level study on the effect of peer tutoring. The study investigated how tutoring influenced tutors themselves. It included the use of 7th grade struggling readers altering their time in the reading resource room with time spent acting as tutors for first and second grade children in a cross age tutoring program. The seventh grade readers improved their scores on their yearly Gates-MacGinitie reading test when compared with those who did not participate in the program.
3. Method

3.1. Participants
The participants of the study were all third-grade students of a junior high school (n=60 students) in Karaj, Iran. All of them were males, with a mean age of 15 years. The participants all came from roughly similar socioeconomic backgrounds and the same teacher handled both the control and experimental groups. The participants were considered homogenized based on schools’ criteria. The first language of the participants was Turkish and their second language was Persian.

3.2. Instrumentation
Two different (a pretest and a posttest) multiple-choice reading comprehension tests were utilized in the present study. A pretest was administered to both control and experimental groups to control for any initial differences in their performance. Similarly, a post-test was administered to both groups to measure their achievement during the experiment. Both the pretest and the posttest were domain-referenced tests that covered the content domains targeted prior to the study in the case of the pretest and during the period of investigation in the case of the posttest.

3.3. Procedure
Before the start of the study, during the first six weeks of the educational year, both classes had studied three lessons following the conventional method (individualistic approach), which mostly consists of structural analysis of the passages, rigid vocabulary memorization, and, translational exercises which view reading as a passive skill (Marzban, 2010). The context was teacher-centered, and full of individual silent reading, individual translation and teacher questioning for comprehension, then a pretest was administered to see the differences in the performance of both groups. When the researchers started this investigation, a change was introduced and the randomly assigned experimental group (n=30) started working in six groups of five and a peer tutor was assigned to each group. The teacher tried to arrange the groups by taking personality traits into consideration to lessen the factors that might influence the results of the study. The teacher also tried to choose tutors and tutees meticulously, by considering their leadership qualities, their sense of responsibility, and their ability to stimulate the interest of other students. The tutors were briefed on the steps involved in a peer tutoring cycle or session through which, they can efficiently monitor their tutoring sessions. The steps included:
A) Greeting and setting a learning environment.
B) Using questions, on the part of tutors, to properly define his peer tutees’ problems and concerns.
C) Breaking the information into understandable portions.
D) Encouraging the students to explain what they have learned.
E) Using positive statements to convey to the students that his understanding of the subject matter is correct.
F) Closing. (www.e.how.com/about_peertutoring.html) The peer tutors were also taught to:
Establish good rapport with their peers, get prepared at home by studying the reading, be confident, know that most teachers, tutors and educators do not know “everything”, and persuade them to ask the teacher for help if they need (www.e.how.com/about_peertutoring.html).

The teacher monitored the groups’ work in the experimental group, helped students if they needed and tried to persuade them to work cooperatively. On the other hand, the control group followed their conventional approach in a teacher-centered context, which was full of individual silent reading, individual translation and teacher questioning for comprehension. The same material was used for both groups. The treatment lasted for six weeks and consisted of three instructional lessons with same teacher teaching both groups.

3.4. Design
The research design for this study was two groups pre-post-test design (intact group design):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>T1</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>T2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

4. Results
After collecting the data and scoring the tests, statistical analyses were performed using SPSS software. In order to make sure that the participants in both control and experimental groups were at the same proficiency level at the beginning of the study, concerning the reading comprehension, a 10-item test in reading comprehension was used. As shown in table 1 the differences between the groups on the pretest is not significant t (58) = 673, p > .05. This suggests that students in two groups were homogeneous in the reading comprehension at the beginning of the study.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Test</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Levene’s Test for Equivalence of Variances</th>
<th>T-Test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16.2333</td>
<td>2.38795</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15.9767</td>
<td>2.48420</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.914</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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As table 2 shows, the Independent Sample T-test results indicates that there is meaningful difference between the means of two groups at 0.05 level of significance $t(58) = -3.18, p < .05$, with the mean score for the control group ($M = 16.10$) being lower than that of the experimental group ($M = 17.80$). This means that peer tutoring had a positive effect on reading comprehension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.Deviation</th>
<th>Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>T-Test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17.80</td>
<td>1.789</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to measure and compare the amount of the progress in each group, the scores of the participants on both pretest and posttest were submitted to a paired samples t-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The tests</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest. Con</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16.233</td>
<td>2.38795</td>
<td>.43598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest. Con</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16.100</td>
<td>2.30965</td>
<td>.42168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in Table 3, there is not a significant difference between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test in the control group $t(29) = .254, p > .05$. In fact, the results of Table 4 further confirm the results reported in Table 3.

According to the results of Table 5, there is a significant difference between the performance of participants in the experimental group in the pre-test and the post-test. Since, the mean score for participants in the pretest is (15.97) which is lower than the mean score for subjects.
in the posttest (17.80). Therefore, subjects performed better in the post-test than in the pre-
test. Table 6 demonstrates that the difference between the performances of subjects in the
experimental group in the pre-test and the post-test is significant, since the t (29) = -3.64, p
<.05. Accordingly it can be concluded that peer-tutoring has positive effects on improving
(Iranian) EFL learners’ reading comprehension ability.

5. Discussion and conclusion
The purpose of this study was to examine the effectiveness of peer tutoring as an instructional
tool at promoting the reading comprehension of students at junior high school. The results of
this study support the peer tutoring effectiveness in increasing the reading comprehension
proficiency of these students. Before applying the treatment there was not a significant
difference in the performance of the students on the pretest, but after applying the treatment
there was a significant difference between the performance of experimental and control
groups. So, in light of the findings presented above, it is advisable that Iranian EFL teachers
take notice of the importance and usefulness of peer tutoring and working in groups in
increasing the outcome of English courses and they should try to implement it in their classes.
Working in groups and receiving support from the peers can be a strong motivator for
unmotivated, anxious, and shy learners. It can also help students with an introverted
personality to participate and share to group more. Students can be motivated when they
receive feedback from their peers and are encouraged and supported for their contributions.
Furthermore, as Maheady, Harper, and Mallette (2001) noted, peer tutoring enables the
teacher to share the responsibility of instruction with students, hence causing his or her role to
change from a primary deliverer of instruction to a facilitator.

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Title

Are False Cognates Really False Friends?

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Abstract

There are lexical items in different languages which share similar phonological forms but whose meanings diverge to various degrees; as a result, they can easily mislead their users and create communication difficulties. The present study aims to examine two research questions: a) is it difficult for Iranian EFL learners to acquire English lexical items that have same pronunciations in L1 but their meanings are different? b) what kind of the strategies Persian EFL learners use to learn these lexical items? The participants were 35 students at intermediate level of language proficiency. The teacher use explicit instruction for teaching the vocabularies. A vocabulary test was used as instruments for data collection. The test consisted of 30 English words (15 false cognates. And 15 noncognates).All subjects were interviewed at the end of the test. Our findings suggest that the majority of the students did not have difficulty in learning these lexical items and they even learn them faster than noncognates. And most learners use word association and repetition strategies in order to learn these lexical items.

Keywords: Noncognates, False cognates, Vocabulary learning strategies
1. Introduction

Learning vocabulary is one of the important steps of learning a second language, yet a learner never finishes vocabulary acquisition. “Vocabulary is central to language and of critical importance to the typical language learner” (Zimmerman 1997). Lack of vocabulary knowledge will result in lack of meaningful communication as Wilkins (1972) points out: "Without grammar, very little can be conveyed. Without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed”.

Recent research has confirmed strongly what language teachers have always known i.e. the mother tongue has a strong influence on the way a second language is learnt and used. (e.g. Kellerman 1984, Kellerman and Smith 1986, Ringbom 1987, Odlin 1989, Perdue 1993)

There are two major types of relationship between target words and words in L1 (interlingual relationships):

1. Similarity of form of L1 and L2 words: words that are similar both in form and meaning in the same context are called "cognates". And they are supposed to be easier for learning. (Laufer, 1997) On the other hand, words which are similar in form but different in meaning are called "false cognates" or false friends (Moss, 1992). Such resemblances can of course be misleading, and numerous errors, both receptive and productive, are caused by 'false friends' in related languages. False cognates cause problems for learners as they often tend to associate similarity of form with similarity of meaning in L1 and L2. (Laufer, 1997).

2. Meaning relations between words in L1 and L2. When the forms are different but there are somehow related in meaning.

When a word in the second language is phonologically similar to a word in the native language, one often assumes they also share similar meanings. As it was mentioned before, false cognates are equal or similar in pronunciation or form in two languages but have different etymologies and different meanings. Examples of these, the word "eel" which means a "a long thin fish like a snake" in English but in Persian language it means " a tribe" or the term "messy" that means "untidy" in English but " a dish made of copper" in Persian. So, the aural stimulus reaching the brain may become a misleading clue for the L2 learner lacking the required background knowledge, or the cognitive ability to discriminate stimuli. In these cases, the learning strategies related to meaning deduction of new words may turn into afloat for intermediate students who do not master other contextual clues.
But is it really true that False Cognates make the vocabulary learning more difficult? As a language teacher, the researchers have noticed that the students don’t have difficulty in learning false cognates in their classes.

This study addresses two major research questions:

1) Is it difficult for Iranian EFL learners to acquire the false cognates (English word which have the same pronunciation in L1 and L2)?

2) What are the strategies that EFL learners use to learn the false cognates?

2. Review of the Related Literature

False friends or false cognates have been extensively studied in different language areas: translation studies, language teaching, lexicography or contrastive linguistics. This expression goes back to 1928, when Koessler and Derocquigny used the term faux amis in their well-known book Les Faux Amis, ou les Trahisons du Vocabulaire Anglais.

False cognates have been of interest to psycholinguists, to cognitive psychologists, as well as to researchers investigating the word recognition process in bilinguals. Cognitive psychologists have suggested that cognates are pre-existing schemas which cause the automatic pairing of stimulus and response without allowing the speaker to pay any attention to the semantic differences between the stimulus and the response (Baddeley 1966, Shiffrin & Schneider 1977, both cited in Shlesinger & Malkiel 2005). Kirsner et al. (1993) proposed a model of bilingual lexical representation, according to which, words with common morphology, and not exclusively cognates, are stored together in clusters. Cognate translations share the same root morpheme, and thus, they are stored within the same morphological cluster, regardless of language (see also Cristoffanini et al. 1986). On the other hand, relevant studies have shown that false cognates can become particularly problematic for translators (cf. Schlesinger & Malkiel 2005) and second language learner (Mattheoudakis 1998, Meara 1993). In the case of translation or interpreting, false cognates are particularly problematic and have often deceived not only novices but also highly experienced translators and interpreters (Bastin 2000, Malkiel 2006, Shlesinger & Malkiel 2005, Venuti 2002).

With regard to language learners, results of recent studies indicate that cognates provide learners with a significant advantage: in particular, L2 learners acquire and recall cognate translations more easily. What is more, fewer learning sessions are needed to help them recall cognates than non-cognates and response latencies in translating cognates are faster than for
non-cognates (de Groot & Keijzer 2000, Ellis and Beaton 1993). Such findings actually suggest that cognates can be a significant source of positive transfer and can facilitate vocabulary acquisition in L2 as they offer an encouraging springboard into learning a new language (see also Nation 1990, Odlin 1989, Ringbom 1987). At the same time, however, false cognates have been found to be a persistent source of interference for the second language learner when morpho-phonological similarity between an L1 and an L2 word misleads them to assume semantic similarity as well. (Altarriba & Mathis 1997, Talamas et al. 1999). False friends are particularly problematic when they share some aspects of their meaning or use (partial false friends) rather than when their meanings are completely unrelated (absolute false friends). Unfortunately, partial false friends are far more frequent than absolute false friends (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995).

Hall (2002) also distinguishes between two types of false cognate: (i) true false cognates, and (ii) indirect cognates. James (1998) makes a similar distinction between "totally deceptive" and "partially deceptive" cognates. A true false cognate would be the words which have the same pronunciation in both languages but completely different meaning. An indirect cognate, on the other hand, shares some critical amount of salient features in conceptual memory, of which the learner may be consciously aware. Hall (2002) believes that the learner have more problem in acquiring the true false cognates.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants
The research was conducted at intermediate level of language proficiency (high school level). The sample group consisted of 180 Persian students from six English classes taught by the same teacher and using the same textbook in a high school located in Isfahan. They were pre-tested using an established general English language proficiency test (The Nelson proficiency test). Measurement of standard deviation was used as a criterion for subject selection. Therefore 35 learners were selected.

3.2. Instrumentation
A vocabulary test was used as instruments for data collection. The test consisted of 30 English words 15 words have the same pronunciation in both Persian and English but they have different meaning (false cognate). And 15 others had a different pronunciation and meaning in two Languages. All the vocabularies were mixed.
3.3. Procedure

A pretest was administered in English classes between the 4th and 14th of October in 2012 by the researchers in order to ensure that the language learners didn’t know any of the word beforehand. Five learners know some of the words meaning. They were omitted from the test.

The teacher use explicit instruction for teaching the vocabularies, such as providing definitions, providing examples and illustrations. The teacher asked them not to write any of the word in their notebook. They should just listen to their teacher. All the thirty words were taught in one session. Two weeks later, the same test was administered again as a post-test to see how well vocabulary was retained. After the collection and analysis of the test items, interviews were made to get more specific observation. The questions are mainly about what kind of strategies they use for learning the false cognates. All EFL learners were interviewed separately to see whether they learn false cognates easier when they learn vocabulary.

4. Result and Discussion

To investigate the first research question, the test items were divided into two categories; a) those words which have the same pronunciations in L1 and L2 but different meaning (false cognates)b) those words which have different pronunciation in L1 and L2. The Participants’ responses were examined according to each of these categories and were tabulated by percentages.

The result shows that most of EFL learners had learned the words in group A( the word with the same pronunciation), only four students in high school group got a complete score in both A and B group .The descriptive statistics of learners’ scores are shown in table 2.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description tabulation of learners’ scores on vocabulary tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Numbers show the Learners’ score on Vocabulary Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of post-test showed a significant degree of attrition on the recall of vocabulary items among subjects. It was noticed that false cognates are less subject to attrition and less difficult to retrieve than other vocabulary items. A comparison of the mean scores of
vocabulary tests is illustrated in figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*The Graph of the mean scores of vocabulary tests*

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![Graph of mean scores of vocabulary tests](image)

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**Table 2.**

*Analysis of learners’ scores on vocabulary tests; Independent Samples Test*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The analysis of learners’ scores on the pretest and post test</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>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>2.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>57.9 4</td>
<td>0.038</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These scores were subjected to a series of *t*-tests to verify whether the differences were significant. The *t*-tests showed that the differences were statistically significant at at least $p \leq 0.038$. This paper results in some interesting and revealing findings.

As for the first research question, most of the Persian learners participated in this study can learn the false cognates easier and faster than non-cognates. The results indicate that Persian EFL learners squire and recall false cognates better than noncognates words. This results is completely different to what most writers (Duran Escribano, 2004; Hall, 2002; Lerchundi and Moreno, 1999; James 1998; Laufer, B. 1997; Holmes and Ramos, 1993) have because false cognates have been found to be persistent source of interference for second language learners they mislead learners to assume semantic similarity as well. For
example, Duran Escribano, (2004) believes that "If the new word we find in a second language is homographic to a known word in our first language, but with a different meaning, a 'false friend', a misleading visual stimulus reaches our brain resulting in its wrong interpretation".

Hall( 2002) believes that learners have problem in acquiring the false cognates. Laufer (1997) also claims that False cognates cause problems for learners as they often tend to associate similarity of form with similarity of meaning in L1 and L2.

The answer to the second research question was based on the analysis of attitudes of learners in the interview. Most learners agreed that learning false cognates are easier than noncognates. Most of them believed that false cognates are funnier and interesting. Because they have already known the pronunciation they only need to learn its L2 meaning. By making contrast between L1 and L2 meaning, they can learn them easily. Most of them (85%) believed that word association between L1 and L2 words and repetition strategies can also be used as a technique for learning noncognates and false cognates.

5. Conclusion

False cognates are words which are equal in pronunciation or form in two languages but have different meanings; As a result, they can easily mislead their users and create communication difficulties. The present study aims to examine two research questions. a) Is it difficult for Iranian EFL learners to acquire the false cognates? b) What kind of the strategies Persian EFL learners use to learn the false cognates? The main finding of this empirical study is that Persian EFL learners learn false cognates faster and easier than noncognate Most of them believed that false cognates are more funny and interesting. Because they have already known the pronunciation in their L1, they only need to learn its L2 meanings.

The findings of this research may be helpful for teachers in order to improve EFL learners’ perception and awareness in vocabulary learning strategies. Teachers could teach some strategies and guide learners to use these strategies in their learning process. Furthermore, studies can be conducted concerning how to adapt these strategies in classroom teaching and learning and how to train learners to use vocabulary learning strategies efficiently.

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Title
The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and the EFL Learners’ Oral Translation Performance

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Abstract
As in the process of any second language performance, the learners’ mind would be involved continuously, the level of Emotional intelligence might be one of the possible factors manipulating the translators’ mind as they produce any piece of oral translation. The present study is concerned to investigate whether there is a relationship between the Iranian EFL learners’ level of EQ and their success in English-Persian oral translation performance. To this end, after administrating a proficiency test for the purpose of homogenizing the learners, 72 out of 90 senior university students in English translation major were chosen as the subjects of this study. Then all the participants received oral translation tips and techniques from the instructor and worked on the same tasks. At the end, both a final oral translation test and a Bar-On (1997) EQ questionnaire were administered for all the subjects. To answer the research question the correlation between the final oral translation score and the total score of EQ test was calculated. The result showed there was a positive and significant relationship between the learners’ EQ and their success in oral translation performance. Furthermore, by applying the statistical procedure of regression, the researchers figured out which categories in
EQ might have more effect on the learners’ success in oral translation. To sum up, teachers and students could benefit more if they focus on strategies which empower these subcategories for the goal of second language oral translation.

**Keywords**: Translation, Oral translation, Emotional intelligence

1. **Introduction**

If you stop and think, you will come to this issue that everything in life is translation such as translating our feelings into actions. When we put anything into words, we translate our thoughts. Translating from one language into another is only the most obvious form of an activity which is perhaps the most common of all human activities. This maybe the reason people usually take translation for granted as something that does not require any special effort, and at the same time so challenging and full of possibilities. There is nothing easy or simple about translation, even as there is nothing easy or simple about any human activity. It might only look easy because we are used to doing it. Translation in the formal sense deals with human language, the most common yet the most complex and hallowed of human functions. Language is what makes us who we are. Language can work miracles. Language can kill, and language can heal. Transmitting meaning from one language to another brings people together, helps them share each other’s culture, benefit from each other’s experience, and makes them aware of how much they all have in common.

2. **Review of the Related Literature**

As this paper investigates the relationship between emotional intelligence and the EFL learners’ oral translation, the following sections tries to illustrate the relationship between these two concepts and second language learning.

2.1. **Second language translation and oral translation**

The translator, of course, is a ‘special category of a communicator’ (Hatim & Mason, 1997) who more and more tries to closely interact with both source and target texts of all kinds, for the particular purposes and particular recipients and eventually to specific effect. The translator has his own feeling about language and his translation. This feeling consists of a ‘sixth sense’ (Newmark, 1988) but it is included of intelligence and sensitivity as well as knowledge. The combination of all these feelings comes into play in the task of translation. As translation is a communicative activity practiced within a meaningful context (Nord, 1997), it could be concluded that oral translation is one the most common mode of it.
Although Dollerup and Linegaard (1994) consider some differences between written and oral translation, they believe both types of translation must respect “(1) norms of good usage (avoiding elements considered extremely vulgar or offensive if they appear in written discourse), and (2) readability (textual coherence being dependent on phenomena such as word order, repetition, a certain amount of redundancy discourse markers and pragmatic connectors that are very frequent in oral discourse” (p.282).

There are two types of oral translation: *consecutive* and *simultaneous* which differ in methodology, price and necessary technical equipment. The former is applied during seminars or business meetings where the groups are small and have to interact, presentations, visits to public notary offices, reaching specific business agreements and similar. After addressing those present, the speaker makes a break to allow a translation of what has been said, and the latter is applied during congresses, conferences, seminars, workshops and business meetings which include a larger number of participants. The presentation here is conducted in a systematic manner with somewhat restricted interactivity and closeness and much faster than the first type which microphones, earphones and a booth are necessary technical equipment. Nowadays, the oral translation courses at the Universities which have foreign language translation majors are described and suggestions not only as skill but also as an opportunity for the students’ future professions.

**2.2. Emotional Intelligence and second language learning**

In the 20th century, IQ has been considered as an important part of human intelligence, in accordance with growing evidence in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century which an important part of human intelligence is considered as EQ(Emotional Intelligence). Theorists of emotional intelligence with psychological reasons have distinguished EQ from IQ (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002). It is crucial to say that both EQ and IQ are the extension of ability not the ability itself. Theorists believe that “IQ tells us what we can do, however EQ tells us what we should do” (Hatch & Kornhaber, 2006, p. 63). Our ability for recognition, rational, and abstract thinking are related to IQ, but EQ is considered with using IQ for achieving success in our lives. The emotional intelligence would be an important element in human resources in terms of “planning, job profiling, recruitment interviewing and selection, management development, customer relations and customer service, and even more” (Serrat 2009, p. 50). Accordingly, emotional intelligence represents an ability to use emotions to improve thinking as well as to have a valid reason with emotions.

Although different competing and sometimes conflicting components have been integrated into emotional intelligence, this construct has offered the potential to integrate the
reasoning of a person's cognition and emotion. Recently more attention has been paid to the
effect of emotional intelligence on academic success in education (Elias, Arnold, & Hussey
2003). Nevertheless, as Brackett and Katulak (2007) state, only few studies have been
conducted to explore this concept in contexts where English is spoken as a second or foreign
Language (ESL/EFL), given the idea that the emotional intelligence serves both internal
mechanisms and external environment in the process of language learning (Goleman 2001).
EQ describes abilities distinct from, but complementary to academic intelligence, the purely
cognitive capacities measured by IQ. Many people who are book-smart but lack EQ end up
working for people who have lower IQs than them but who excel in EQ (Mayer, et al., 2002).
According to Bar-On (2004), emotional intelligence is "an array of non-cognitive capabilities,
competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in the coping with
environmental demands and pressures" (p. 111). For the first time, Bar-On (1988) coined the
term emotional quotient (EQ) as a counterpart to IQ, that is, to cognitive ability. Bar-On
thought of EQ as representing a set of social and emotional abilities that help individuals
cope with the demands of daily life. Bar-On (1997) suggested that since EI is an important
element in one’s life showing and predicting success, there is a dire need to measure,
operationalized, and quantify this construct. In his definition, EI is a collection of capabilities,
competencies, and non-cognitive skills that have an effect on a person’s abilities to gain
success in the face of environmental pressures. In other words, he believed that EI is the
ability to understand emotions and how such emotions influence interpersonal relationships
(Bar-On, 2000). According to Hein (2003), the concept of EQ connotes that IQ or
conventional intelligence is too narrow and that there are wider areas of emotional
intelligence that determine how successful we are. He maintains that success requires more
than IQ, which has tended to be the traditional measure of intelligence, ignoring essential
behavioral and character elements; in fact “we have all met people who are academically
brilliant and yet are socially and inter-personally inept; and we know that despite possessing a
high IQ rating, success does not automatically follow” (p. 154). Study of EI in the
educational setting is a relatively new endeavor and, as such, few studies have focused on the
overall effects of EI on second or foreign language learning. These few studies have been
limited to certain dimensions as management, self-esteem, anxiety, strategy use, or
motivation only. In ESL/EFL context, different studies examined the relationship between
EQ and second language success (Chao, 2003; Clement, Dornyei, & Noels, 1994; Nelson &
Low, 1999).
One of the most significant manifestations of the success of translation studies has been the development of scientific approaches to training translators academically. Among so many factors contributing to the task of translation it seems that emotional intelligence plays a critical role in translation. There are lots of questions about why one translator succeeds, but the other does not. Why two people with the same age and academic background are so different in their task of translation. No one can deny the role of strong memory, language competence, world knowledge, experience, and practice in the success of a translator. Recent studies (e.g. Murphy, 2006) make it obvious that translation has always gone hand in hand with so many factors, so that it should be studied along other fields, and it is not separate from them. One of the fields that can have a close relationship with translation is psychology. Psychology always seeks to identify, characterize, manage, and measure the different aspects of individuals. People use language to talk about events, memories, emotions, and sensations. They use language to inform other people of different cultures and different nationalities; and the main bridge between different languages is translation. By translation people around the world get information about different issues. Translation is a task that is done by individuals, so there can be a close relationship between translation and psychology. It is stated, “One of the recent studies in psychology is the study of intelligence and especially emotional intelligence which is considered as one of the most important dimensions of intelligence” (Murphy, 2006, p. 43).

Although deep understanding and creative thinking are undoubtedly the prerequisites to translation, yet other factors can be influential in the success of the translators. However, the researchers in this study were concerned to investigate the relationship between EQ and translation. Therefore the present study sought to shed light on the relationship between emotional intelligence level of translators and the quality of their translation. In keeping with the purpose of the study the following research question was raised:

Q: Is there a significant relationship between the emotional intelligence and the Iranian EFL learners’ oral translation performance success?

To probe the above question, the following null hypothesis was proposed:

H: There is no significant correlation between the emotional intelligence and the Iranian EFL learners’ oral translation performance success.

3. Method
3.1. Design
As the nature of the current research was to seek the relationship between the emotional intelligence of the translator and his/her success in oral translation performance, ex post facto was considered as the research design.

3.2. Participants

All the participants of this study were male and female senior university students in English translation major who enrolled in oral translation course at Islamic Azad University, Karaj Branch. By administrating a proficiency test for all the students and calculating the results, 72 out of 90 students were chosen to be the subjects of this study. Accordingly all the subjects of this study were considered to have upper-intermediate language proficiency knowledge. Moreover, all of them had taken the translation principles course and had translation experience due to previous courses. Their age ranged between 19 and 30 years old.

3.3. Instrumentation

In order to accomplish the study and to investigate the research hypothesis, two sets of tests were applied: An oral translation test and the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQi).

3.3.1. Bar-On EQ-i. In order to measure the EQ of the participants of this study, Bar-On EQ-i was used which was originally designed in 1980 by Bar-On and is a self-report scale including 133 items which measures five broad areas of skills or competencies and 15 factorial components. First is intrapersonal EQ (40 items), which is divided into emotional self-awareness (8 items), assertiveness (7 items), self-regard (9 items), self-actualization (9 items), and independence (7 items). Second is interpersonal EQ (29 items), which is divided into empathy (8 items), interpersonal relationship (11 items), and social responsibility (10 items). Third is adaptability EQ (26 items), which is divided into problem solving (8 items), reality testing (10 items), and flexibility (8 items). Fourth is stress management EQ (18 items), which is divided into stress tolerance (9 items) and impulse control (9 items). Fifth is general mood EQ (17 items), which is divided into happiness (9 items) and optimism (8 items) (Bar-On, 1997, pp. 43-45).

3.3.2. Oral Translation test. In order to test the learners’ success in oral translation, three audio files with the same time-each 2 minutes but in different genres i.e. educational, political, and social news/issues were chosen from the recent VOA news services. It should be noted the speed of the chosen files were the same as those the learners worked during the semester. The transcriptions of the files except some sentences (including 15-20 words for each sentence) in each part were provided for all participants. They had to listen and follow the transcriptions, and their oral translations for the missing parts were recorded by the instructor for assessing the quality and success of their translation.
3.3.3. **Oral translation scale.** In order to analyze the quality of students’ interpretation, Kurz’s (1993) scale was used.

**3.4. Procedure**

The following steps were taken to accomplish the purpose of the study during the research process:

**3.4.1. Oral translation tasks and EQ questionnaire:** All the participants of the current study spent 12 sessions, each 90 minutes for learning and practicing oral translation tasks from English to Persian. In each session, two kinds of tasks were provided for the learners: first, they listened to an audio file and translate each sentence orally. Second, they listened to an audio file in which the English transcription were provided for them but some missing parts, and they had to write the translation in Persian in their transcription document. In the final test, they were required to accomplish a test which combined the previous two tasks, i.e. they had to listen to some audio file and translate some missing parts in their English transcription documents orally which was recorded by the instructor. Furthermore, at the end of course, they all were required to answer the EQ questionnaire.

**3.4.2. Scoring procedure:** The oral translation tasks and tests were scored by considering the factors like accuracy of the oral translation, fluency of oral translation, choice of vocabulary, and timing and pacing. For each of the mentioned criteria, the researchers allocated 5 scores to each group from completely disapproved to completely approved with the overall score of 20 for each learner. This scale was objectified scoring, based on error analysis and possible mistakes. As these categories are related with each other, Bar-On questionnaire is based on the most comprehensive theory of EI to date and renders an overall EQ score as well as scores for the 15 major categories. These important areas of emotional intelligence are measured accurately with a sophisticated correction factor. Students' scores have to range from minimum 270 to maximum 450. Scores show students' abilities in 15 major categories as follows: 1. Emotional self-awareness, 2. Assertiveness, 3. Self-regards, 4. Self-actualization, 5. Independence, 6. Empathy, 7. Social responsibility, 8. Interpersonal relationship, 9. Reality testing, 10. Flexibility, 11. Problem solving, 12. Stress tolerance, 13. Impulse control, 14. Optimism, and 15. Happiness.

**4. Results and discussion**

The main purpose of using the Michigan proficiency test (MTELP) as a standard test was to homogenize the participants and select those with upper-intermediate language proficiency.
knowledge. As all the students were supposed to pass a university course, all of them participated in the course and did the tasks but the researchers omitted the learners’ scores whose language proficiency did not meet the needed criterion. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics of the proficiency test.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for MTELP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MELAB</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>56.62</td>
<td>23.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the obtained distribution of scores did not significantly differ from the normal distribution, the researchers selected 80% of the participants, those standing between $X \pm 1$ SD. Therefore, 72 students who scored between 33.02 and 80.22 were selected for the study.

The next step was to find the answer to the research questions and investigate the accuracy of the null hypothesis; the researchers had to analyze the data gathered. With the oral translation and EQ scores in hand, and using the SPSS software version 19, the researchers calculated the correlation between these two factors to find whether there was any significant relationship between the emotional intelligence level of the translators and their success in oral translation. Table 2 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the final oral translation test and EQ result.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for the final oral translation test and EQ result**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EQ</td>
<td>285.67</td>
<td>25.491</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oral translation score</td>
<td>16.88</td>
<td>1.802</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To investigate the relationship between the oral translation performance scores and the test takers’ preferences on *Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory*, a correlation was calculated. Table 3 summarizes this analysis.

**Table 3. Correlations between EQ and oral translation scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>EQ</th>
<th>oral translation score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EQ</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation: 1</td>
<td>.579**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

It can be seen that, the correlation coefficient index is .579; here, a direct linear relationship between the two measures is proved to be significant ($p = .00$). That is, both oral translation success and Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory are significantly correlated. Moreover, the
coefficient of determination ($r^2 = .412$) shows that the proportion of shared variance between oral translation and EQ is 41%.

The researcher also compared EQ inventory subcategories with oral translation scores. Table 5 shows this comparison.

**Table 5. Correlation between EQ Inventory Subcategories and oral translation scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EQ subcategory</th>
<th>Oral translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional self-awareness</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal relationship</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optimism</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reality testing</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-regard</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-actualization</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social responsibility</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulse control</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress tolerance</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^*$ $p < .05$

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As illustrated in Table 5, since in eight EQ categories the amount of $p$ value is less than .05 ($p < .05$), there is a positive relationship between these EQ subcategories and oral translation. While in other seven subcategories there was no correlation between EQ and oral translation performance scores: emotional self-awareness ($p = .377$), reality testing ($p=.86$), assertiveness ($p = .749$), Empathy ($p=152$), Impulse control ($p=.279$), social responsibility ($p = .665$), and stress tolerance ($p=.916$).

5. Conclusion

The main goal of the present study was to investigate whether there is a relationship between the EFL learners’ EQ and their success in English to Persian oral translation.

5.1. Findings

Based on the finding, the researchers concluded there was a positive and significant relationship between the learners’ success in oral translation and their EQ, except for seven subcategories in EQ: emotional self-awareness, reality testing, assertiveness, empathy, impulse control, stress tolerance, and social responsibility. In addition, the regression result revealed that 41% of oral translation success could be predicted by the learners’ EQ.

5.2. Implications

The researchers suggest that to train more efficient oral translators, the instructors would better consider the concept of emotional intelligence in their teaching and providing translation materials. Translation as a task is highly connected with other fields. A translator should have good knowledge of other fields to perform a better job. Emotional intelligence is one of the recent studies in today’s psychology. It has proved to be correlated with successful task performance (Schutte, 2001) and successful management (Sosik & Megerian, 1999). Various studies and observations (Sternberg, 1997; Goleman, 1995) have also demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between EQ and life satisfaction, social interaction, physical and psychological health and happiness. Arnold (1998) claims that EQ has great impacts on many careers like teaching English as a second language. Nassimi (2009) demonstrated that there is a positive relationship between EQ and the quality of children’s literature translation. Hence, it is good for students to know more about EQ during their courses and even if they choose to be an oral translators in future because unlike the tasks which were of neutral nature and did not belong to any specific genre in this study, translators may come across other situations which may be influenced by the EQ of the translator.
References


Title

Multiple Intelligences Theory: A Content Analysis of Iranian High Schools English Language Teaching Textbooks

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Abstract

This paper is outcome of a study which analyzed the Iranian high school English Language Teaching (ELT) textbooks within the framework of Multiple Intelligences Theory. The Multiple Intelligences (MI) checklist Christison et.al, (1996;1998) was used to analyze the conversations, grammar and reading comprehension parts of grades 1-3 of Iranian high schools ELT textbooks. The results of the study indicate that the dominant intelligence profile of the Iranian ELT textbooks is Verbal/Linguistic, Logical/Mathematical, and Intrapersonal. Engaging other types of intelligences in the textbook activities depends on the kind of the activity involved. Notably, intelligences such as Bodily/Kinesthetic and Musical were totally absent in the textbook activities and Natural intelligence was nearly ignored.

Keywords: Multiple Intelligences, ELT textbooks, Content analysis

1. Introduction
The roots of the Multiple Intelligences theory goes back to Gardner (1983) who dared the educationalists in their thoughts by changing the traditional methods of teaching and the educational routine to methods of learning and teaching that meet the needs of the new educational situation (Denig, 2004).

This theory that Gardner came up with for the mind, means there are differences between people in their mental and cognitive abilities, which means they have different types of intelligences. For example a person could have excellent verbal intelligence but finds it difficult to learn music (Shearer, 2004). The traditional curriculum used to focus on verbal and logical intelligences, therefore Gardener suggested the importance of developing a curriculum that combines the different types of Multiple Intelligences, and funded the educational views with role playing, imagination, and storytelling.

Irma (1996) stated that the theory of Multiple Intelligences is considered a cognitive model in learning, that allows the publishers of the school books to develop in light of this theory which will help the teacher to use any teaching courses in different ways to reach as many number of students with their different levels and abilities.

Othman, (2001) showed that for designing and developing the curriculum in light of the Multiple Intelligences theory, the content must be organized in a way where we would move from one intelligence to another to meet the students' intelligence.

Since its proposal in 1983 by Gardner, the theory of MI has had a significant impact not only on the design of the foreign language curriculum but also on the design of textbook materials. Unfortunately, the traditional curriculum used to focus on language, verbal and logical intelligences therefore. Gardner suggested the importance of developing a curriculum that combines different types of intelligences.

It is important to point out that any curriculum designed in light of the multiple intelligence theory must link between the different cognitive fields where it would provide the students with the chance to use their intelligences in a scientific way and also vary in its use of different activities that would meet the different intelligences of the student.

Textbooks play a very important role in EFL education since it is generally through textbooks that learners get acquainted with the target language culture and values (Bahman and Rahimi, 2010). One of the most important areas on which MI can have impact is textbooks.

Textbooks are important resources for teachers in assisting students to learn every subject including English. They are the foundation of school instruction and the primary source of information for teachers. In Iran, in practice, textbooks serve as the basis for much of the
language input learners receive and the language practice that takes place in the classroom. For the EFL learners, the textbook becomes the major source of contact they have with the language apart from the input provided by the teacher.(Azizifar, Koosha, Lotfi, 2010).

Regarding MI theory and textbook analysis, Snider (2001) analyzed ten well-known textbooks for German first-year college learners in order to identify different types of activities that were included in textbooks and analyzed how the activities in the textbooks engaged Multiple Intelligences in learners.

In another study (Palmberg, 2001), a group of student teachers evaluated how current FL textbook activities are related to MI Theory and to what extent they engage MI in FL instruction. The study shows that not all of the eight intelligence types are included in the activities in textbooks, and some of the intelligences predominate in the textbooks such as the verbal-linguistic and intrapersonal intelligences.

For investigating the types of Multiple Intelligences in social studies, Arabic and English books in Saudi Arabia Alghazo, Obeidat, Ai-trawneh, Aisharaideh (2009) conducted a study that showed the most common intelligence found in these books was visual intelligence and the least kind was physical intelligence in the social studies books and the environmental intelligence was the least kind of intelligence in English and Arabic books.

In another recent study (Yasemin, 2010) analyzed locally published ELT textbooks in Turkey and the results showed that the intelligence profile of English textbooks was predominantly Verbal/Linguistic and visual/spatial.

The purpose of this study is analyzing Iranian high school ELT Textbooks written by Birjandi et al. (2010) with respect to MI theory and determining where they do or do not engage multiple intelligence domains.

In Iran significant projects have been carried out to evaluate textbooks, among which Ansary and Babaii (2002), Yarmohammadi (2002), and Amalsaleh (2004) are typical examples. However, none of these studies have been done in light of Multiple Intelligences to cater for the intelligence profile of the mentioned textbooks. Therefore, the present study is going to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most common Multiple Intelligence types found in the three grades of Iranian high school ELT textbooks?
2. What are the frequencies and percentage of distribution of Multiple Intelligences in Iranian high school ELT textbooks?

2. Methodology
The design of the study is more qualitative although the researcher started with counting frequencies and calculating percentages of catering for the eight intelligences based on the checklist of the study. The researcher catered for the types of Multiple Intelligences found in conversations, grammar, and reading comprehension activities of the Iranian high school ELT textbooks. The frequencies counted, related percentages calculated, and tables and graphs of each activity type which was supposed to engage different intelligences were drawn.

2.1. Materials
The materials of this study consisted of dialogues, structures, and reading comprehensions parts in Grade one, two, and three of Iranian high school ELT textbook reprinted in 2010 by the Ministry of Education.

Book one consists of nine lessons which starts with new words followed by the “reading comprehension activity. The other parts consist of presentation of grammatical structures and drills, some short dialogues, pronunciation practice, and vocabulary. Book two has 7 lessons but the order of the presentation is similar to book one. Book three includes 6 lessons with the same order of materials as book one and two.

2.2. Instrument
In the present study a Multiple Intelligences (MI) checklist based on the framework of the theory of MI adapted from Christison (1996;1998) was used comprising definition of the eight intelligences and a matrix of activities for each kind of the intelligences. For example, a definition of the verbal/linguistic intelligence involved the ability to use words effectively both orally and in writing, remembering information, convincing others to help and talking about language itself. A matrix of activities for verbal/linguistic intelligence includes note taking, riddles, worksheets, listening to lectures, word play games, listening to talking books, reading books, discussions, storytelling, journal keeping, debates, memorizing, and writing.

2.3. Procedure
In order to attribute an activity to a particular intelligence in conversations, grammar, and reading comprehension parts, the Multiple Intelligence checklist was used. The instruction and content of each drill or activity were studied carefully by the researcher and it was decided that the analyzed activity is supposed to engage one or more intelligences. For example, in reading comprehension activity of lesson one, book one, the students are exposed with a reading passage. Then some questions are given to check understanding at the end of the passage. First, the students are required to answer the questions orally. Later a set of
multiple choice questions are given to recognize the true answer based on the passage. Finally they are required to write complete answers to a set of other questions. Based on the checklist of the study in all these instructions, the intelligence type which is supposed to be engaged is verbal/linguistic. The students are also asked to do the above mentioned activity as a kind of homework individually which can be regarded as engaging Intrapersonal intelligence. It is also supposed to engage the visual/spatial intelligence due to the fact that in the beginning of the text, there are some drawings which are instances of engaging visual/spatial intelligence. If an activity was supposed to engage a specific intelligence, it would be coded 1 which meant it had activated that type of intelligence. Coding zero meant it did not engage that specific intelligence.

2.4. Analysis and discussion

2.4.1. Conversations

For each type of intelligence in the conversation activities of the three books, all the activities were coded as supposing to engage or not engage the intelligences. The data were collected, the frequencies counted and the percentages relating to each intelligence were calculated.

There are 55 cases in which multiple intelligences are addressed in the conversation activities of Iranian ELT high school textbooks. Table 1 is the summary for distribution of intelligences in the conversation activities in the Iranian ELT high school textbooks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Num</th>
<th>Type of Intelligence</th>
<th>ELT Book 1</th>
<th>ELT Book 2</th>
<th>ELT Book 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Verbal/Linguistic</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Logical/Mathematical</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spatial/Visual</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bodily/Kinesthetic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Naturalistic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can observe that the verbal/linguistic is the most predominantly addressed intelligence in the conversation activities of ELT textbooks. It means that this type of intelligence is the one which is addressed in 49% of the activities assuming to engage MI.
The next dominantly targeted intelligence is the interpersonal intelligence which is present in 43% of the activities as is seen in Table 1. We can also observe that in 6% of the conversation activities of Iranian high school ELT Books spatial/visual intelligence is present. Only 2% of the activities were analyzed to consider the intrapersonal intelligence in the conversations.

What is so surprising is the observation that based on the checklist of this study no conversations throughout these textbook engage Logical/Mathematical, Spatial/Visual, Bodily/Kinesthetic, Musical, and Natural intelligences. Any Conversation could have included some pictures, arts, role playing, some music and probably some reference to nature to engage the related intelligences. According to Gardner (1983) each person has an intelligence profile that consists of combinations of eight different intelligence types. Some people are stronger in some specific intelligences while others may be stronger in some other types of intelligences.

Another surprising point seen here is the observation that the amount of pictorials and drawings in lower Grade books is less than the higher Grade textbooks which is contrary to the expectations, i.e. we expect to see more pictures and spatial/visual activities in Grade one book and observe a kind of decrease in higher Grade books. However, the case here is completely the other way round, and we observe that 33% of activities engage spatial/visual intelligence in the Third Grade textbook, 14% in Grade two and, 0% in Grade one textbooks. According to Alghazo, Obeidat, Al-Trawneh, Alshraideh (2009) when the students move ahead from one grade to another their dependence on pictures to understand the information becomes less and his mental ability reaches a stage where he can understand the abstract terminology without pictures but the story is different here.

A decrease in the activities related to Interpersonal intelligence for conversation activities of textbook 3 compared with the Grade 1 and 2 textbooks is also surprising. We expect to have Interpersonal intelligence engaged in any conversation activity but a decrease in the activities of a higher Grade book in which the students are expected to be more involved in communicative situations is under question.

2.4.2. Grammar

I located 553 observations of addressing the MI in the Grammar activities of Iranian high school ELT textbooks. As is observed in the following Table, in 34% of the instances, verbal/linguistic is activated in the grammar activities which is considered the most predominant intelligence. This is in line with the expectation due to the fact that every
grammatical explanations and presentations involve the use of language and engages the verbal/linguistic intelligence.

Table 2. Distribution of MI in Grammar activities of Iranian high school ELT textbooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Intelligence</th>
<th>ELT Book 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>ELT Book 2</th>
<th></th>
<th>ELT Book 3</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Verbal/Linguistic</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Logical/Mathematical</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Spatial/Visual</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Bodily/Kinesthetic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Musical</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Interpersonal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Intrapersonal</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Naturalistic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>195</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>533</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 also shows that in 29% of the activities, intrapersonal intelligence is involved in grammar activities. This is the second predominant type of intelligence in the activities analyzed. Most of the exercises have asked the students to respond orally or write answers for the questions given to them in the form of homework. Doing the exercises individually or as homework is among the activities which are indicators of activating Intrapersonal intelligence.

In 27% of the analyzed activities logical/mathematical intelligence is thought to be catered for with the frequency of 147. It is the characteristic of grammatical exercises to make one induce or deduce the grammatical rules from the way they have been presented and finally s/he should recognize abstract patterns. The mentioned processes are among the indicators of engaging Logical/Mathematical intelligence.

The spatial/visual intelligence is engaged in 9% of the grammar activities of the mentioned. The grammatical drills and exercises in Grade one textbook have included some black and white pictures and drawings to help students understand the structural rules; however as Table 2 indicates in Grade 2 and 3 textbooks the inclusion of pictures and drawings have increased. The researcher noticed that the pictures in grade 3 book became more colorful. This cycle is expected to be the other way round, i.e. one expects to have more interesting pictures and graphs to be found in lower grade books due to the fact that students in lower grades who are younger rely more on pictures to learn. We referred to this point in Alghazo, Obeidat, Al- trawneh, Al shraideh (2009) maintaining that as the human grows up,
s/he develops cognitively and is able to have greater ability to understand more abstract concepts without reference to pictorials.

It can be seen from Table 2 that no activities were found to cater for the intelligence types of bodily/kinesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal, and naturalist.

2.4.3. Reading Comprehension

Table 3 indicates that the Verbal/Linguistic intelligence is also the one which is catered for in all three books and as it is the characteristic of reading activities, this type of intelligence is observed to be engaged by the reading comprehension texts.

In Table 3 we can observe the result of analysis for the engagement of MI in the reading comprehension activities of Iranian high school ELT textbooks.

There are 158 activities which are supposed to cater for MI in the mentioned activities. Table 3 indicates that 44% of those activities address verbal/linguistic intelligence as the most common type of intelligence in the reading activities of the above textbooks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Intelligence</th>
<th>ELT Book 1</th>
<th>ELT Book 2</th>
<th>ELT Book 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal/Linguistic</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical/Mathematical</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spatial/Visual</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bodily/Kinesthetic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrapersonal</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naturalistic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

76 48% 54 34% 28 18% 158 100%

Based on the checklist of the study, the next predominant intelligence is the intrapersonal intelligence with the distribution of 58 and the related 35% being engaged in the reading activities as is seen in Table 3. In 1% of the reading activities of Iranian high school ELT textbooks bodily/kinesthetic intelligence is supposed to be catered for.

The next type of intelligence found to be activated in 7% of the observations is logical/mathematical. The frequency of occurrence for addressing this intelligence is 10 as we can see in Table 3.

The following Table also shows that naturalistic and bodily/kinesthetic intelligences are entangled in 2% and 1% of the activities respectively.
As is seen in Table 3, no activities were found to account for musical and interpersonal intelligences in the reading comprehension activities of the mentioned textbooks.

2.4.4. The Intelligence Profile for the Iranian high school English language teaching textbooks as a whole

There are 746 instances of engagement of MI in 279 of the analyzed activities in Iranian high school ELT textbooks. Tables 4 and 5 and Graph 1 indicate the results of the analysis for the intelligence profiles in conversations, grammar and reading comprehension activities of the mentioned textbooks.

Table 4. Frequency of Distribution of MI in each of the Iranian high school ELT textbooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textbook</th>
<th>V/L</th>
<th>L/M</th>
<th>S/V</th>
<th>B/K</th>
<th>M.</th>
<th>Inter.</th>
<th>Intra.</th>
<th>Nat.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iranian ELT Book 1</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iranian ELT Book 2</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iranian ELT Book 3</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>746</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. Distribution of MI in Iranian high school ELT textbooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intelligence</th>
<th>V/L</th>
<th>L/M</th>
<th>S/V</th>
<th>B/K</th>
<th>Mus.</th>
<th>Inter.</th>
<th>Intra.</th>
<th>Nat.</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>746</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

37% 21% 9% 0% 0% 3% 29% 0% 100%

Graph 1. Distribution of MI in Iranian high school ELT textbooks

As is seen, the intelligence profile for these textbooks is verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, and intrapersonal. We can also observe that no activities are seen to have activated bodily/kinesthetic, musical, and naturalistic Intelligences.

3. Results and discussion
This study was conducted with the purpose of catering for the different types of intelligences targeted by the Iranian ELT high school textbooks.

Each lesson in the Iranian high school textbooks starts with new words presentation in some sentences and examples with pictures and drawings, reading comprehension passages, some new structures and grammatical forms followed by some pronunciation practices, conversations in the form of Language functions, writing activities and finally a vocabulary list. It seems that the aim of such activities is to provide the students with the opportunities to practice whatever they learn during the course.

It seems that this series of textbooks are more verbal/linguistic, Interpersonal and Intrapersonal intelligence dominated which involves other intelligences based on the type of activity which is going to be presented. Musical and Bodily/Kinesthetic intelligences are totally absent in activities and Natural intelligence is also nearly ignored. The potentiality of the textbooks to include more intelligences is high, however it can be maintained that in the development of materials for these textbooks, it seems there is not a theory of syllabus design to follow. The theory of Multiple Intelligences which is now accepted to have a word to say in the curriculum planning and syllabus design of many countries does not have a place in the design of the Iranian high school ELT textbooks.

Looking back into the tables and graphs is expressive of the fact that only grammatical presentations and drills are supposed to engage four intelligences simultaneously. Large parts of the Iranian high school ELT textbooks have been devoted to grammatical presentations and practice but in a way that they just seem to activate four intelligences.

Regarding conversations, it is possible to include more conversation activities with a variety of tasks and realia to engage more intelligences and in this way consider the individual differences of the learners. While in many countries the curriculum for teaching foreign languages has included more communicative activities in the textbooks which are also in line with the theory of Multiple Intelligences, in the textbooks analyzed there is just one short conversation activity in each lesson. They don’t have attracting look up, photos, motivation to cooperate, audio or music, and role play etc.

The materials developers seem to have just focused on the mechanical drills and presentation of grammatical rules and reading passages without the consideration of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences and its probable effect on language learning. Learners find no opportunities to negotiate with each other and their teachers. Unfortunately they are not provided with the opportunity to practice communicatively the language they are learning, therefore not engaging many intelligences.
The researcher suggests that material designers should not restrict the process of language learning to inclusion of grammatical rules and reading comprehension passages and list of vocabulary. They should not limit it within the walls of the classroom. In other words, in Iranian high school instructional textbooks, there could be enough opportunities for the learners to practice communicatively the language they are learning to engage more intelligences and benefit from their innate potentialities in the process of language learning. This study is considered one of the first studies to investigate the inclusion of the Multiple Intelligences in the Iranian high school ELT textbooks. The results of the study will provide the Ministry of Education with information on how much the current high school ELT textbooks take into account the Theory of Multiple Intelligences which is very important in accounting for individual differences in teaching and learning.

The results of the study will also help course designers to include activities in the materials which engage Multiple Intelligences in their books and consequently provide different learners with the opportunity of involving their intelligences. It also makes teachers and instructors aware of engaging different types of intelligences in their instructions. It can also help teachers to use the results of the study in improving their teaching quality and achievements.

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URL: [http://www.hltmag.co.uk/jan02/sart6.htm](http://www.hltmag.co.uk/jan02/sart6.htm)


Title

A Study of the Level of Awareness on Discoursal Aspects of Translation Process among B.A Translation Students

Authors

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Biodata

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Abstract

One of the major aims in translation is to transmit massage of source language appropriately in the target language. For communicating appropriately one needs communicative competence. Nida (1964), Hatim and Mason (1990), and Schäffner (1994), point out that translation is essentially an act of communication. In this respect, the primary objective of this study was to investigate the level of awareness on discoursal aspects of translation process among BA translation students. Because translation is considered to be an act of communication, the study attempted to integrate notions of strategic, linguistic, discourse and socio-cultural competences into the construct of translation. To examine the translation difficulties and factors determining a better qualify of translation, the researcher investigated the competence of translation of the students in the following areas of communicative competence: linguistic, strategic, socio-cultural and discourse competences. For this purpose, 30 multiple choice questions and three texts for translation were administered to 45 translation students and the results were analyzed by three different translation instructors, from a communicative
competence perspective, where the difficulties in translation were experienced. The results showed that students’ difficulties frequently originated from discourse competence, followed by strategic, linguistic and socio-cultural competences, respectively.

**Keywords:** Translation, Discourse, Communicative competence, Discourse competence, Linguistic competence, Strategic competence, Socio-cultural competence

1. Introduction

Communication has always been an important need of all societies. Communication is the exchange of ideas, information, etc. between two or more people. In the process of rapid exchange of information and for the purpose of improving cultural contacts, one thing is inevitable, and that is "translating." This is why there is a need for competent translators and interpreters. Eugene Nida (1964) has suggested that the significance of translation as an act of communication has been overlooked or underestimated and has called for translation to be studied as a communicative event. Following the theoretical framework proposed by Canale and Swain (1983), communicative competence in language teaching embraces four competences: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic. According to Schäffner (1995), translation and interpreting are essentially communicative processes that produce texts. According to Beeby (1996), the student translator competence includes a grammatical dimension (linguistic rules of source and target languages), sociolinguistic dimension (utterances within a situational context in source and target languages), discourse dimension (cohesion and coherence in source and target languages) and transfer dimension (strategies to improve communication or to compensate for communication breakdowns). Cao (1996) applies Bachman's model of the components of communicative language competence to the development of a model of translation proficiency for the purpose of testing translator skills. What she terms "translational competence" includes organisational competence in the source language and target language, consisting of grammatical and textual competence, and pragmatic competence in SL and TL, made up of illocutionary and sociolinguistic competence.

Following this tradition of research in general and to gain a deeper understanding of Iranian English translation student's awareness of translation process, the present research attempted to investigate a group of Iranian participant's awareness of discoursal aspects of
translation. The study attempted to investigate Iranian English translation students in understanding and translating different texts and tries to diagnose the translation problems from a Communicative Competence perspective (discoursal view) and aims at categorizing the skills into four main categories. In this aspect, it has a holistic view over translation problems and attempts to integrate notions of strategic, sociolinguistic (pragmatic) competence, discourse and linguistics competence into the construct of translation.

The present research addressed the following questions:
1. Which areas of communicative competence need the most attention for better translation to take place?
2. What are the common problems that result in weaknesses in translation by translation students?
3- By considering the first and second research questions do BA English translation students have discoursal view to translation?

2. Review of theoretical background

All four authors (Dell Hymes (1972), Michael Canale and Merrill Swain (1980), Sandra Savignon (1983) and Lyle Bachman (1990)) have one premise in common—an integrative view of communicative competence with various components. They include in their theoretical model of the concept components slightly varying from each other, and they each view the relationship or importance of the components somewhat differently. Their definitions of communicative competence emphasize the users and their use of language for communication. They insisted that communicative competence comprises both knowledge and skills in using acquired knowledge when interacting in actual communication. Knowledge for them is what one knows about the language and about other aspects of life and the world and skill refers to how well one can perform. Canale and Swain proposed a modular framework for describing communicative competence that included grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence (Canale & Swain).

Subsequently Canale updated the model and proposed a four-dimensional model comprising linguistic, sociolinguistic, discoursal and strategic competences; the additional distinction being made between sociolinguistic competence and discourse competence (Canale).

2.1 Defining and Describing Translation Competence:

There are six explicit definitions of translation competence that will be examined below for the purposes of establishing a working definition of translation competence according to
communicative competence. The first one is Bell’s (1991); he defines translation competences as “the knowledge and skills the translator must possess in order to carry out translation”. The second one is Kiraly’s (1995) definition of translational competence and he defines it as the ability to interact appropriately and adequately with a source text and its context, the translation brief, and the participants (author of source text, intended audience, who is paying for the translation, etc.) in the process in order to produce a target text that is adequate to the needs of the brief and the target context. The third definition that will be discussed is Beeby’s (1996). She believes that professional translator communicative competence is different from that of the average communicator. Ideally it comprises specific grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and transfer competences. The fourth definition is from Neubert (2000), who suggests that translational competence is a hierarchical configuration of clearly distinguishable component competences—largely related to language, text, encyclopedic, cultural and transfer knowledge and skills. The fifth definition is that of PACTE (1998) which defines translation competence as the underlying system of knowledge and skills needed to be able to translate. Finally the sixth definition comes from Hatim and Mason (1997). Their definition is completed with four affirmations, mainly that (1) translation competence is realized in different ways in different situations; (2) it consists basically of operative knowledge; (3) strategies play a basic role in translation competence and (4) as in any kind of expert knowledge, most translation competence processes are automatic.

Translator communicative competence for Beeby (1996) consists of four competences

1- Ideal translator grammatical competence. Knowledge of the linguistic rules (Vocabulary, word formation, pronunciation, spelling and sentence structure) of both languages—“that is, the knowledge and skills required to understand the literal meaning of utterances.

2- Ideal translator sociolinguistic competence. Knowledge of and ability to understand and produce appropriate language in the context and situation it is used in both cultures—“that is, as constrained by the cognitive context, the general socio-historical context, the mode, the field, the tenor, the status of the participants, the purposes of the interaction and so on.

3- Ideal translator discourse competence. “The ability to combine form and meaning to achieve unified spoken or written texts in different genres in both languages. This unity depends on cohesion, the way statements are linked grammatically for ease of understanding of a text, and on coherence in meaning, the relationships among literal meanings, social meanings and intertextuality of texts.
4-Ideal translator transfer competence. The ability to use communication strategies to compensate for breakdowns in communication or insufficient competence in one or more of the other communicative competence components when transferring meaning from the source language to the target language.

2.2. Translation and translator from discoursal view (Discourse-based approach)

Socio-cultural awareness, can improve the quality of the students' translations to a great extent. According to Hatim and Mason (1997), the social context in translating a text is probably a more important variable than its genre. The act of translating takes place in the socio-cultural context. Consequently, it is important to judge translating activity only within a social context.

According to Kazem Lotfipour-Saedi (2000)" in translation studies, the framework used for contrasting the source and target languages should be discoursal". According to the discoursal view of language, meaning is not carried by the text, it is rather negotiated by the participants and the text acts as a mediator. He argues that the best and most comprehensive definition which can be given to translation consistent with the true nature of discourse process within the framework of discourse analysis can be as follows; translation is the act of recreating the textual/discoursal conditions under which the source language producer and target language receiver can engage in the interaction act with one another.

Azabdaftary (as cited in Razmjou, 2004) noted, training translators is an important task which should be given a high priority. The service that translators render to enhance cultures and nurture languages has been significant throughout history. Translators are the agents for transferring messages from one language to another, while preserving the underlying cultural and discoursal ideas and values.

Farahzad (as cited in Razmjou, 2004) noted, the translator uses the core meaning present in the source text to create a new whole, namely, the target text. Razmjou( 2004) states, one of the most important points to consider in the act of translating is: understanding the value of the source text within the framework of the source-language discourse. To develop this understanding, the translator must be aware of the cultural differences and the various discoursal strategies in the source and target languages.

3. Methods

3.1. Participants
The subjects of the study were 45 English translation students. These students were attending the translation courses in Peyamnour university of Tabriz and Bonab and Islamic Azad University of Maragheh, Iran. These students were in last semester of bachelor's degree in English translation, and had passed several courses in grammar, reading, conversation, and writing up to advanced level. So, it was assumed that they had enough proficiency in general English. Because the number of the last term students was limited, almost all of them were chosen.

3.2. Instruments
The questionnaire developed for this investigation had four parts: the first part was composed of 15 multiple choice questions. The second part was composed of 4 items. They were all about the translation and knowledge that was going to measure the student's knowledge about strategic competence. All of them were designed from authentic resources. The tests included items that required the necessary knowledge about background, cultural knowledge and context. In part 3- A, there are 5 multiple choice questions that were about the function of the sentences according to speech act model. The fifth question of this part was about the Socio-cultural knowledge. The last part of this section (part3-B) was Persian sentences with their best translation in English. The part 4 was composed of three texts. In this section students were asked to mark the best choice and translate the texts to Persian.

3.3. Procedure
After the pilot study was done, the answers were analyzed. The pilot study proved to be successful. Based on the feedback from the participants and data analysis problems, some minor corrections and modifications were done in the light of this pilot study. When the questions were prepared then were distributed to the participants. The questionnaire was explained to them before they started to write. Three universities were chosen from East Azarbayjan, Peyamnour university of Tabriz and Bonab and Islamic Azad University of Maragheh. Almost all last term students from these universities were selected in the survey which took them about 45 minutes to complete. They were told that the information obtained in the course of this study would be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of academic research. Finally, the results were analyzed quantitatively by Microsoft Office Excel.

4. Results and discussion
This section includes mean of each item on all of the 4 parts and also overall mean scores for all of the tests. Qualitative data derived from the analysis of the test results is used to diagnose which items on the tests were more difficult for students. The marking of the papers was first done by the researcher himself. Later, two other committee members separately marked exams using the same answer key.

4.1. The Results of Test 1

As can be seen from the preceding figure indicating the descriptive statistics for the first test, the mean of the test vary between 13.33 and 77.78 out of 100. The mean of the test as a whole is 38.22. The lowest being the twelfth question with the mean of 13.33 and the highest the second one with the mean of 77.78.

4.2. The Results of Test 2

Figure 4.2 shows the descriptive statistics for the second test, the means of the test vary between 8.89 and 55.56 out of 100. The mean of the test as a whole is 33.33. The lowest being the second question with the mean of 13.33 and the highest the third one with the mean of 77.78.

4.3. The Results of Test 3
Figure 4.3 clearly shows the mean of the student's performance in terms of pragmatic competence. The mean of the test vary between 20 and 84.44 out of 100. The mean of the test as a whole is 47.50. The lowest being the seventh question with the mean of 20 and the highest the sixth one with the mean of 84.44.

4.4. The Results of Test 4:
The results of the last test are considered from three perspectives:

A- Discourse   B- Linguistics   C- Translation

4.4.1. Results of the fourth test-A (discourse competence):

Figure 4. 4. Results of Test 4-A (discourse competence)

Figure 4.4 shows the descriptive statistics for the fourth test, the means of the test are 22.22 and 17.78 out of 100. The mean of the test as a whole is 20.

Figure 4. 5. Results of Test 4-B & C (linguistic competence)

The last part of this section is translation. The whole mean is 18.15. Figure 4.6 shows this fact below.

Figure 4. 6. Results of Test 4-B and C (translation)

4.5. Translation competence on the bases of communicative competence:
On the basis of the results of four elements of communicative competence that was showed and calculated before, now the mean of the whole model can be calculated:

Strategic competence: 33.33
Socio-cultural competence (pragmatics): 47.50
Discourse competence: 20
Linguistic competence: 34.08
Multiple choice items: 38.22
Translation: 18.15

The figures show this fact below:

Figure 4. 7. Results of communicative competence

Figure 4. 8. Results of communicative competence plus T and M

As two figures show the mean of the four components of communicative competence is 33.72. The mean of the four components of communicative competence plus multiple choice questions and translation is 31.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Findings

The first research question aimed to find out the components of communicative competence at which the students were the weakest. As understood from the results of the exams, it is obvious that Discourse competence occupies that position, followed by Strategic, Linguistic
and Socio-cultural competence. The results of the exam showed that the students were weak at the following components of communicative competence:

Most of the components that the students had difficulty in applying fall into the category of discourse competence since discourse competence helps the translators to relate words, sentences and paragraphs to each other. Without understanding and digesting the contextual clues and textual relations (cohesion and coherence) intertwined throughout texts, they were unable to interpret the meanings hidden on the page.

As for the strategic competence, students were sometimes unable to use the necessary strategies to facilitate their comprehension of the texts. They were not always aware how they could increase their comprehension: they lacked cultural, background and contextual knowledge.

In terms of linguistic competence, students had difficulties in vocabularies. Some of the students didn't know the meaning of simple vocabularies. Some of them didn’t write the correct meaning of the words and sentences because of the lack of socio-cultural and background knowledge. Writing ambiguous sentences and incorrect Persian translations were the other difficulties of the students.

Socio-cultural (pragmatic) competence was also problematic since more than half of the students were not familiar with the cultural references and implied (functional) meanings of certain words and phrases. Another reason for this situation was that the students did not share with the writer the same assumptions and understanding and view of the world. To conclude, discourse competence was the weakest component among all the others and socio-cultural competence was the strongest.

The result of multiple choice and translation section showed that students had difficulties in these two sections too. In translation section almost all of the students didn’t have any acceptable translation. Since most of the students had difficulties in four components of CC, their translation was weak. The weakness in all components caused their translation to be refused. In multiple choice questions the result was only 38.08. This is related to unpractical knowledge of the students.

The second research question aimed to find out the common problems that result in weaknesses in translation. The results of the exam showed that the common problems are at the following components and skills:

• Identifying inter-sentential relations and lexical coherence
• Deducing the meaning of sentences with the help of cohesive devices
• Recognizing the overall message of the text
• Putting together smaller pieces of information spread over text to make inferences
• Identifying the main ideas of text
• Understanding and awareness of the social context of the text: The purpose of the text
• Identifying the appropriate meaning of a statement/sentence in a specific context/setting
• Understanding the meaning of culturally based information (information with cultural references: Recognizing the writer’s purpose in selecting certain words and examples)
• Deducing the writer’s attitude and tone from the text based clues such as word selection, choice of grammatical forms and background knowledge
• Understanding the cultural implications of words, phrases and sentences in their specific context
• Inferring the communicative value of statements (illocutionary forces)
• Guessing the meaning and use of unknown vocabulary from contextual clues
• Activating and using background and general world knowledge
• Identifying the right meaning of a word in context using lexical knowledge

By considering the results of four components of communicative competence and multiple choice and translation section, the answer of the third research question is clear: English translation students in this research didn’t have discoursal view to translation. Therefore, the findings of this study confirm our Hypotheses.

5.2. Pedagogical implications

This study shows that translation instructors and course designers should include a large variety of skills and components of communicative competence in the courses of translation students and attempt to teach beyond the sentence level comprehension and also beyond the literal comprehension. Teachers can use the list of skills and components needed while designing their course syllabus in their actual teaching. Not only should the traditional skills related to linguistic and strategic competence be emphasized, but also discourse and sociolinguistic competence should be given greater priority than at present. A healthy balance of all four components is ideal for the translators to get the best results in their translations. Training the students on how to benefit from discourse and contextual clues, logical thinking skills and providing them with an introductory target language culture course would help them become better translators. Lastly, overall understanding and implied messages of authors should be regarded as the ultimate aim of the translation process. If translation instructors view the translation process and the teaching of translation from a communicative competence perspective, they will focus on a far greater number of components than has
usually been the case and see the translation class as a place to develop students’ communicative competence, not just their translation skills. Introducing some key courses such as discourse analysis and text analysis, pragmatics and communicative functions of utterances to students would expand their knowledge. It seems some courses on advertisements, announcements, instructions, etc. are essential for the trainees since they imply socio-cultural aspects of a language.

5.3. Limitations and delimitation
Certain limitations made it more difficult to generalize its results to other contexts. The present study has some limitations which should be acknowledged. First it is difficult to decide specifically what causes a student to fail in a question since many intervening variables are at work while answering a single question. The second limitation of the study refers to the findings of the study. The findings of this study should be generalized with caution due to the relatively low number of the participants. In other words, this study includes only 45 English translation students. The third limitation relates to limitation of different kinds of samples. Because of the limitation of English translation instructors in these universities, this study only was performed on the English translation students.

5.4. Suggestions for further research
In order to make the results more generalizable to other contexts, the following suggestions are given for further research. The exams should be administered to different and larger learner groups and their reliability should be higher. Future studies can attempt to test each component with different tests. Because this study only was administered to English students the future studies could be administered to English translation instructors too.

References

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**Appendices**

Dear Respondent,

The researcher is conducting a study entitled, *A study of the level of awareness on discoursal aspects of translation process among BA translation students*. You are kindly requested to answer the items of this questionnaire carefully, realistically, honestly and accurately. Rest assured that the information obtained in the course of this study will be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of academic research.

**Thank you**

**Part 1**

A- Choose the best one.

1-…………. is a collection of formal objects held together by patterns of equivalence or frequencies or by cohesive devices.

1-Discourse       2- reference         3- sentence                    4- utterance

3- A communicative use of language which takes on pragmatic meaning. It is contextualized sentences.

1-texture             2- sentence         3- coherence                    4-utterance

4-…………. is the network of lexical, grammatical, and other relations which provide links between various parts of the text.

1-coherence         2- cohesion        3- text                              4- substitution

5-A text has a………….. and this is what distinguishing it from something that is not a text.

1-text               2- texture              3- reference                    4- semantics

6-It is the study of the meanings of linguistic expressions taken in isolation.

1-utterance        2- pragmatics            3- semantics                  4- situation

7-…………. is concerned with how people make meaning and make out meaning.

1-text               2- sentence              3- texture                    4- discourse

8-It is defined as continuity in meaning and context. It is the network of conceptual relations which underlie the surface text.

1-cohesion         2- text                           3- pragmatics                  4- coherence
9- It is traditionally used in semantics for the relationship holds a word and what it points to in the real world.
10- It is most concerned with analyzing speaker meaning at the level of utterances.
11- It is the study of how stretches of language in context are perceived as meaningful and unified by their users.

Part 2
A. 1- Which option is necessary for avoiding the mistranslation of this sentence? "you can borrow my Chomsky".
2- Mistranslation of this sentence "the king of France is bold" refers to a………………

Why is this statement Unsuitable? Because it does not have a………………-

4- Which option is necessary for understanding and translating this sentence?
"The door is open"

Part 3 - A
B- Which one is the best function of the underlined sentences?
1- An employee objected to his boss for the reduction in his salary. The boss answered: the door is open.
2- Titus and Maggie are playing with a game of cards that display all kinds of vehicles. Titus is in the possession of a card that shows a car. Maggie is eager to exchange this card for one of hers and offers Titus a card with bicycle. Titus: Thank you, I need a motorcycle.
3- Its late and two people, one of whom appears upset, in a room in a party, a violent thunderstorm outside:
A- Its nearly midnight!
B- It's raining cats and dongs
C- Thanks a lot

4- What do you suppose the illocutionary force of this message was meant to be?
Sign in the bathroom of a hotel room: for your convenience, towels are provided at the Health Club and Pool. Please enjoy your stay".
5- Which case should be taken into consideration in translating this text the most?

Part 3 - B
C- Which one is the best translation?

1- Can I borrow your pencil? 2- Could I borrow your pencil?
3- Is it ok if I borrow your pencil? 4- Would you mind if I borrowed your pencil?
5- Could you give me the gun 2- give me the gun.
3-would you mind if take the gun 4-please give me the gun.
8-چک به دوست صمیمیش می‌گوید: ان نمک را به من بده
1- pass me the salt. 2-can you pass me the salt?
3-would you mind giving me the salt? 4-could you pass me the salt?

Part 4
B- Translate to Farsi and state which case should be taken into consideration in translating these texts the most.

1-However, nobody had seen one for months. He thought he saw a shape in the bushes. Mary had told him about the foxes. John looked out of the window. Could it be a fox?
1-cohesion 2-coherence 3-grammatical competence 4-reference

2-We spent our holidays in Romania. This is a country where grapes are grown. They are kind of fruit. So are bananas. Fruit contains vitamins, and these are essential for a healthy life. So is regular exercise. Jogging is good for you. We do it every day.
1-coherence 2-cohesion 3-sociolinguistic competence 4-illocutionary

3-Serge Cardin, a Canadian MP, had to apologize to the House for humming the theme song from 'The Godfather' while Public Works Minister Alfonso Gagliano, who is of Italian descent, addressed Parliament.
1-socio-cultural knowledge 2-reference 3-coherence 4-semantics

General Information:
Gender: □ Male □ Female
Name:………………..
Age: …………………
Hometown: ………………
Semester: …………………
University name:………………
If you like to get the result, please write your E-mail:……………

Thanks a lot for your time and help
Title

An Investigation of Students’ Attitudes towards Integrating Synthetic and Analytic Approaches in Syllabus Design

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Abstract

In recent years, many teachers, syllabus designers and researchers try to have a change in syllabus design towards the integration of synthetic or analytic approaches. This is what Hutchinson and Waters (1987) have called an eclectic, hybrid, or multi-syllabus. It is argued that the integration of two separate approaches in syllabus design yields more favorable results. As Nunan (1998) asserts that any approach alone does not meet all requirements. The main purpose of the current investigation was to design a syllabus for EFL high school students which is the integration of the synthetic and the analytic approaches in order to improve students’ communicative competence and also to investigate high school students’ attitudes towards the proposed integrated syllabus. Based on a survey study design, this research employed questionnaires and interviews to collect data from 60 participants. In this study, an attempt is made to include the issue of needs analysis as an indispensible part of any curriculum design. Survey-based design was employed in this study. Two research instruments, i.e. questionnaire
and interview, were used for data collection. The preliminary results of the investigation revealed that students had positive attitudes towards the integration of the synthetic and analytic approaches in syllabus design.

**Keywords:** Synthetic Approaches, Analytic Approaches, Needs Analysis, Syllabus, Curriculum

1. Introduction

The last decade has seen lots of changes in many fields of education. The field of syllabus design in foreign language instruction is no exception. The role of syllabus design is an important consideration for every language teacher. The kind of syllabus a language teacher operates from is highly significant. Since a syllabus reflects a view of language and of language learning, the process of syllabus design has received a great deal of interest and attention in the recent history of language teaching (Finney, 2004).

ELT is most commonly seen as an educational practice, with internal debates focusing, for example, on the methods, syllabus, content and materials of teaching. Perhaps one of the most important questions often raised by language teaching professionals is concerned with the most appropriate unit of analysis for syllabus design (Long & Crookes, 1993). Traditionally, grammatical items graded from easy to difficult, were the point of departure for designing language courses, resulting in what is commonly known as the structural or grammatical syllabus (Nunan, 1988). Thus, the grammatical syllabus is one which attributes the highest priority to grammatical features and views. This traditional way of organizing the syllabus, represent synthetic approaches to syllabus design (Wilkins, 1976). The actual units according to which synthetic syllabuses are organized vary. Structural, functional-notional and situational are synthetic (Nunan, 1988).

Wilkins (1976) offered an alternative to synthetic approaches which is called analytical approaches. All syllabus proposals that do not depend on a prior analysis of the language belong to this second category. Procedural, process and task-based syllabuses are examples of the analytic approaches (Wilkins, 1976).

Synthetic approaches to syllabus design, has been and remains the dominant approach in Asia (Nunan, 1993). In this approach, which is also dominant in Iran, the focus is on form and not the communication. However, in analytic approaches, the focus is on communication and less on form. These two approaches have been criticized for lack of needs analysis too (Willis, 1996).
An indispensable part of any curriculum design in an educational setting is the analysis of the needs of the learners involved in the context. Needs analysis is claimed to be a critical part of the syllabus planning (Nunan, 1995). Wilkins (1996) states that needs analysis identifies the required language specifics and guides syllabus content. The needs can be addressed from different perspectives. Among them the learners’ needs in terms of their perceptions toward what constitute learning processes are of prominent values. Student’s attitudes to learning have more effect on learning than materials or methods. We therefore need to take this into account in designing syllabus to promote a student-centered learning environment (Nunan, 1993).

Eclecticism is a dominant feature of the syllabus programs currently on offer (Ellis, 2003). This is a change in designing new syllabuses. As Hutchinson and Waters (1987) suggest: It is wise to take an eclectic approach, taking what is useful from each theory and trusting also in the evidence of your own experience as a teacher. Many SLA researchers now support the value of integrated syllabuses, because empirical studies have generally found it inadequate to use one approach to the exclusion of the other (Ellis, 2003, Savignon, 1997). Stern (1984) advocates that in order to gain the highest degree of effectiveness from the language classroom, the two approaches should be integrated and regarded as complementary.

Most approaches to syllabus design have been either towards synthetic or towards analytic approaches. Of course, in recent years, the combination of these two approaches has been emphasized. In Iran, most syllabuses at least at the high school level have been synthetic (Izadpanah, 2008). The strongest deficiency is that synthetic syllabuses take no account of language use; only focusing on grammatical and lexical meaning. There is no recognition of the need to develop communicative competence (Wilkins, 1976). Synthetic syllabuses are compiling lists of linguistic items and expecting students to master these items. Students’ needs and motivation are also ignored (Wilkins, 1976).

One of the problems of language learning in Iran is that most of our students do not have the capacity to express themselves in the foreign language fluently after studying English at high school. In other words, they cannot communicate in English. It seems that it is partly due to the content of the syllabuses which is based on synthetic approach or grammar-oriented and partly due to the design of the syllabuses which is teacher-centered, not student-centered. Although during the recent years, there have been many changes in English syllabuses at Iranian guidance and high schools, these changes have not always yielded positive results. Although it seems that the designers were honest in their attempts to take advantage of new findings in applied linguistics, they have always looked at English from a
narrow point of view, i.e. as a designer, not from the point of view of the learners. Therefore, the syllabuses were teacher-centered, not student-centered (Ansari, 2004). In the analytic syllabus design, the focus is on communication or utterance. That is why many students have many problems in the structure of English language and face many difficulties. The main problem is that synthetic and analytic approaches are not sufficient alone in syllabus design (Rabbini, 1998). What is often suggested is that there needs to an emphasis on a syllabus which takes into consideration both structure and communication (Savignon, 1997). This kind of integrated syllabus seems to facilitate better learning and promote learners performance in oral skills (Rabbini, 1998).

As it has been mentioned, an indispensable part of any curriculum design in an educational setting is the analysis of the needs of the learners involved in the context. Among these needs, the learners’ needs in terms of their perceptions toward what constitute learning processes are very important. If there is a match between how they view these processes and what the course designers assume them to be, more achievement is likely to happen. Therefore, it seems that we should focus on a syllabus programs which take into consideration students’ needs and attitudes. The issue that has been ignored in designing syllabus programs in Iran (Jabbarifar, 2011)

In the light of this background and lack of exposure to the target language outside the classroom, the strategy with a blend of two approaches based on students’ needs and attitudes and emphasis on communicative learning may well be one of the most suitable types of syllabus design on offer for language learners in Iran. As Izadpanah (2011) suggests: Any approach alone does not solve all problems. Any approach alone does not meet all the requirements. Language is communication and as teachers we must develop in our learners the ability to communicate effectively in a wide range of professional and social contexts. In this study, synthetic and analytic approaches have been integrated. In other words, a hybrid syllabus has been selected to yield better results and students’ attitudes have been investigated. This indicates the issue of needs analysis which is the most important element in designing a syllabus.

2. Review of the Related Literature

2.1. Syllabus and Curriculum

Questions arise concerning the distinction between the terms curriculum and syllabus. Part of the confusion stems from the North American understanding of the term curriculum, which is
often used interchangeably with syllabus. Both can be used in America to mean teachers’ requirements for a particular course (Nunan, 1993).

Candlin (1984) suggests that curriculum is concerned with making general statements about language learning, learning purpose, experience, evaluation and the role and relationships of teachers and learners. Syllabuses, on the other hand, are more localized and are based on accounts and records of what actually happens at the classroom level as teachers and learners apply a given curriculum to their own situation (Candlin, 1984).

2.2. Procedures of Syllabus Design

2.2.1. Needs Analysis

Syllabus design starts with identifying learners’ needs and purposes of learning the target language. Broadly defined, needs analysis (NA) is a procedure to collect information about learners' needs (Richards, 2001). The importance of NA is emphasized in English for Specific Purpose and also in general language courses espousing learner-centered curricula (Nunan, 1988).

Broadly speaking, there are two different types of needs analysis used by language syllabus designers. The first of these is learner analysis, while the second is task analysis (Nunan, 1998).

Learner analysis is based on information about the learner. The central question of concern to the syllabus designer is: For what purpose or purposes is the learner learning the language? (Nunan, 1998)

The second type of analysis, task analysis, is employed to specify and categorize the language skills required to carry out real-world communicative tasks, and often follows the learner analysis. The central question here is: What are the subordinate skills and knowledge required by the learner in order to carry out real-world communicative tasks? (Nunan, 1998)

NA is considered a crucial component of systematic curriculum development. In Browns' systematic curriculum development model, it is the first phase of an ongoing quality control process. Brown (1995) defines NA as: the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary to satisfy the language learning requirements of the students within the context of the particular institutions involved in the learning situation.

2.2.2 Goals, Aims, and objectives

White (1988) gives a distinction between ‘goals’, ‘aims’, and ‘objectives’. While goals are general and broad in their scope, aims are more specific and long-term targets to be aimed at, and objectives are short-to medium-term goals (White, 1988). Widdowson defines objectives as the pedagogic intentions of a particular course of study to be achieved within the period of
that course which are in principle measurable by some device at the end of the course, and they are conventionally stated in behavioural terms (White, 1988). Behavioural or performance objectives are objectives which specify what learners should do as a result of instruction (Nunan, 1988).

Setting a set of performance objectives in syllabus design may be useful in that:

- They can be a guide to the selection of content, thereby giving a sharper focus to the teacher,
- They can give a clear idea of what they can get from a language programme,
- They can help in developing means of assessment and evaluation (Nunan 1988, p. 61).

2.2.3. Selecting and grading the syllabus content

In a traditional syllabus like the grammar-oriented one, linguistic elements and grammatical rules are the central concern of both the teacher and the learners. This type of syllabus is called the product-oriented syllabus, in which the content is stated in terms of the outcomes of instruction (Nunan 1988), thereby specifying the content in grammatical, phonological, and vocabulary items.

A central issue for the syllabus designer might be how and on what criteria the content (i.e., the what-elements) are to be selected and ordered. In a structural syllabus, for example, syllabus entry may be selected and graded according to grammatical notions of simplicity and complexity (Nunan, 1988), working from the easier towards the more difficult words, from the more frequently used to the less frequently used structures, or from the concrete ideas to the more abstract concepts.

In functional syllabuses, the content is defined in terms of categories of communicative language use (White, 1988) reflecting the learners’ needs in the real world.

2.2.4. Evaluation and assessment

Evaluation involves looking at all the factors that influence the learning process, such as syllabus objectives, course design, materials, and methodology, teacher performance and assessment (Harris and McCann, 1994) and it is incorporated as feedback and a formative process within language curriculum development (White, 1988), which means the results gained from the feedback process could provide a fresh start for further development and innovation.
Teachers can look at the evidence of pupils’ progress towards the objectives through assessment which is one of the most valuable sources of information for evaluation. Evaluation entails judgment and interpretation of the data derived from both formal and informal assessment opportunities. In order to make any judgment about the degree of achievement of the syllabus objectives, each objective ‘must be written with adequate clarity and precision’ (Nicholls and Nicholls, 1978, p. 72).

As methods of getting feedback from the pupils, a variety of assessment techniques can be suggested: rating scales, teacher observation, diaries, written reports, questionnaire survey, and interviews.

White introduces Lawton’s three models of evaluation: the illuminative, the professional, and the case study models (White, 1988). According to White, in the illuminative evaluation, the evaluator gathers information as participant observer, who takes part in the situation he or she is studying as a way of collecting data for further study (White, 1988). The second model is the teacher-as-researcher model as is seen in action research, which refers to the systematic collection and analysis of data relating to the improvement of some aspect of professional practice (White, 1998). Finally, the case study models, i.e., an in-depth study of one particular student, teacher, class, school, etc (White, 1998), yield data that is strong in reality (White, 1988). White also refers to the significance of triangulation of the data collected, in that it can provide several viewpoints of the same event or experience (White, 1988).

2.3 An Overview of Syllabus Types

The choice of a syllabus is a major decision in language teaching. Several distinct types of language teaching syllabi have been proposed, and these different types may be implemented in various teaching situations Krahnke (1987,) has proposed six types of syllabi as follows:

1) A *Structural syllabus* is a kind of syllabus in which the content of language teaching is a collection of the forms and structures, usually grammatical elements such as verbs, nouns, past tense and so on.

2) A *notional/functional syllabus* is the one in which the content of the language is a collection of the functions that are to be performed when language is used, or of the notions that language is used to express. For example, informing, agreeing, apologizing, requesting, promising and so on.

3) A *situational syllabus* is one in which the content of language teaching is a collection of real or imaginary situations in which language occurs or is used. For example, seeing the dentist, asking directions in a new town, buying a book in a book shop.
4) A skill-based syllabus is one in which the content of language teaching is a collection of specific abilities that may play a part in using language.

5) A content-based syllabus is not really a language teaching syllabus at all. In content-based language teaching, the primary purpose of the instruction is to teach some content or information using the language that the students are also learning. The students are simultaneously language students and students of whatever content is being taught. The subject matter is primary, and language learning occurs incidentally to the content learning. An example of content-based language teaching is a science class taught in the language the students need or want to learn.

6) A task-based syllabus is one in which the content of the teaching is a series of complex and purposeful tasks that the students want or need to perform with the language they are learning.

2.4 Synthetic Syllabus Planning:
In 1976, the British applied linguist David Wilkins suggested a basic distinction between what he called ‘Synthetic Approaches’ to syllabus design and ‘Analytical Approaches’. All syllabuses, he suggested, fitted one or other of these approaches. He described the synthetic approach in the following terms:

A synthetic language teaching strategy is one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and step by step so that acquisition is a process of gradual accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been built up (Wilkins, 1976, p. 66).

2.5 Analytical Syllabus Planning:
In analytical approaches the learner is presented with holistic chunks of language and is required to analyze them, or break them down into their constituent parts (Wilkins, 1976). Wilkins defines ‘analytical approaches’ as:

Prior analysis of the total language system into a Set of discrete pieces of language that is a necessary precondition for the adoption of a Synthetic approach is largely superfluous. Such Approaches are organized in terms of the purposes for which people are learning language and the Kinds of language that are necessary to meet these Purposes (Wilkins, 1976, p. 45).

2.6 Toward an Eclectic Approach
It can be seen that any syllabus design will have unique set of strengths and weaknesses, the complete reporting of which lies beyond the scope of this paper. Whatever position language teachers take, they will need to accept the pedagogic consequences of their decision. Most language teachers will probably take Whites’ position:
In the end, a hybrid syllabus will probably result, not simply because of theoretical considerations, but because, in the day to day world of teaching, this will be the compromise which satisfies most interest groups, and I personally would find it difficult to argue against such a pragmatic solution (White, 1988, p. 43).

Martin points out that an eclectic approach is not only common sense; it is the best available choice since variety is the spice of language (Martin, 1997). Ultimately an eclectic approach to syllabus design is the most logical, but only if it is an informal choice (Hadley, 2000). A hybrid syllabus will result purely due to pragmatic reasons. As Hutchinson and Waters (1987) suggest: It is wise to take an eclectic approach, taking what is useful from each theory and trusting also in the evidence of your own experience as a teacher. Thus, to what extent has an integration of the various approaches taken place? Does the syllabus specification include all aspects? If yes, how is priority established? These questions must also form part of the criteria when designing or assessing your own syllabus (Rabbini, 1998).

Given the fact that none of the existing types of syllabuses is any better than the others, decisions about a suitable syllabus framework for a language course reflect different priorities in teaching rather than absolute choices…. In most courses there will generally be a number of different syllabus strands, such as grammar linked to skills and texts, tasks linked to topics and functions, or skills linked to topics and texts (Richards, 2001). Therefore, the integrated syllabus came into being, which is also called the multi-syllabus. Designing a multi-syllabus does not mean the simple combination of elements from different types of syllabuses. Rather, it is a matter of choice of priority.

Currently, the practice of adhering to one type of syllabus throughout the language program is rare. Rather syllabus designers tend to resort to multi-syllabus. There are two ways for syllabus designers to do so. First, they can design a multi-syllabus, incorporating features of currently popular syllabuses. Second, they can choose to adopt a different type for the different stages of the program. For example, [a] syllabus might be organized grammatically at the first level and then the grammar presented functionally. Or the first level of organization might be functional with grammar items selected according to the grammatical demands of different functions (Richards, 2001).

3. Research Question

The research question which guided this study was:

1-What are Iranian high school students’ attitudes towards a syllabus design which has integrated synthetic and analytic approaches?
4. Method

4.1 Research Design
Survey-based research was employed for this study. Interview and questionnaire, as part of survey-based research were used to collect data. Such a design was considered appropriate since it was intended to investigate students’ attitudes towards integrating synthetic and analytic approaches in syllabus design. The survey, typically in the form of a questionnaire, is one of the most frequently used and efficient method of collecting data on attitudes and opinions from a large group of students (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

4.2 Population
This study was conducted at Hekmat State High School in Parsabad. Therefore, the population of the study was considered to be all the 60 second grade high school students at this school.

4.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure
The sample of this study was 30 female students in the second grade at Hekmat High School. They were of the same age group between 15 and 17 years old. All of the students had been the researcher’s students at Hekmat High School for two years. The group was taught following the guidelines of the proposed integrated syllabus. A detailed description of the proposed syllabus has been provided in appendix B.

The convenience sampling was used in this study which is the most common sample type in L2 research (Dornyei, 2001). The sample of 30 female students was selected as it met certain practical criteria, such as availability at a certain time, or easy accessibility. The sample was similar to the population as they were in the second grade high school and they were of the same age group.

4.4 Instrumentation
In order to obtain a satisfying amount of authentic data, this study attempted to employ multiple methods and sources of information about students’ attitudes. Therefore, it made use of three semi structured interviews in addition to the close-ended questionnaire for investigation.

The students’ questionnaire consisted of fifteen 5-point Likert scale questions in Persian. This questionnaire was adapted from Schulz (2001). The first version of the questionnaire had 20 questions which were reduced to 15 after being piloted. In order to support the questionnaire results and increase the outcomes of the research, the researcher carried out
interviews to communicate directly with students. The semi-structured interview form was employed for this research because it gives interviewees, a degree of power and control over the course of interview, and also because it gives the interviewer a great deal of flexibility (Mackey & Gass, 2005).

To investigate the reliability level of the questionnaire items, a pilot study was conducted to a group of 30 students similar to the intended sample. In this pilot study, students received instruction based on the proposed integrated syllabus for 10 sessions. Then their attitudes were evaluated. The validity of the questionnaire was established by three experts. The experts’ judgment or comments were taken into consideration and the final and revised form of the questionnaire items was presented to the students in the major study. All the experts advocated that the items of the questionnaire are valid to investigate the research objectives.

To investigate the reliability of the interview data, rater reliability was determined in the major study. Once data was collected, it was evaluated by the researcher and one of the researcher’s colleagues. The percentage of agreement between the two raters indicated a high degree of rater reliability (%90).

The validity of the interview was established by three experts. All the experts advocated that the interview questions are valid to investigate the research objectives.

4.5 Procedure

Before conducting the questionnaire and interview, the students were taught under the guidelines of the proposed integrated syllabus twice a week for 26 sessions over a period of three months (12 units during the whole teaching program, each of hour and a half duration). The experiment was conducted from the middle of September 2012 to the end of December 2012. The proposed integrated syllabus was what White calls ‘a hybrid or proportional’ syllabus (White, 1988). The syllabus was a hybrid of synthetic-oriented syllabi (such as grammatical, functional, and situational syllabi) and analytical-oriented syllabi (such as task-based syllabi with focus on interactive and role-play activities). The crucial point here is that the central component of the syllabus is the topics and activities related to the students’ daily life both at home and school. As Clement and MacIntyre (2003) point out designs of some useful and interesting topics and activities related to the students’ daily life will stimulate students’ talks.

The students’ questionnaire was distributed to 30 students. Prior to the distributing of the questionnaires, the students were informed of the objectives and significance of the research. They were also requested to state their true and honest responses. The whole administration to complete answering the questionnaire lasted about 15 minutes. All ambiguities by the
students were responded by the researcher at the time of answering the questionnaire. Once they finished answering the questionnaire, they were requested to check their responses for incompleteness or missing answer.

Before conducting the interviews, the students were briefed on the aims and procedures of the interview. The interview was conducted by the researcher. The researcher asked the students to answer the interview questions honestly and assured the students that the interview results made no change in their final examination. In order to gather a deeper understanding of students’ responses, the researcher asked students who were willing to voice their opinions in the interview. The aim of this work was to encourage the students to offer honest opinions in a non-threatening way (Murphy, 2001). Therefore, 16 students wanted to participate in interview at the end of the teaching program. The interview was conducted at Hekmat State High School in Parsabad. The amount of time required to respond to the open-ended questions in interview was exactly twenty five minutes. The open-ended questions in the interview were intended to elicit the students’ opinions regarding the proposed integrated syllabus, interactive activities, and using English in pairs.

4.6 Data Analysis
The data obtained from the questionnaires were analyzed in terms of percentages. Each evaluative statement was weighted equally, and with 15 statements, 1 point for each strongly agree, 2 points for each agree, 3 points for each strongly disagree, 4 points for each disagree, and 5 points for neutral. All scores were converted to percentile rankings (0-100%).

As for the interview data, after collecting the data and transcribing the interview responses, the data were interpreted to produce the findings of the study.

5. Results
5.1 Results of Students’ Questionnaire Data Analysis
It might be worth indicating that the analysis of the data was based on the student’s responses to fifteen statements, for which they were required to choose one of the five alternatives, namely: 1) Strongly Agree, 2) Agree, 3) Strongly Disagree, 4) Disagree, and 5) Neutral.
### Table 1.1 Results of the analysis of students’ attitudes towards the proposed syllabus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Questionnaire Item</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n=30 %</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total n=30 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I like the study of grammar.</td>
<td>5 17 20 66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Task-based activities in this syllabus are enough for learning grammar.</td>
<td>23 72 6 20.2 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I like to focus on Form and meaning in overall context of communication.</td>
<td>22 71 5 17 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I think that fluency is more important than accuracy.</td>
<td>10 10 15 55</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I think that fluency and accuracy should be in balance to improve speaking.</td>
<td>25 85 5 15 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I like the teacher to focus only on meaning –centered tasks.</td>
<td>7 22.6 17 66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6 11.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I like to practice language functions by interactive activities.</td>
<td>26 88 2 6.5 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I like this type of syllabus as it helps me to develop my speaking English.</td>
<td>27 96 2 6.7 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>In class, I learn better when I work with others than by myself.</td>
<td>20 66 4 13 6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I like to discuss topics which are motivating.</td>
<td>21 70 5 15 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I like the teacher to promote communication language learning through activities, discussion, and sharing ideas.</td>
<td>24 82 6 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I like to learn or practice English outside the classroom.</td>
<td>12 43.7 6 16.3 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10 7 30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I like activities with focus on language use such as role play and interactive activities.</td>
<td>12 45 9 35 9 10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I like the teacher to let me find my mistakes.</td>
<td>16 51.7 19 48.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I like the teacher to use various materials such as video, audio and multimedia.</td>
<td>10 43.8 5 16.2 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 23 5 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A total of 72% of the respondents agreed with the statement “Task-based activities in the syllabus are enough for learning grammar”. A large majority of the students reacted positively towards using a variety of activities for learning grammatical structures. This means that integrating synthetic and analytic approaches, i.e., grammatical and task-based syllabi, met the needs of my students.

The study of grammar is basically boring for most students. This type of syllabus can facilitate students’ learning of grammar and can also develop learners’ communicative competence.

Comparing students’ responses to item 1 and 2 indicated that while a total of 66% of the students reacted negatively to the statement “I like the study of grammar”, a total of 81% of the students gave positive responses to the study of grammar through activities. This means that integrating synthetic and analytic approaches in syllabus design leads to better results.

Comparing the responses of the students to item 3 revealed that a total of 71% of the students responded positively to the statement “I like to focus on form and meaning in overall context of communication”. The students in this study showed positive attitudes towards the need of form-focused and communication-oriented instruction. Again, this indicates the need for integrating synthetic and analytic approaches. In item 4 and 6, a total of 55% and 66% of the students respectively responded negatively. This indicates that synthetic and analytic approaches alone cannot be sufficient. Regarding item 5, “I think that fluency and accuracy should be in balance to improve speaking”, a total of 85% of the students yielded positive.
responses. This was what I was expecting. As Savignon (2000) claimed that communication cannot take place in the absence of structure.

A total of 88% of the students agreed with the statement that “I like to practice language functions by interactive activities”. Again this implies that students have positive attitudes towards the integration of synthetic and analytic approaches. Learning language functions alone is boring and nonsense for most of the students. But when language functions are taught with task-based syllabus, they will be so interesting for students and this will increase students’ communicative competence (Schulz, 2001).

A total of 96% of the students provided positive responses to the statement “I like this type of syllabus as it helps me to develop my speaking English”. Rabbini (2002) argues that when assessing a syllabus which is intended to develop an overall competence, one has to determine how priority is established among the various aspects. Communicative competence is the major objective of this syllabus which can be attained by increasing the number of activities that promote speaking or rather by integrating components of synthetic and analytic approaches. Since speaking is the major part of the syllabus, most of the functions, grammar, and vocabulary are intended to develop accordingly.

A total of 79% of the students supported the idea of doing more group work. Group or pair work brings about more discussions for students. This makes them speak English and reduces their stress.

A total of 70% of the students supported the statement that the selected topics in the proposed syllabus are motivating. Providing some useful and interesting topics for students will stimulate students’ talks and is more likely to motivate the student class participation. Therefore, we can conclude that familiarity with the discussion topics will promote the smooth progress in communication activities (Nunan, 1998). The variability of interesting and familiar topics increases learners’ motivation, thereby constituting an important dimension that determines learning success and this will develop speaking (Schulz, 2001).

A total of 82% of the students responded positively to the statement “I like the teacher to promote communication language learning through activities”.

A total of 43% of the students yielded positive attitudes towards practicing English outside the classroom. Practicing English in real-life situations motivates students to speak in English. Foreign language learning should be carried out in authentic situations. Macintyre and Clement (2000) claimed that students should learn in the real communication situation, and make use of class activities such as scenario, role play.
Statement 14 yielded mixed responses: While 51.7% of the students supported the statement that “I like the teacher to let me find my mistakes”, 43.3% argued against it. This makes them to reduce their stress so that they can speak English easily.

Finally, in responding to the item “I like the teacher to use various materials including video, audio, and multimedia”, more than half (51%) of the students responded positively, 35% responded negatively, and 5% gave neutral responses.

Overall, the comparison of the students’ responses to item 1 through item 15 shows that on the whole students were satisfied with this type of integrated syllabus.

5.2 Results of the Interview Data Analysis
After collecting data and transcribing the interview responses, the data were analyzed. It is worth restating that the analysis of the data was based on the students’ responses to three open-ended questions. The interview questions were:

1) Does the syllabus help you to communicate in English?
2) Do you think that interactive activities help you to learn better language functions and grammar?
3) Do you think that using English in pairs will help you to communicate in English?

The analysis of the students’ interview data revealed that the proposed integrated syllabus helped students to communicate in English. In fact the results of the interview analysis supported the results of the questionnaire analysis.

The students reported that their opportunities to speak English were increased by this type of syllabus. Two students expressed their reactions in the following way:

All in all, I had a good experience learning this syllabus and felt that my teacher did a good job. This type of syllabus reduced monotony and boredom in class. It helped me a lot to learn to speak English through interesting topics and activities.

Regarding students’ responses to the second question, most of the students yielded positive attitudes. They said that before conducting this syllabus, learning grammar and functions were difficult and boring for them but with this type of syllabus, learning grammar and functions were interesting for them. The cooperative nature of interactive activities naturally encourages student-student interaction. These types of activities are excellent for encouraging shy students, since they require the participation of all the members of a group (Schulz, 2001, p. 61). One of the students expressed her reactions in the following way:

Before conducting this syllabus, I disliked grammar. I didn’t know what functions were. My teacher in this syllabus taught me what was grammar and functions. Through interactive
activities, I did learn grammar, functions and English on the whole. These type of activities facilitated learning grammar and functions for me.

Some students reported:

Interactive activities can offer us more opportunities to speak and practice English because you have to answer questions. You have to talk and ask.

Regarding students’ attitudes to the third question of the interview, the vast majority of them gave positive responses. Most of them told that pair work provided more discussion and it helped them to increase their self confidence. Therefore, students can improve their communicative abilities.

In addition to favoring group work, two other students made positive comments about the feedback they had received about the accuracy and fluency of their English utterances from their group members. A student pointed out that:

One of the best aspects of learning a language within a classroom setting is the class participation and discussion. My group members will correct me if I make a mistake. If we are not sure, the teacher walks around the class, we may ask her right away.

Some of the students, who were afraid of approaching the teacher directly, experienced much less anxiety in their interactions with classmates. One of the students reported:

I dare not ask the teacher directly because I would feel nervous when talking to the teacher. If I have any questions or anything I don’t understand, I ask my classmates. And sometimes, I can understand better.

6. Conclusion

It was considered at the outset of this study that the role of syllabus design is very important for every language teacher. We need to have the right attitudes towards the syllabuses in schools. It has been observed that syllabuses are not ‘masters’ but ‘servant’, the underlying message being that we should not regard one syllabus as an absolute authority and depend on it too much, but rather take whatever is beneficial to teaching and learning and adapt, complement or modify what is not satisfactory. In this way, we are making use of the syllabuses to achieve our own purposes. The result of this study revealed that in order to gain the highest degree of effectiveness from the language classroom, the two approaches, synthetic and analytic approaches, should be integrated and regarded as complementary. The syllabus emphasizes the consolidation of grammatical and task-based syllabi as the basis for developing students’ communicative competence, which is considered to be the ultimate objective of this study.
The effects of using task-based activities on developing speaking skill were confirmed in this study. My students’ perceptions confirmed that task-based activities are fun and created a non-threatening learning environment that encourages interactions between students and teachers, enhances communication and teamwork, encourages active participation and enables students to demonstrate and apply previously or newly acquired language knowledge and skills. Detailed attention should be given to the type of the activities in our schools’ syllabuses. Therefore, most of the tasks should be done in the classroom with emphasis on pair or group work.

It is also to be noted that students yielded positive attitudes towards the topics in this syllabus. The type of the chosen topics in this syllabus was mainly dealt with students’ daily life. It was personalized. Therefore, students were more willing to talk about their own experiences. In so doing, they will feel less nervous and more ready to communicate. Therefore, the type of the topics in our schools’ syllabuses should be motivating and interesting to encourage students to talk English. To increase the rate of learning, more use of language teaching aids such as video films are suggested. Since technology provides an exciting advancement in the use of machines to teach language. My students reacted positively towards practicing English outside the classroom. Although practicing English in real life situations motivates students to speak in English, the lack of time in our schools in Iran do not allow practicing English outside the classroom. I believe that taking the students out of the classroom gives them a welcome change of scenery.

This study by no means claims to be a complete survey of all of the Iranian high school students’ attitudes towards integrated approaches in syllabus design, though the researcher has done her best to accomplish the study. The findings of this investigation can benefit both teachers who try to open new horizons for their students as well as course designers to reconsider the issues which are of great challenges to any educational curriculum in different educational settings. It is hoped that this study would give significant insight toward the integrated syllabuses and would motivate more research works at larger scales.

7. Pedagogical Implications
The findings of this study can be used as a beginning point for providing some pedagogical implications that should be taken into consideration by both English instructors and syllabus designers. The implications are as follow:

1. To inform policy makers or syllabus designers to revise the current policy in syllabus design. Syllabus designers can make use of integrated syllabus to develop
students’ communicative competence. Since speaking is the major part of the syllabus and many students at high schools in Iran have difficulty in speaking, this kind of integrated syllabus can help them a lot to develop their speaking.

2. To inform teachers to use new methods, techniques and strategies to prepare the students to take part actively in learning situation in order to achieve the goal, namely, communication. The role of syllabus design is an important consideration for every language teacher. The kind of syllabus a language teacher operates from is highly significant. Teachers do not feel the need and necessity of implementing communicative approaches as they do not believe in enabling students to communicate during their school years. Since the top goal of instruction in high schools is to prepare students to enter the universities and students’ oral skills are not evaluated on university entrance exams, teachers spend all their time and energy to instruct based on traditional approaches and follow only a linguistic approach not communicative one.

3. To inform policy makers or syllabus designers to include needs analysis as the important and basic element in designing syllabuses in order to develop a syllabus based on students’ needs and attitudes. Pedagogically, students’ opinions and attitudes towards specific syllabus can affect decisions on how best to modify and employ various techniques and methods in syllabus design (Ellis, 2003).

4. The fourth implication is that curriculum designers ought to consider integrating more communicative activities into their language teaching programs. Due to the overall positive effects of the use of activities, it is important to integrate them into the regular syllabus and curriculum in appropriate ways and also teachers need to make use of these activities at classroom situations. As Nunan (2003) suggested task-based activities should be regarded as integral part of the language syllabus, not an amusing activity for the end of the term.

5. The final implication is that teachers need to make use of pair and group work in the classroom in order to help to develop students’ communicative abilities. Most of Iranian English teachers do not take advantage of pair and group work in the classroom which can release them from their position at the front of the class and devote their time to those students who need more attention.
8. Suggestions for Future Research

The limitations under which this study was conducted need to be adjusted or supplemented by further research on this study. This study was conducted for the duration of three months and monitored the short term results of the use of integrated syllabuses on students’ communicative competence. In order to obtain further confirmation of the positive effects of integrated syllabuses that emerged from my data, further studies could investigate these effects over a longer period of time as suggested by Hadley (2000). Hadley suggested that SLA researchers should “increasingly seek to look at second language and communicative development longitudinally. Ultimately, longitudinal findings can have a central place in advancing our SLA theories and research programs (Hadley, 2000). Finally, the recommendations given here will be worth done by students, teachers, supervisors, and the researcher if they help to improve current and future language learning success of our countries’ students.

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Journal of curriculum development, 6, 5-21.


Title

The Most Difficult Areas in English Writing: A Study on Iranian and Malaysian Students’ and Teachers’ Perception

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Biodata

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Abstract

One effective method for conveying one’s thoughts and ideas is through writing. As Leki and Carson (1994) emphasize: "ability to write well is necessary both to achieve academic success and to demonstrate that achievement" (p. 83). While writing in one's native language is a daunting task, it is simple to see why most students find writing in a foreign language to be devastating. With the growing number of Iranian students studying overseas, it is necessary to see what these students’ and their teachers perceive to be the most difficult areas in English writing. 6 areas of difficulty (Jordan, 1997) were used in the present study. 70 Iranian along with 60 Malaysian higher intermediate EFL Students; and 20 Iranian and 10 Malaysian EFL teachers were asked to number the areas from most problematic to least problematic. To further probe participants' perception, an interview was held with 14 participants. A mismatch was found in the perception of the Iranian participants which shows what the students perceive to be areas of difficulty in English writing are not areas teachers emphasize in classes. The
findings revealed there are inconsistencies between the learners' needs, and what the teachers believe to be areas of difficulty in these students’ English writings.

Key words: Culture, English writing, Iranian students, Iranian teachers, perception, writing difficulty

1. Introduction

In the post modern world we are living in today, having the ability to express one’s ideas is becoming increasingly important and this is most effectively achieved through writing. Effective written English is an essential tool for any academic and professional career (Liu and You, 2008). As Leki and Carson (1994) emphasize: "ability to write well is necessary both to achieve academic success and to demonstrate that achievement" (p. 83). By considering the fact that writing in one’s mother tongue is a very difficult task, it is understandable why writing in a foreign language becomes devastating for some students. Jalilifar (2008) states that "writing in a second language is further complicated by issues of proficiency in the target language, first language literacy, and differences in culture and rhetorical approach to the text" (p. 114). The process of academic writing is a very complex and complicated procedure for everyone and this task becomes even more daunting for ESL/EFL writers:

Compared to students writing in their native language (L1), however, students writing in their L2 have to also acquire proficiency in the use of the language as well as writing strategies, techniques and skills. They might also have to deal with instructors and later, faculty members, who may or may not get beyond their language problems when evaluating their work (Myles, 2002, P.1).

Bereiter and Scaramalia (1983) assert that "writing a long essay is probably the most complex constructive act that human beings are ever expected to perform" (P. 20). Writing is a complex process which in turn shows the writers' communicative skills. In order to assist EFL students on their writing skills, teachers should focus on these students’ major difficulties in writing.

English is one of the most common languages spoken internationally. In fact according to The Summer Institute for Linguistics (SIL) Ethnologue Survey in 2009, over 328 million people speak English worldwide (Lewis, 2009). English as a key to a modern life, has a dominant position in science, technology, medicine and computer, it is the most widely used language in business, trade, aviation, diplomacy, international organizations and companies,
in mass media and journalism, in sport and youth life, in music, in education systems and most importantly, in foreign language teaching. It is through all the means above that English has found its way into many cultures (Mugglestone, 2006).

In Iran, English is considered a foreign language which is taught from junior high school onward. Students have to deal with English language proficiency in junior high school, high school, college, and even university. As Strain (1971) reported, over 90% of Iranian students prefer to elect English as their foreign language in university; which also shows the popularity of this language among students. Vaezi (2009) and Sadighi and Maghsudi, (2000) found similar results among Iranian undergraduates. They found the Iranian students to be highly motivated to learning English. This was the case in both English major and non English major students studying at various universities in Iran.

Teachers’ concepts of good writing and their students’ problematic areas in writing can play a great role in how composition is taught in ESL classes. Various studies have pointed to different problems in the eyes of teachers. Casanave and Hubbard (1992) found that teachers in the social sciences and humanities believe that vocabulary use is the greatest problem in the non native students’ writings. Schwartz (1984) conducted a study on a group of students in which he asked them to determine what kind of passage their professor would favor. The students had two choices: 1) a clear but lifeless passage 2) a very creative passage with mechanical errors. The results from this study reveal that the students all chose the first one which shows that according to students’ perspective “grammatical errors are more powerful in effect than voice” (p. 60).

Liu and You (2008, p. 154) believe that a combination of “Cultural values, literary aesthetics, and teachers’ socio-political experiences” make up the teachers’ perception of good writers. Diab (2005) takes a different approach and studies the students’ perspectives on what the teachers should concentrate on in writing classes. The participants were 156 EFL university students enrolled in English language courses at the American University of Beirut. She found out that most students (86%) believed that the teacher should point out errors in grammar more than anything else.

Radecki and Swales (1988) surveyed 59 ESL students’ perspectives. They found that the ESL students expected their teachers to focus on correcting all their surface-level errors. They also reported that if this expectation was not met, the teacher would lose credibility in the eyes of the students.
Golshan and Karbalaei (2009) studied the writings of 120 Iranian university students majoring in English. Their study revealed that specific areas in grammar seem to be particularly problematic. They divided the participants into two groups of lower and higher English proficiency. They found that preposition, lack of concord, and article created the greatest areas of difficulty for the lower level students while distribution of verb groups, article, preposition, and lack of concord proved to be more difficult for the higher proficiency students.

Rahimi (2010) studied 50 Iranian EFL students majoring in English at an Iranian university. He inquired about these students’ ideas regarding error feedback. He found that the most important area the students concentrated on was transitional words (86%), followed by sentence structure (84%), spelling (52%), and finally prepositions with only 46%. This shows the importance of surface-level errors in the eyes of the Iranian students.

Jordan (1997) reported the most problematic areas in English writing according to the overseas postgraduate students and also their academic staff at a university in United Kingdom. The student participants were asked to comment on their own writing. They were told to choose a comment for the 6 areas of difficulty in English writing from “a number” to “a lot”. The staff was asked to comment on the same areas but regarding what caused them the most difficulty when reading what the students had written. The six areas included: vocabulary, style, spelling, grammar, punctuation, and handwriting. Each area of difficulty refers to the following (p. 47): 1. Vocabulary includes “using a word correctly, own lack of vocabulary, and confusion caused by similar sounding/looking words”. 2. Style is related to formal vs. informal types of writing. 3. Spelling encompasses “trying to write what is heard and confusion of similar sounding words”. 4. Grammar contains verb tenses, active vs. passive form of verbs, and agreement of verb and subject. 5. Punctuation is not being aware of how to use them properly. 6. Handwriting is related to illegibility due to quick writing. Jordan’s results can be summarized:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students’ Perception</th>
<th>Staff’s Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Handwriting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>Punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handwriting</td>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jordan’s (1997) results showed that while the students believed that vocabulary, style, and spelling caused the greatest problems for them, the staff asserted that style, grammar, and vocabulary predominated the areas of concern in the students’ English writing.
It is important to see whether such a mismatch still exists among EFL students’ and their instructors’ perception of the most difficult areas in English writing in the 21st century. It is clear that a mismatch between the two sides’ perception can lead to a miscommunication and bring about unsuccessful learning and teaching. Therefore the same six areas will be used for the present study on both students and teachers’ perspectives on the most problematic areas of English writing. Therefore, the primary purpose of the present study is studying the Iranian EFL teachers and students’ point of view regarding the most problematic areas in English writing.

2. Some Explanations for ESL/EFL Students’ Difficulties in Writing

One major source of difficulty for students’ writing can be related to the idea of organization; as it may differ between the students’ first language and the target language they are writing in. As Kaplan (1988, as cited in Matsuda 1997, p. 48) reminds us “the fact that the student knows the conventions of his or her own writing system does not mean the student understands the conventions employed in the target language”.

Another source of difficulty is the student’s previous educational experience. Mohan and Lo (1985) studied the composition courses in British Columbia and in Hong Kong and they found that both the number of students in each class and also the number of hours for composition instruction differed greatly between the two places. They report that while there are 45-60 students in Hong Kong classrooms, there are only 21-30 in British Columbia. Also, while British Columbia students receive 60-80 minutes of English composition instruction weekly, their counterparts in Hong Kong only receive 40 minutes. They assert these two factors play a vital role in how well these students write.

Another factor Mohan and Lo (1985) refer to is the instructor’s emphasis in each classroom regarding English composition. While the Hong Kong instructors placed more emphasis on teaching grammar, the British Columbia instructors focused on organization and style. So, while sentence structure is considered as the most important feature in writing in Hong Kong, units larger than sentences received the limelight in British Columbia and this difference in the emphasis the instructor places on writing while teaching greatly affects the students.

Grabe and Kaplan (1989) also believe in differences in learners’ background. They assert that: Writers composing in different languages will produce rhetorically distinct texts, independent of other causal factors such as differences in processing, in age, in relative proficiency, in education, in topic, in task complexity, or in audience. (p. 264).
Shokrpour and Fallahzadeh (2007) studied reports written by Iranian EFL medical students and discovered that these students have problems in writing and language skills. They found that although the students had difficulty in both areas (language and writing skills), most of their problems stemmed from writing skills. A follow up interview revealed that the main reasons behind the writing problems are the students’ lack of time to study English along with their specialized courses and also the fact that their General English course was presented in Persian and that they were not required to write in these classes.

In order to help Higher-intermediate EFL students perform better on writing tasks, understanding their perception of the most difficult areas in English writing seems to be essential. The study reported here presents an effort to understand these.

3. Material and Methods
To testify the truth or falsity of the research hypothesis, the researcher initially decided to collect and analyze data. This section gives information regarding the sampling, the instrumentation, and finally the procedure that was used in the study. The basis of the data collection was the 6 areas of difficulty used by Jordan in 1997 (As introduced in the Introduction section). SPSS software was used for the statistical analyses of the questionnaire.

3.1. Participants
70 Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students (both males and females), 60 Higher-intermediate Malaysian EFL students (both males and females), 20 Iranian EFL teachers (both males and females), and 10 Malaysian EFL teachers (both males and females) were chosen from two renowned colleges in Mashhad, Iran and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. These students were chosen because they have learned a range of various grammatical structures and a series of vocabulary. It should also be mentioned that these EFL learners have studied English as an extra curricular activity for at least 3 years. Out of the Iranian EFL participants, 8 Iranian and 6 Malaysian participants were randomly selected to take part in a short interview on their perception of English writing.

3.1.1. Student Participants
The 130 students who participated in the present study were all university students (Bachelor/ Master/ PhD). They were majoring in foreign languages, humanities, engineering, medical and veterinary sciences, basic sciences, art, and management. Their ages ranged from 20 to 40, (Mean= 27, SD= 4.805). Overall, 39 males (Mean= 26.64, SD= 3.874) and 91 females
(Mean= 27.15, SD= 5.206) took part in this section. However, it should be mentioned that age did not play a significant role in this study. There were more females than males because there were generally more female students in each of the English classes. All the participants had studied English for at least 3 years. The mean for the number of years they had studied English was 10.07 (SD= 4.876). This was necessary in order to make sure the participants has a good command over English in order to be make good judgment regarding their English writing problems . The single stage sampling of participants was conducted based on these students’ availability as “potential respondents in the population” (Creswell, 2009; p. 148).

3.1.2. Teacher Participants
A total of 20 Iranian EFL teachers (both males and females), and 10 Malaysian EFL teachers (both males and females) were selected for this study. They were invited by the researchers to take part in the present study. The teachers had a bachelors or Masters degree in English (Teaching English as a Foreign Language, English Literature) and had taught English for at least 3 years. Their ages ranged from 23 to 65, (Mean= 35.20, SD= 12.972). Overall, 13 males (Mean= 34.60, SD= 12.92) and 17 females (Mean= 35.80, SD= 13.69) took part in this section. After filling out the consent forms and the demographics section of the questionnaire, the teachers were asked to number the areas they perceived their students had the most difficulty in English writing. 6 problem areas (vocabulary, grammar, spelling, style, punctuation, and handwriting) were introduced (based on Jordan, 1997) and the teachers were asked to number these areas from 1 (most difficult) to 6 (least difficult).

3. 2. Questionnaire
For the present study, a questionnaire (See Appendix) consisting of two different parts was used for the EFL students and their teachers. Each of the Higher-intermediate EFL students as well as each EFL teacher was initially given a written consent form explaining their participation and also giving some information regarding the overall research. The first part of the questionnaire includes the demographics. In this section, demographic information such as age, gender, field of study, mother tongue, number of years allocated for English learning, etc. was obtained. The questionnaire items were prepared in English and it was given to each student. The researcher was present to make sure there was no ambiguity- involving vocabulary or comprehension difficulty in the instructions of each section of the questionnaire. The second part of the questionnaire focused on the participants’ perception of the most problematic areas of English writing. In this section, the participants were asked to number the six different problems in writing (vocabulary, grammar, spelling, style, punctuation, and handwriting) from most problematic (1) to least problematic (6).
The same questionnaire consisting of the demographics and the second part of the questionnaire (perception of the most problematic areas in English writing) was distributed among 30 EFL teachers who had at least 3 years of teaching experience.

3.3. Interview

There are numerous limitations regarding the use of close-ended questionnaires in a study. Some of these limitations would include collecting data which is distant from the real context it is meant to be used in, being limited to only the designers’ preferences, no room for the respondents’ explanation or elaboration (Baker and Boonkit, 2004; Petric and Czarl, 2003). In order to reduce the effects of some of these shortcomings, the researchers decided to use an interview along with the students’ questionnaire responses to help triangulate the responses and attain complementary data. The interviews were mainly used as a secondary source of information in order to confirm what the students had mentioned in the questionnaire. The interview was used more as “a medium for guided reflections” (Buckingham, 2008, p. 5) in this study.

8 Iranian and 6 Malaysian participants were asked to take part in a short interview. The interviewees were briefed beforehand regarding the purpose of the interview, and the interview was conducted in a semi-structured format so that the interviewer’s questions would not limit the participants and they could openly air their views regarding their areas of difficulty in English writing. The students were asked to further explain what they felt were the most difficult areas in English writing. The interview was employed to aid the researcher in uncovering what the respondents perceived to be difficult when they were writing in English. The interview was tape recorded. Of these 14 participants 7 were male and 7 were female students. This was done so as to ensure both genders had an equal chance at expressing their views.

4. Results and Discussion

This section provides us with a report and a discussion regarding the research findings in response to the research question concerned with perception of EFL students regarding the most difficult areas in English Writing. The overall pool of data for the present study was provided through the responses the participants gave in the survey questionnaire, and the information which was elicited from the interviews.

4.1. The Participants’ Perception
As mentioned before, the six problematic areas had been reported by Jordan in 1997. The six areas mentioned were vocabulary, grammar, spelling, style, punctuation, and handwriting. The results are as follow:

4.1.1. The Students:

4.1.1.1. Iranian EFL Students

70 Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students were asked to number the six problematic areas in English writing from 1 (most problematic) to 6 (least problematic) according to their point of view. The order of the most problematic areas selected by the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students (according to %) is listed below in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handwriting</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students’ perception of the most problematic areas in English writing

As can be seen above the Iranian students perceive grammar to be the most problematic area and handwriting to be the least problematic area in English writing. The students seem to favor surface-level errors which show their concern in language accuracy difficulties. This is also what many scholars (Hedgecock and Lefkowitz 1994; Kern, 1995; Schulz, 1996; Schulz, 2001; Diab, 2005; Diab, 2006; Rahimi, 2010) have found in their studies. Diab (2006, p. 3) asserts “surface-level correction is often what students want and expect from their teachers”. This shows that according to the students more time needs to be spent on learning and checking grammar before handing in a piece of writing in class. This was also what most students mentioned in the interview when they were asked about the changes they made between the drafts they wrote. One student (Interviewee 4) mentioned:

…The grammar is more important because (eh) the structures (eh) can make difference between the meanings. If you use one structure maybe the meanings had change. If I have any mistakes it’s all because I’m not that much good in grammar.

Another student (Interviewee 6) referred to the same point when he talked about his difficulty in English writing. He explains that some English grammatical structures do not exist in Persian and therefore he needs to change the structure in order to convey the same meaning. He said:
Grammar and structure in some points are different [Between Persian and English]… I (eh) can remember one situation where I had problem that our language [Persian] (eh) didn’t prepare this English structure and I should change my meaning of sentence.

A third student (Interviewee 1) also referred to the changes she made in her writing. She also had a similar set of ideas which she reflected on by saying “I put my sentences grammatically or I try to sometimes I try to use collocations or I try to improve vocabulary or something like that”.

4.1.1.2. Malaysian EFL Students

60 Higher-intermediate Malaysian EFL students were asked to number the six problematic areas in English writing from 1 (most problematic) to 6 (least problematic) according to their point of view. The order of the most problematic areas selected by the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students (according to %) is listed below in Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handwriting</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. higher-intermediate Malaysian EFL students’ perception of the most problematic areas in English writing

As can be seen from the above table, the results for the Malaysian students resemble the ones obtained from the Iranian students. The only difference lies in the position of handwriting and punctuation in the table. As confirmed by previous studies on Malaysian students, grammar has always posed the greatest challenge for Malaysian students (Yah Awg Nik, 2010).

4.1.2. The Teachers

4.1.2.1. Iranian EFL Teachers

20 Iranian EFL teachers were also asked to participate in this section of the questionnaire. They were asked to number the areas they perceived their students had the most difficulty in English writing from 1 (most problematic) to 6 (least problematic). The order of the most problematic areas selected by the Iranian EFL teachers (according to %) is listed below in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problematic Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handwriting</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Iranian teachers’ perception of the most problematic areas in English writing
From the above it is clear that the teachers perceive style to be the most problematic area and handwriting to be the least problematic area in their students’ English writing. This shows that according to the teachers more time needs to be allocated to the overall organization and style of the students writing. This in fact is in line with what Jordan (1997) found. According to him 92% of the teachers were worried about the style the students were using in their writing.

4.1.2.2. Malaysian EFL Teachers

10 Malaysian EFL teachers were also asked to participate in this section of the questionnaire. They were asked to number the areas they perceived their students had the most difficulty in English writing from 1 (most problematic) to 6 (least problematic). The order of the most problematic areas selected by the Iranian EFL teachers (according to %) is listed below in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problematic Area</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handwriting</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Style</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Malaysian teachers’ perception of the most problematic areas in English writing

From teachers’ perception, grammar was rated as the most problematic area of writing faced by students. Grammar is rated 100% which means all ten teachers agree grammar poses the most challenge as compared to the other categories. The second highest in the ranking is vocabulary where 90% of the teachers perceived it to be problematic. Muncie (2002) stated that students with limited vocabulary are a major obstacle to students’ learning to write in a foreign language. He concluded that vocabulary learning is a vital to the development of ESL writing and that ESL writing teachers need to recognize and encourage vocabulary learning to the students. The other categories include spelling, handwriting and style. The last category is the punctuation. The reason behind punctuation coming last in the table might be due to the computerized preference for students’ homework.

4.2. Comparison on Students’ and Teachers’ Perception

4.2.1. The Iranian Participants

The results illustrated above show a mismatch between the students’ and the teachers’ perception of the most problematic areas associated with English writing. Whereas the students selected grammar (84%) as their greatest challenge in English writing, their teachers clearly believed style (75%) indicated the greatest concern. Both groups felt strongly about
their selection and this shows a discrepancy. It is noteworthy to mention that the students ranked style as the fifth area of difficulty which shows they do not know the importance of formal vs. informal style of writing as opposed to their teachers. According to the results it is apparent that while the students are more concerned with surface level problems such as grammar and vocabulary, their teachers are worried about the overall style the students are applying to their writings. This mismatch might be one of the reasons why students’ think of English writing as a barrier in English acquisition and in thinking so still have not been able to move beyond this barrier.

However, it is interesting to know that both groups considered handwriting to be the least problematic area. One main reason for this might be the advent of typed out pieces of writing which is becoming more and more popular each day at English classes in Iran.

The results from the present study show that the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students and their teachers have different perceptions regarding the most problematic areas in English writing. While the students put the limelight on surface level problems such as grammar, vocabulary, and spelling, their teachers are primarily concerned with the style the students are using in their writings. This mismatch between the two sides’ perception can bring about unsuccessful learning and teaching experiences. Therefore, in order to avoid such experiences and also help Higher-intermediate EFL students write more effectively, a distinction must be made between language accuracy and writing skills. Language problems are not the only problems EFL students are confronted with when trying to write; the writing problems which go beyond surface-level problems also need to be taken into account. It is the teachers’ responsibility to make the students aware of these different types of problems in order for them to write closer to the standards required on international exams. These results can demonstrate one area of difficulty which can in turn contribute to the Higher-intermediate Iranian EFL students’ low scores on the writing sections of international exams such as TOEFL and IELTS. Although students strive to write grammatically correct sentences on such tests, not paying attention to the overall style of their writing might be the reason for not achieving favorable scores.

The results can also aid teachers in realizing that the students are still very concerned with surface level errors. Teachers can assist students to see the bigger picture and help them to comprehend the importance of writing skills. Language accuracy, although very important cannot result in effective writing alone. Therefore, what the students need to practice more is writing skills. It is also very important for teachers to pay attention to the areas of concern
their students have and try to bridge the gap between their own and their students’ perceptions and expectations (Schulz, 1996, 2001).

Shokrpour and Fallahzadeh (2007) believe that Iranian EFL teachers mainly concentrate on correcting the compositions sentence by sentence and in doing so focus the students’ attention on the product rather than the process. This is the kind of behavior that needs to be toned down on the part of the teachers in order to facilitate more effective writing by students. As Truscott (1996) strongly believes that in EFL classes, the correction of surface-level errors should be abandoned completely. He believes this type of correction has some harmful effects on the students’ learning experience.

One recommendation could be for teachers to dedicate a part of class time to analyzing poorly written English texts and assisting the students in realizing what is wrong with these texts and proposing ways in which they can remedy these errors. This would be a great time to even analyze some of the students written essays and have the whole class participate in the corrections. This would, of course, require more time to be allocated to writing in general and perhaps having writing classes as a separate skill. Having these classes can help students to write easier and with more accuracy (Golshan and Karbalaei, 2009).

Although the study was conducted on a limited number of students and teachers, it does nonetheless present a glimpse of the participants’ perceptions. The present results can assist syllabus designers to generate some guidelines for EFL programs used for teaching Iranian students. Syllabus designers can use the results to make possible changes to the already existing syllabuses for English language textbooks taught at language institutes. They can check to see what can be added to the writing sections in these textbooks and anticipate just what kind of information to include in order to help students make the best of what resources they already have.

4.2.2. The Malaysian Participants

From the findings above, students’ and teachers’ believe that grammar is the most problematic areas in writing. Of the 60 participants, 52 of them and all ten teachers share the same perception on grammar. Both parties are agreeable that grammar is primarily the most difficult area to master in writing. In a study done by Saadiyah Darus and Kaladevi (2009), they have analyzed 72 written essays by Form Four students in one semi-urban secondary school. Then finding of the study indicated that students generally had problems in applying correct grammatical rules in their writing. Findings of this study imply that students have not yet mastered basic grammatical structures even though they have gone through 10 years of learning English.
Another area where both students and teachers mostly agree on is vocabulary. By having limited vocabulary, students tend to use and repeat the same vocabulary to express the ideas and to develop the content. Overall there seem to be a general agreement between students and teachers regarding the most problematic areas in English writing.

5. Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to explore Higher-intermediate Iranian and Malaysian EFL students’ and their teachers’ perception of the most difficult areas in English writing. The analysis of Iranian student and teacher responses revealed a discrepancy between teachers’ and students’ perception of the most difficult areas in English writing. While the students’ perception of the main areas of concern encompassed surface level errors, their teachers believed that the overall style of writing is the main issue. However, the results obtained from the Malaysian participants show an almost perfect agreement between the students and teachers’ perceptions on the most difficult areas in English writing. The overall comparison of the results shows that the Malaysian teachers appear to be more expressive regarding what they expect from the students’ writings.

According to the overall results, students should be open-minded and share the difficulties with their teachers and ask for guidance in order to progress. For teachers, with the excess, they should change their teaching strategies in order to help students. The findings in this research have implications in the area of learning and teaching. Although the findings can not be generalized, nevertheless in a global scenario where ESL/EFL students are struggling to cope with the skill of writing, the mismatch in the Iranian participants’ perception is an issue that needs to be addressed. The authors hope that this research raises the awareness of the Iranian teachers and learners as to the need to meet each other half way, that is, students to be aware of writing as more than a grammatical exercise and teachers as to the need to train students to see the bigger picture in the skill of writing in English as a global language.

References


Appendix: Questionnaire

Part 1: Please fill in the background information section below.

Gender: □ Male □ Female Age:

Field of Study: Mother tongue:

Languages I speak: □ English □ Persian □ Turkish □ German □ Italian □ Other …………

How long have you studied English?

Have you lived abroad? □ Yes ………… □ No
(If you answered yes, where and how long?)

Academic qualifications:
□ Diploma □ Bachelor or Bachelor student
□ Master or Master student □ PhD or PhD student

Have you had formal training in English writing (such as report writing, essay writing, formal letter writing, …)? □ Yes ………… □ No
(If you answered yes, where and how long?)

Part 2: Number the following from 1 (most problematic) to 6 (least problematic) according to your perception of English writing.

□ Vocabulary □ Grammar □ Spelling
□ Style □ Punctuation □ Handwriting
Title

The Effect of Idiom Type and Individual Differences on Idiom Comprehension and Strategy Use of Iranian EFL Students

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Abstract

This study aimed at investigating whether level of language proficiency, risk-taking and ambiguity tolerance affected comprehension of idiom types A (L1/L2 structural and semantic similarity), B (L1/L2 partial structural but complete semantic similarity), C1 (L1/L2 structural similarity but semantic dissimilarity), C2 (structural and semantic dissimilarity) as classified by Yoshikawa (2008), and D (structural dissimilarity but semantic similarity and possible to be guessed, added by the researchers) and use of idiom comprehension strategies. 80 TEFL sophomores took a 35-item idiom comprehension test and 3 questionnaires (strategy, risk-taking, ambiguity tolerance). The results show better comprehension of type A by higher proficiency, intolerant and high risk-taking learners than types C1 and C2. Also, all groups used comprehension strategies differently. The findings suggest that idioms should be give different pedagogical attention, considering their transparency as well as level of proficiency, risk-taking and ambiguity tolerance of most students in class.

Keywords: Idiom type, Idiom comprehension, Strategy use, Persian idioms.

1. Introduction
Idioms are multiple word units whose overall meaning cannot always be readily derived from their individual parts. This nonliteralness has been regarded as one of the foremost causes of difficulty in the process of idiom comprehension and interpretation by L2 learners (Danesi, 1993), thus making idioms the focus of many research studies (Abel 2003; Boers & Demecheleer 2001; Cooper 1999; Wray, 1999). These studies are concerned with two central issues: the factors that affect idiom comprehension in L2 and the strategies that learners adopt in their comprehension.

Most L2 idiom research in the earlier stage focused on the role of L1 in L2 idiom comprehension (e.g. Boers & Demecheleer 2001; Irujo 1986; Kellerman 1983; Yoshikawa 2008). Kellerman (1979, 1983) investigated the relationship between native language (NL) knowledge and interpretation of the figurative meaning of target language (TL) expressions. He considered the strategy of transfer of NL items into TL expressions as an active learner strategy dependent on the learners’ notion of "psychotypological distance" (the proximity) between the NL and the TL and the markedness of the structure in the L1. He suggested that these two factors may serve to prevent facilitation of transfer where L1 and L2 are typologically close, and also to prevent interference where L1 and L2 are different.

Later, Irujo (1986) investigated whether advanced Spanish students of English relied on knowledge of their native language in the process of comprehension and production of L2 idioms. She divided English idioms into three types: identical with, similar to, and different from Spanish idioms in form and meaning. The data obtained from this study showed that idioms which were identical in both L1 and L2 were the easiest to comprehend and produce, idioms which were similar in L1 and L2 presented learners with more difficulty, and idioms which were completely different proved to be the most difficult for learners to comprehend and produce. She concluded that there was both positive and negative L1 knowledge transfer in the case of identical or similar idioms when the learners’ first language (Spanish) was close to the second language.

Boers and Demecheleer (2001) aimed to prove that idioms of medium transparency could be remembered better due to the imageability of conventional metaphors in L1 and L2. (Imageable idioms are figurative expressions that tend to call up a conventional scene in the native speaker's mind). The variable involved in this study was the culture-specific grounding that certain idioms have. This study showed a special interest in metaphorical themes that could be shared by languages which were close to one another. The researchers concluded
that students were more successful in guessing the meaning of idioms whose metaphorical theme was closer to their culture.

Yoshikawa (2008) studied the comprehension of 12 English idioms by 175 Japanese college students. They first have to answer whether they already know each idiomatic expression or not. Then they are required to write down the equivalent meaning in Japanese. After the data analysis in terms of structural as well as semantic similarity of idioms in the two languages, he divided them into 4 groups: A (L1/L2 structural and semantic similarity), B (L1/L2 partial structural but complete semantic similarity), C1 (L1/L2 structural similarity but semantic dissimilarity) and C2 (structural and semantic dissimilarity). He concluded that the closer the idioms were in terms of semantic and structural similarity in the two languages, the more understandable the idiomatic expressions were.

The effect of L2 proficiency level idiom comprehension is contradictory. Some studies found a relationship between the two while others failed to do so. For example, Trosborg (1985) showed that the learners’ ability to figure out the meaning of unknown idioms was correlated with their proficiency in upper-intermediate French speaking learners. On the other hand, Johnson (1989, 1991) and Johnson and Rosano (1993) found out that language proficiency did not affect idiom comprehension. Similarly, Elkilic (2008) investigated the comprehension of some transparent and opaque English idioms by intermediate and advanced Turkish students and found no significant difference between the two groups. One factor which might have affected the results is the presentation of idioms out of the context and in isolation. As pointed out by Liontas (2001), research into idiom understanding must be text situated and context-based.

As mentioned before, the metaphoric meaning of idioms cannot be derived from the literal meaning of their individual parts; as a result, L2 learners may apply some strategies to process and interpret unfamiliar L2 idioms. Consequently, researchers pay special attention to find out what these strategies are. Cooper (1999) investigated the on-line processing strategies used by a sample of nonnative speakers of English with varying L1 backgrounds, who were asked to think aloud while deciding on the meaning of 20 contextualized idioms. Analysis of the think-aloud data revealed that most of the participants employed a variety of strategies to find the meaning. Specifically, eight major strategies were identified: guessing from context, discussing and analyzing the idiom, using literal meaning, requesting information, repeating or paraphrasing the idiom, using background knowledge, referring to an L1 idiom, and knowing a particular word in the idiom.
The study by Chen (2004) was interesting; as he investigated the strategies Chinese learners of English used in the comprehension of English color idioms in relation to proficiency level and idiom type. Using an idiom comprehension test and a think-aloud task, Chen (2004) found that strategy use differed with idiom types. Specifically, the amount of strategy use increased with the degree of difficulty of color idioms. Concerning the effect of L2 proficiency, statistics showed that strategy use by the advanced learners was more diversified and more effective.

Apart from the L1 and the proficiency level of learners in L2, Psychological constructs such as risk-taking and ambiguity tolerance may influence idiom comprehension and idiom strategy use, for the degree to which learners take or avert risk, or the extent to which they have high or low ambiguity tolerance is shown to affect other aspects of language learning and use, Moghadasian-Rad (1994), Chapelle (1983). For example, Ashouri and Fotovatnia (2011) showed negative effect of risk-taking on translation belief and translation strategy use; risk-averse learners were found to have positive belief about translation and reported they used translation strategies more. Whereas, risk-takers were found to have negative belief about translation and they reported they used translation strategies less. Ambiguity tolerance, on the other hand, had no effect on translation belief and translation strategy use. Contrary to the finding about ambiguity tolerance, Chapelle (1983) found it is positively related to one’s scores on a multiple choice grammar test, a dictation test and parts of a speaking test.

Although previous studies on idiom comprehension have contributed enlightening insights to the literature, most of them focused on languages such as Spanish, German and French and on language learners with almost similar cultural background to native speakers of English. As culture is found influential in the comprehension of idioms (Boers & Demecheleer, 2001), the extent to which the same results might be found in the case of a more distant language and learners from a different cultural background is debatable, thus worth investigating. Furthermore, the way individual differences such as L2 proficiency level, risk-taking and ambiguity tolerance affect idiom comprehension and idiom comprehension strategy use have not been investigated in any study so far. Specifically, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. Does the level of language proficiency affect the comprehension of idiom types A, B, C1, C2 and D?

2. Does the level of language proficiency affect the use of idiom comprehension strategies in comprehension of idiom types A, B, C1, C2 and D?
3. Does risk-taking affect the comprehension of different idiom types and use of idiom comprehension strategies?

4. Does ambiguity tolerance affect the comprehension of different idiom types and use of idiom comprehension strategies?

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Eighty Iranian sophomores, who were studying TEFL at the Islamic Azad University, Najafabad Branch, with the age range of 19-25, participated in the study. The reason for selecting sophomores was that they had not studied idioms explicitly in a separate course before the experiment. As a result, it was less probable they knew the meaning of the idioms. Consequently, the participants were expected to rely on certain strategies to get their meaning. However, to ensure about the unfamiliarity of idioms, they were given to the participants to translate to Persian four weeks before the experiment and the idioms that were known by the participants were crossed out. The participants’ scores on the Nelson proficiency test (1986) was used to divide them into higher (15 students, M=33.33) and lower (14 students, M=13.43) proficiency groups (between 1 and 2 SDs above and below the mean respectively).

2.2. Instruments and procedure

Two tests and three questionnaires were used as the instruments to collect data in this study:

1) Nelson proficiency test developed by Norman and Fowler (1986) with the reliability of .93, as measured by Chronbach’s alpha.

2) Idiom comprehension test, which was designed by the researchers based on Yoshikawa’s idiom classification (2008). To construct the test, 75 English idioms were selected from *English Idiom in Use* (McCarthy & O’Dell, 2003), *Idiom and Metaphorical Expressions in Translation* (Tajalli, 2005) and *Oxford Idioms Dictionary* (2010), and after the piloting, 35 idioms, which were not defined by the students, were selected, classified and contextualized (7 items for each type)(appendix A).

In the current study the degree of L1-L2 structural and semantic similarity and the extent an idiom could be translated from English to Persian were taken as criteria for classification of the target English idioms. Idioms are considered structurally similar if the major content words could be literally translated to L1. They are semantically similar when they share the
same central concept, and can be used in the same contexts (pragmatically congruent) (Cedar, 2004). Consequently, idioms were classified into the following types (appendix B):

a. Type A: English idioms with structural and semantic similarity to Persian idioms. They have exact translation equivalents in Persian. For example, *count on somebody*, which has an identical Persian counterpart, shares similar content words with that idiom and is used in the same context.

A. / røyə kæsi həsəb kærdæn/
B. count on somebody

b. Type B: idioms with partly structural but complete semantic similarity to Persian idioms. They have partial translation equivalents in Persian. For example, *know something like the back of hand*, which has the following similar idiomatic counterpart in Persian, shares not all the content words but the same context of use.

A. / məsəl kæf dæst bælæd budæn/
B. know something like the back of hand

c. Type C1: idioms with structural similarity but semantic dissimilarity to Persian idioms. They can be translated literally into Persian, yet their literal translation denotes a different idiomatic meaning other than the meaning of the target idioms. For example, the idiom *jumped out of one’s skin* in English means making a quick, sudden movement because something has frightened the person while its literal translation to Persian is an idiom describing a person who is extremely happy.

A. / æz dʒʌ pæridæn/
B. jumped out of one’s skin

d. Type C2: idioms with structural and semantic dissimilarity to Persian idioms. They can be translated literally into Persian but the translation conveys no idiomatic meaning in Persian. For example, the idiom *man and boy* means from when somebody was young to when they were old in English but there is no idiom in Persian with the same or similar content words that express the same meaning and can be used in the same context.

A. / ʊmr /
B. man and boy

e. Type D: idioms with structural dissimilarity but semantic similarity to Persian idioms. They cannot be translated literally into Persian because literal translation does not make sense in Persian, yet contrary to C2, their literal translation may give learners clue to the idiomatic meaning. For example, *one’s heart is in the right place* means that someone has right feelings about something, and the same meaning can be inferred by the Persian learner because of the
conceptual metaphors. This idiom type was added by the researchers to Yoshikawa’s idiom classification (2008).

A. /xuj ghælb budæn/

B. one's heart is in the right place

3. Strategy use questionnaire included Cooper’s (1999) six reported strategies, which was added to the idiom comprehension test on a separate sheet of paper, and the participants were asked to tick the appropriate strategy/stategies they used for each idiom.

4. The Persian version of Venturesomeness subscale of Eysenck’s Impulsiveness, Venturesomeness and Empathy (IVE) Questionnaire (1991), which was developed by Kiany and Pournia (2006) and which contained 16 items to determine the participants’ level of risk-taking.

5. Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale (SLTAS) (Ely, 1995) translated into Persian, which contained 12 items, and which was used to measure participants' tolerance of ambiguity.

All the instruments were piloted with another representative sample (about ¼ of the participants) of the same population in order to ensure the clarity of instructions and questions, and the time needed to complete the questionnaires and their reliabilities, which were measured as .94 by KR-21, .83 by Chronbach alpha, and .78 by Chronbach alpha respectively for the idiom test, risk taking questionnaire, and ambiguity questionnaire. The idiom test and the questionnaires were given in three different sessions to the participants. For the idiom test, the participants were asked to write either an equivalent Persian idiom, or if they could not think of any idiom, the literal meaning of each idiom. For the strategy questionnaire, they were asked to tick the strategy they used to get the meaning of each idiom on the strategy answer sheet. The other two questionnaires were on Likert scale and the participants were asked to tick the scale that showed their degree of risk taking and ambiguity tolerance.

3. Analyses and Results

3.1. Comprehension of Idiom Types by Higher and Lower Proficiency Groups

Two points were given to each idiom in the test for writing the exact L1 equivalent and one for writing the meaning of the idiom in Persian. Table 1 shows that higher proficiency group had the highest mean score for idiom type A and the lowest mean score for idiom type C2.

Table 1 Descriptive statistic for high and low proficiency groups for correct use of idioms
Similarly, lower proficiency group had the highest mean score for idiom type A but the lowest mean score for idiom type C1. One-way ANOVA showed that the differences among the means of different idiom types were significant in higher group, $F(4, 29) = 5.37, p = .002$, and Post Hoc Tests proved the differences between idiom types A and C1 as well as A and C2 were significant. However, the differences among the means of different idiom types were not significant in the lower group, $F(4, 30) = 2.68, p = .51$.

### 3.2. Use of Comprehension Strategies by Higher and Lower Proficiency Group

The purpose of using the strategy questionnaire in the process of idiom comprehension was to identify the strategies used more in the comprehension of each idiom type in higher and lower proficiency groups. To analyze the data, 1 point was given to each employed strategy. This way, the maximum score of strategy use for each item of idiom test was 6 and the minimum score was 0. The scores were added together to get a total for each strategy. Table 2 indicates that higher proficiency group utilized *guessing from context* more in the comprehension of idiom types B, C1, C2 and D and *word by word translation to Persian* more in the comprehension of idiom type A. In lower proficiency group, strategy of *word by word translation to Farsi* was utilized more in comprehension of all types of idioms (A, B, C1, C2, and D).

One-way ANOVA showed significant differences among the means in relation to *referring to Persian idiom* strategy, $F(4, 30) = 5.430, p = .002$ and Post Hoc Tests proved the differences between idiom types A and C2 ($p = .19$) as well as between idiom types B and C2 ($p = .033$) were significant. Nevertheless, no significant difference among the mean scores was found in lower group for the six strategies. Figure 1 and Figure 2 illustrate the same results.

**Figure 1  Estimated Marginal Means of Strategy Scores of Higher Group**
A two-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of proficiency level and strategy type on strategy use. There was a statistically significant main effect for proficiency, $F (1,408) = 24.02, p = .000$; and an interaction effect between proficiency and strategy type, $F (5,408) = 6.68, p = .000$. This means that higher proficiency learners used idiom comprehension strategies more than lower proficiency learners. Also, guessing from context was used more by the former group. Figure 3 shows the results.

3.3. Comprehension of Idiom Types by High and Low Risk-Takers

The Persian version of risk-taking questionnaire used a 5-point Likert-scale ranging from always to rarely and included 16 statements. Participants whose proficiency scores on the
Nelson (1986) test were between -1SD and +1SD were given the risk taking questionnaire. Following Kiany and Pournia (2006), the learners who were at the percentiles greater than 70 were considered as high (14 ones) and those who were at the percentiles lower than 30 were considered as low risk-takers (13 ones). As Table 3 shows, both high and low risk-takers have the highest mean for idiom type A and the lowest mean for idiom type C2.

One-way ANOVA revealed significant differences among mean scores of both high risk-takers, \( F(4, 30) =6.36, p=.001 \), and low risk-takers, \( F(4, 30) =3.20, p=.026 \), and Scheffe test showed the differences existed between idiom types A and C1 as well as A and C2 in the former group only.

### 3.4. Use of Comprehension Strategies by High and Low Risk-Takers

In high risk-takers, as Table 4 demonstrates, guessing from context was utilized more than any other strategy in comprehension of idiom types A, B, C1, C2, and D. In low risk-takers, guessing from context was utilized more in comprehension of idiom types B, C2 and word by word translation to Farsi was utilized more in comprehension of idiom types A, C1 and D.

One-way ANOVA showed a significant difference among the means concerning knowing a particular word strategy and Sheffe test showed the difference between idiom types B and D in relation to Knowing a Particular Word in Idiom was significant (\( p=.034 \)). Regarding low risk takers, one-way ANOVA showed significant differences among the means in relation to word by word translation to Farsi and referring to Farsi idiom and Scheffe showed the differences between idiom types C1 and C2 in relation to word by word translation to Farsi and between idiom types C1 and D in relation to referring to Farsi idiom were significant.

### 3.5. Comprehension of Idiom Types by Intolerant and Tolerant Learners

In the ambiguity tolerance questionnaire, responses ranged from strongly agree (5 points) to strongly disagree (1 point) and showed participants’ agreement with 12 statements depicting intolerance of ambiguity. Higher grades showed higher level of ambiguity intolerance and lower grades showed higher level of ambiguity tolerance. To divide the participants into tolerant and intolerant groups, only the participants whose proficiency scores were between +1SD and -1SD were taken into account. Afterwards, those whose scores were 0.5 SD below the mean were considered as tolerant learners (16), and those who were 0.5 SD above the mean were considered as intolerant learners (17). Table 5 shows that both groups of learners had the highest mean for idiom type A and the lowest mean for idiom type C2.

One-way ANOVA showed the differences among the means are significant for both intolerant, \( F(4, 30) =6.76, p=.001 \), and tolerant \( F(4, 30) =5.078, p=.003 \) learners.
However, Scheffe test showed, in the former group, the differences between idiom types A and C1 as well as A and C2 and, in the latter group, the difference between idiom types A and C2 were significant.

### 3.6. Use of Comprehension Strategies by Intolerant and Tolerant Learners

Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics of 6 different strategies used in comprehension of 5 types of idioms. As Table 6 demonstrates, in intolerant and tolerant groups *guessing from context* was utilized more than any other strategy in comprehension of idiom types A, B, C1, C2 and D.

One-way ANOVA showed a significant difference among the means in relation to *word by word translation to Farsi* for intolerant group, $F(4, 30) = 5.542, p = .002$. Scheffe test showed the differences between idiom types A and C2 as well as C1 and C2 in relation to *word by word translation to Farsi* were significant.

In the tolerant group, a significant difference among the means in relation to *knowing a particular word in idiom* was found, $F(4, 30) = 6.474, p = .001$. Scheffe test showed the differences between idiom types B and C1 as well as B and D in relation to *knowing particular words in idiom* were significant.

### 4. Discussion

Generally higher proficiency group had a higher rate of correctness across all five idiom types than lower proficiency group. Specifically, in higher proficiency group, significant differences were found between comprehension of idiom types A and C1 as well as A and C2. This shows that idiom types C1 and C2 posed the greatest difficulty while idiom type A was the easiest to comprehend. In lower proficiency group, however, no significant difference in the comprehension of each idiom type was found. This surprisingly indicates that comprehension of different idiom types did not differ from each other for the participants in this group. That is, comprehension of idiom type A was not easier than the other types, although there was structural and semantic similarity between English and Persian idioms in this group.

Experimental findings about the effect of L2 proficiency on idiom comprehension are contradictory. This discrepancy could be due to different designs of the research studies such as presenting the idioms in isolation or context, examining different proficiency levels of participants, or using different models for classification of idioms. As a result, the findings of the present study are found different from or similar to those of the following studies.
Trosborg (1985) found that the learners’ ability, who were students of language and linguistics, to figure out the meaning of unknown metaphorical idioms was correlated with their proficiency in the target language. Similarly, Kellerman (1979, 1983) and Irujo (1986) showed that, the greater the degree of similarity between the idiom and the L1 translation counterparts, the easier idiom comprehension was, and vice versa for advanced learners. Likewise, the results of the study can quantitatively support Yoshikawa (2008), who conducted a qualitative research on 172 Japanese college students required to write the meaning of 12 English idioms. He classified the idioms based on semantic transparency of English and Japanese idioms into the groups A, B, C1 and C2. Idiom type A was easily understood by his participants because these expressions had high transparency for transmitting the true meaning. Idiom type B showed a moderate degree of transparency, and idiom types C1 and C2 had low transparency. Idiom type C1 had only structural similarity but different meaning with idioms in L1, so this type had false transparency. Idiom type C2 was extremely difficult for learners and had a high opacity.

On the other hand, Johnson (1989, 1991) and Johnson and Rosano (1993) concluded that language proficiency did not affect idiom comprehension of upper-intermediate French-speaking university students of English. Elkilic (2008) studied idiom comprehension in isolation and concluded that there was no significant difference between advanced and intermediate proficient learners in the understanding of both transparent and opaque idioms.

Concerning the use of idiom comprehension strategies, higher and lower proficiency groups differed in their preferences for specific strategies in comprehension of the four idiom types (except type A, for which both groups used strategy of word by word translation to Farsi more than the other strategies). In higher proficiency group, regarding the use of strategy referring to Farsi idiom, the differences between idiom types A and C2 as well as B and C2 were significant. This indicates that higher proficiency group used this strategy more in comprehension of idiom type A, which has an equivalent idiom in Farsi, and idiom type B, which has also an equivalent idiom in Farsi but with a little structural difference. In fact, participants could remember idioms that were identical or similar enough to the English idioms to aid them in their interpretation. On the other hand, referring to Farsi idiom was used less in comprehension of idiom type C2, which does not have an equivalent idiom in Farsi, or whose equivalents do not have any similarity to their English counterparts. In lower proficiency group, nevertheless, there was no significant difference among the means of different idiom types regarding the use of 6 strategies. In other words, the participants used all kinds of strategies in comprehension of all idiom types without a preference for each.
Generally, although there is not a significant difference between each pair of idiom types in using other strategies, and both groups used a variety of strategies in comprehension of different idiom types, higher proficiency group used strategy of *guessing from context* more than other strategies in comprehension of different idiom types (except in comprehension of idiom type A, for which strategy of *word by word translation to Farsi* was used more), but in lower proficiency group strategy of *word by word translation to Farsi* was used more, with higher total mean score than others.

The results obtained from this study seem to be congruent with the findings of the study conducted by Cooper (1999) in terms of strategy use. He selected 20 idioms: eight were representative of Standard English, eight were informal idioms, and four were slang expressions. He used think–aloud protocols to gather data while students took the idiom recognition test. His study revealed that L2 learners did not use a single strategy while encountering an unknown idiomatic expression; instead, they employed a variety of strategies. Also while they were processing the idioms, they made use of *guessing from context* strategy more than others. Participants clearly referred to the situation to infer the meaning of the expression from the context.

Likewise, the results of this study converge with findings of Liontas (2002), who tested the effect of context on the comprehension and interpretation of idioms in three different languages (Spanish, French & German). The criterion for the selection of idioms was their interlingual similarity. The results reveal that context significantly affected the comprehension of idioms. Context favored more the comprehension of L2 idioms that were different from L1 than those that were similar to or identical with L1 idioms, which can reach a high percentage of correct answers even in the no context task. In the present study, also, higher proficiency group used strategy of *guessing from context* more than other strategies in comprehension of idiom types C1 and C2, which have false and low transparency respectively.

In this study, analysis of the data for the effect of risk-taking and ambiguity tolerance on learners’ idiom comprehension and use of idiom comprehension strategies confirmed that only risk-taking had an effect on the comprehension of different idiom types and use of idiom comprehension strategies. In particular, high risk-takers had the greatest comprehension in idiom type A and the least comprehension in idiom types C2 and C1. In low risk-takers, however, no significant difference was found between comprehension of different idiom types, and they comprehended them equally. Generally, low risk-takers had a lower mean score in idiom comprehension than high risk-takers. Concerning use of idiom comprehension
strategies, high risk-takers used *knowing a particular word* strategy more in comprehension of idiom type B and less in comprehension of idiom type D. Although, high risk-takers used different types of strategies, *guessing from context* was used more than other strategies in comprehension of all five idiom types. In other words, if risk-takers are assumed as being eager to try out hunches about new language and take the risk of being wrong (Richards et al., 1992), they can be considered as a type of learners who are willing to learn and comprehend the meaning of different idiom types and use strategy of *guessing from context* more than other strategies.

Low risk-takers, nevertheless, used *word by word translation to Farsi* and *referring to Farsi idiom* strategies more in comprehension of idiom type C1 and less in comprehension of idiom types C2 and D. This shows that low risk-takers mostly avoid uncertain situations and try to comprehend the meaning of most of the idioms by rechecking them word by word with their mother tongue.

Likewise, analysis of the data for ambiguity tolerance shows this variable had an effect on the mean rank of idiom comprehension and use of idiom comprehension strategies. In intolerant group (low ambiguity tolerance), significant differences between comprehension of idiom types A and C1 as well as A and C2 were found. This means that idiom types C1 and C2 were the most difficult idiom type, while type A was the easiest to comprehend. In the same vein, in tolerant group (high ambiguity tolerance) a significant difference between idiom type A and C2 was found. Significant differences between the two groups regarding idiom comprehension strategy use were found. In intolerant group the differences between idiom types A and C2 as well as C1 and C2 are significant concerning strategy of *word by word translation to Farsi*. This indicates that intolerant students used translation more in comprehension of idiom types A and C1, but in tolerant group the strategy of *knowing a particular word in idiom* is used more in comprehension of idiom type B, because the differences between idiom types B and D as well as B and C1 are significant.

The findings support Ely (1995), who stated that those with low tolerance for ambiguity might be in favor of using translation in their EFL learning because they consider English as a novel and unfamiliar context compared with their mother tongue; conversely, students with high ambiguity tolerance are expected to feel more comfortable with learning a new language without mediation of L1. Additionally, Ely stated that the ideal case for the learners is to be on the midpoint in their tolerance of ambiguity, which means to be neither high nor low in ambiguity tolerance. El-Koumy (2000) reported the same results, which indicated moderately tolerant students were more successful than both high and low students in the process of
reading in a foreign language. Despite the fact that Ely defines the situation for EFL learners generally, not for the specific strategy use, Kazamina (1999) stated that defining the midpoint fully is not that easy. All levels of ambiguity tolerance should be considered and the effect of other individual traits which are closely related to this trait is better to be measured. On the other hand, Alptekin (2006) reported that high ambiguity tolerance negatively influenced reading comprehension.

Moreover, another study conducted by Ehrman and Oxford (1990) on another learning strategy showed that ambiguity tolerance had an effect on guessing from the context. Kondo-Brown (2006), in the study of understanding affective variables in reading ability, reported a close relationship between ambiguity tolerance and intrinsic motivation. In sum, the effect of ambiguity tolerance seems better to be investigated in relation to a variety of learning strategies and personality traits. Contrary to the aforementioned studies, Ashouri and Fotovatnia (2010, in press) reported that ambiguity tolerance did not affect learners’ translation belief and translation strategy use.

5. Conclusion
The results of the study show that learners’ L2 proficiency affect idiom comprehension and strategy use. To be specific, idiom type A was the easiest and idiom types C1 and C2 were the most difficult for higher proficiency learners while no significant difference was observed for lower proficiency learners indicating that the increased degree of L1-L2 similarity between an English idiom and its Persian counterpart indicates easier comprehension, specifically as learners increase their English proficiency. Noticeably, choice of strategies differed with proficiency level. Based on descriptive statistics, higher proficiency group used comprehension strategies more frequently and successfully than lower proficiency group. Therefore, they performed better in comprehending the idioms. Furthermore, the study reported that, two levels of risk-taking and ambiguity tolerance had interactional effects with idiom types and idiom strategy.

The findings of the present study bear some pedagogical implications for both idiom teaching and learning. As the study demonstrates, proficiency level affects comprehension of different idiom types. Therefore, differential attention should be paid to different types of idioms at each L2 proficiency level. For example, for L2 idioms which have high transparency for transmitting the true meaning and which have L1 equivalents (idiom type A), a teaching measure is necessary for lower proficiency learners. For L2 idioms which have
moderate transparency and partial translation equivalents in L1 (idiom types B & D), L2 teachers have to provide more teaching measures. For L2 idioms which have false transparency and have literal translations that make sense in Persian but denote a different meaning other than the target English idioms (idiom type C1), explicit teaching measure in English class is strongly required. Finally, for L2 idioms which have high opacity and cannot be translated literally into Persian (idiom type C2), teaching measures are not urgently needed at least for L2 idioms which are not very common.

In teaching idioms Lennon (1998) claims that comparison with L1 should be encouraged so that learners can become aware of the differences between the metaphors in the target language and their native language. In fact, a cross-linguistic comparison of English and Persian idioms in terms of their conceptual basis is needed when teaching or learning English idioms. Activities which compare literal and idiomatic meanings of idioms will provide a link from the literal words to the non-literal meaning.

Concerning the learners’ use of idiom comprehension strategies, higher proficiency group was active strategy users and had higher mean scores in using all types of strategies in comprehension of the 5 idiom types, though insignificantly. This indicates that teaching L2 learners how to use comprehension strategies should be a prime consideration in EFL classroom. In strategy instruction, it is advisable that L2 teachers explain to the students what the strategy is, why and how it should be learned, where and when to use the strategy as well as how to evaluate the effectiveness of strategy use. In other words, activities for teaching idiom comprehension should provide students with strategy training in guessing the meaning of idioms, such as using background knowledge and mental images to figure out the meaning of idioms.

Also, the different strategies which are used by learners can be initiated by different reasons, one of which could be the effect of individual differences such as risk-taking and ambiguity tolerance. Teachers should learn that personality traits such as risk-taking and ambiguity tolerance can be effective in the way learners think about idiom comprehension and in the way they use idiom comprehension strategies. Teachers should be aware that learners with different personalities can have different reactions towards teaching situations. Considering which factor of individual differences is effective in learners’ idiom comprehension and which one is not, can be helpful for the educational system.

References


### Table 1

**Descriptive Statistic for High and Low Proficiency Groups for Correct Use of Idioms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>idiom type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean High proficiency</th>
<th>Mean Low proficiency</th>
<th>Std. Deviation High proficiency</th>
<th>Std. Deviation Low proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
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Descriptive Statistics for Higher and Lower Proficiency Groups Concerning Employed Idiom Comprehension Strategies

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<th>Std. Deviation Low proficiency</th>
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Descriptive Statistics for High and Low Risk takers on Correct Idioms

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<th>Mean Low risk-takers</th>
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<th>Std. Deviation Low risk-takers</th>
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<th>Std. Deviation</th>
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<td>Low risk-takers</td>
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<td>C1</td>
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**Table 5**

**Descriptive Statistics of Total Correct Idioms for Intolerant and Tolerant Learners**

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<td>2.00</td>
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**Table 6**

**Descriptive Statistics Concerning Idiom Comprehension Strategy for Intolerant and Tolerant Learners**
Appendix A: Idiom Comprehension Test

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Appendix A: Idiom Comprehension Test

Name ------------------------------------ No. ----------------------
Write the equivalent idiom or the meaning of idiom in Persian and tick the employed strategy or strategies.

- *Analyzing the idiom & using your world knowledge. (e.g. burn midnight oil remind me the old times when there was no electricity, so people would use oil...)*.

(اصطلاح را برای خودتان تجزیه و تحلیل کنید و از دانش خود استفاده کنید تا بتوانید معنایی برای اصطلاح پیدا کنید مانند "این با، وقتی بود که نیEMA شکست")

* Repeating and paraphrasing the idiom, without giving an interpretation. (e.g. "let sleeping dogs lie", yes don't disturb the dogs while they are sleeping...)

(اصطلاح را به شکلی قطعی برای خودتان تجویز کنید تا بتوانید معنایی برای اصطلاح پیدا کنید مانند "به، وقتی بود که نیEMA شکست")

1. There were three generations of the family living under one roof.
What is the equivalent of "under one roof" in Persian? ----------------------
2. The insurance covers your house against all types of damage, excluding those caused by an act of God. What is the equivalent of "an act of God" in Persian? 

3. Our pianist had fallen ill, and then, at the eleventh hour, when we thought we'd have to cancel the performance, Jill offered to replace him. What is the equivalent of "at the eleventh hour" in Persian?

4. You are not alone in your fight against the authorities. We will stand shoulder to shoulder with you. What is the equivalent of "stand shoulder to shoulder with sb" in Persian?

5. Day in, day out, no matter what the weather is like, she walks ten miles. What is the equivalent of "Day in, day out" in Persian?

6. Dick and Jane live appear about to come to the end of the road. What is the equivalent of "the end of the road" in Persian?

7. When Sally went off to college, she took everything but the kitchen sink. What is the equivalent of "everything but the kitchen sink" in Persian?

8. Read my lips: no new taxes, I promise you. What is the equivalent of "Read my lips" mean in Persian?

9. Jim was feeling under the weather yesterday, so he decided to stay at home and not go to work. What is the equivalent of "feeling under the weather" in Persian?

10. She is nice and her heart is in the right place, but she still has rather a weak personality. What is the equivalent of "her heart is in the right place" in Persian?

11. I am sorry you're going to be away when we come to Germany but, that's the way cookie crumbles. What is the equivalent of "the way cookie crumbles" in Persian?

12. A: can I try your new bicycle? B: be my guest. What is the equivalent of "be my guest" in Persian?

13. Don't be so bull headed. Why can't you admit that others' opinions are just as good as yours? What is the equivalent of "to be bull headed" in Persian?

14. The open letter addressed the president was published in New York Times. What is the equivalent of "open letter" in Persian?

15. Sue's daughter only visits her once in blue moon. What is the equivalent of "once in blue moon" in Persian?

16. Her name is on the tip of my tongue. What is it? What is the equivalent of "be on the tip of tongue" in Persian?

17. He has got an amazing collection of jazz records- you name it, he's got it. What is the equivalent of "you name it" in Persian?

18. The boys stood outside the headmaster office, shaking like a leaf, as they waited to be punished. What is the equivalent of "shake like a leaf" in Persian?

19. She'd just been out in a storm so come into the house looking like a drowned rat. What is the equivalent of "like a drowned rat" in Persian?

20. He worked with the BBC, man and boy, for over 40 years. What is the equivalent of "man and boy" in Persian?

21. I nearly jumped out of my skin when I saw him again at the street.
What is the equivalent of "jumped out of one's skin" in Persian?  

22. Sir Winston Churchill stands head and shoulders above other political leaders of our time.  
What is the equivalent of "head and shoulders above sb" in Persian?  

23. He could play the piano beautifully at the age of seven. Music must be in his blood.  
What is the equivalent of "be in some one's blood" in Persian?  

24. Why you are so silent? Has cat got your tongue?  
What is the equivalent of "cat got your tongue" in Persian?  

25. Jane likes to have a finger in every pie.  
What is the equivalent of "have a finger in every pie" in Persian?  

26. A: Why did you hit your brother?  
   B: Because he called me names in front of Mr. Jackson  
What is the equivalent of "called sb names" in Persian?  

27. That horrible painting uncle Jack gave us is a white elephant. What can we do with it?  
What is the equivalent of "white elephant" in Persian?  

28. A: don't you have a better position for me? I don't want to work as a computer operator.  
   B: This is the only vacancy that we have. Take it or leave it.  
What is the equivalent of "take it or leave it" in Persian?  

29. I'm afraid Jack is always in trouble and a black sheep of the family. The rest are respectable and honest people.  
What is the equivalent of "black sheep" in Persian?  

30. They are engaged but they haven't named the day yet.  
What is the equivalent of "to name the day" Mean in Persian?  

31. Thanks, I can find my way around that part of London. I've lived there for years, so I know it like the back of my hand.  
What is the equivalent of "know sth like the back of hand" in Persian?  

32. So you are opening two new factories and handling your own distribution. That's flying high isn't it?  
What is the equivalent of "flying high" in Persian?  

33. That part of the country has the worst climate. I wouldn't live there not for love or money.  
What is the equivalent of "not for love or money" in Persian?  

34. John will do just what I tell him. I has got him and his brother in the palm of my hand.  
What is the equivalent of "to be in the palm of one's hand" in Persian?  

35. You have read that books many times you must know it backward by now.  
What is the equivalent of "know something backward" in Persian?
Name  

Which of the following strategies did you use to get the meaning of the idioms? Tick the employed strategy.
(You might have used more than one strategy.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom Number</th>
<th>Guessing from context</th>
<th>Using word by word translation to Farsi</th>
<th>Referring to a Farsi idiom</th>
<th>Knowing a particular word in idiom and guessing the meaning</th>
<th>*Analyzing the idiom</th>
<th>*Repeating and paraphrasing the idiom</th>
<th>I have already known the meaning</th>
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## Appendix B

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<th>Persian Equivalent</th>
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<td>1. under one roof</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/zir yek saeephy/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. an act of God</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>/baelaye ye tabey/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. at the eleventh hour</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>/daeghighey naavaed/</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. stand shoulder to shoulder with sb</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/jone be jone kaysi buden/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Day in, day out</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td>/hær ruz/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. the end of the road</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>/be axaere xat residan/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. everything but the kitchen sink</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>/ez sir ta piaze/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Read my lips</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>/ba deghet guf kon/</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Feel under the weather</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td>/haal va housele neafsten/</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. her heart is in the right place</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>/xoj ghael buden/</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. the way cookie crumbles</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td>/tjaarei nist/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. be my guest</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>/befarmaid/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. to be bull headed</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>/kale fiagh buden/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. open letter</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/name ser gofade/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. once in blue moon</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td>/be nudref/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. be on the tip of tongue</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/nake zeban buden/</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. you name it</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>/ta delet boxad/</td>
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<td>18. shake like a leaf</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>/mesle bld laezidan/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Like a drowned rat</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/mesle muje abkefide/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. man and boy</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td>/yak omr/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. jumped out of one's skin</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>/ez dja parlden/</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. head and shoulders above sb</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/yek ser va gaerdan balater buden/</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. be in some one's blood</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/dær xone kaysl buden/</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. cat got your tongue</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/gorbe zahebentu xorde/</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. have a finger in every pie</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>/moxed hær afl buden/</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. called sb names</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>/be kesl tohin kaerdan/</td>
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<tr>
<td>27. white elephant</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td>/bozarg va bl maeeref/</td>
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<td>28. take it or leave it</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>/mixal bexa mixal naaxa/</td>
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<td>29. black sheep</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td>/mayeye ser fekeestegl/</td>
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<tr>
<td>30. to name the day</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>/tarixe ærus1 ta mujaxxes kaerdan/</td>
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<td>31. know sth like the back of hand</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>/mesle kæf daest baeltaed buden/</td>
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<td>32. flying high</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>/boland pervaezl/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. not for love or money</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>/behiif vaedghl/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. to be in the palm of one's hand</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>/tu mujre kaysl buden/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. know something backward</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>/mesle ab xorden baeltaed buden/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Title

Politeness May Not Always Pay: A Contrastive Study of Iranian and American Students’ E-mail Requests

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Abstract

The broad purpose of this study was to investigate the differences in the use of pragmatics by non-native and native speakers of English in their e-mail requests: A study which bridged the quantitative and qualitative methodologies. It drew upon exploring per-locutionary effect and politeness level of requests. In this study, 40 non-native and native speakers of English volunteered to participate and provided the researchers with their e-mail requests to their professors. The data were collected, coded and analyzed in order to determine the e-mails’ per-locutionary effect and politeness level. The results demonstrated that non-native speakers’ e-mail requests were too polite with low per-locutionary effect, while native speakers’ requests were found to be polite enough with high per-locutionary effect.
Keywords: pragmatics, e-mail requests, per-locutionary effect, politeness level

1. Introduction

With the advent of communicative competence, researchers have become interested in the appropriate use of language in different contexts in order to communicate (Chen, 2000). As a result, pragmatic studies have gained an ever-increasing importance. In language teaching, pragmatics deals with the language learners’ abilities to match the utterances with their context of use (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003). In the same line, Stalnaker maintains that pragmatics is “the study of linguistic acts and the contexts in which they are performed” (1972, p. 383). Pragmatics studies consist of speech acts, conversational structure, conversational implicature, conversational management, discourse organization, and sociolinguistic aspects of language use. The study of speech acts like requests, apology, thanking and complaints have been quite attractive to the researchers (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993), where the main emphasis has been on the per-locutionary and politeness aspects.

Along with the continued recognition of the importance of pragmatics studies and by the availability of the gadget called the internet in language teaching, investigating the nature of online communication has gained momentum. Nobody can deny the ubiquitous role of the internet in this field of study, because the electronic discourse has become syntactically and lexically much more complex than the oral discourse (Warschauer, 1996). Additionally, the internet provides optimal conditions for learning to write and it also increases students’ motivation (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Inextricably interwoven with the concept of the online communication and the internet is e-mail writing. Today, e-mail is a widely and frequently used interpersonal communication medium via the internet. Research on the learners’ requesting behavior towards their professors via e-mail writing has been mounting steadily for a number of decades. According to Chen (2001), e-mail has been the focus of many studies because of the following reasons: firstly, e-mail provides naturalistic language data, which is useful for studying learners’ performance in real-life communication; secondly, e-mail has a hybrid nature and characteristics of both spoken and written discourse, providing the users with the abilities to use different discourse styles in different contexts for different communicative purposes.
2. Review of literature

2.1. Pragmatic development and ESL

In an overwhelming number of studies, pragmatic development in English as a second language has been investigated (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993). One of the related issues in this field is pragmatics instruction. In a study by Wishnoff (2000), it was concluded that pragmatics can actually be taught. This finding was substantiated by another study by Bardovi-Harlig (2001), in which pragmatic production, judgment, perception, competence, and proficiency were investigated.

It is noteworthy to mention that a respectable stockpile of research have focused on the effects of explicit and implicit instruction on pragmatics development (e.g., House, 1996; Rose, 1994; Takahashi, 2001; Tateyama, 2001) and it has been concluded that explicit instruction of pragmatic features has a better effect on pragmatic competence than the implicit instruction.

2.2. Requests, politeness and per-locution

Within the speech act theory, utterances have three kinds of meanings; first, locutionary meaning which refers to the propositional, literary or dictionary meaning; second, illocutionary meaning, referring to the effect of an utterance on the listener and third, per-locutionary meaning which is the produced effect on the listener (Salehi, 2009). One of the commonly employed speech acts in everyday communication is request. Pragmatics of requests have been explored in many studies; one of the most famous studies in this field is the CCSARP project (Cross-cultural speech act realization pattern) (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989). In this project, the realization of requests and apologies were compared in different countries; a discourse completion test was used to collect the data and then, the obtained data were analyzed. The findings of the study indicated that different factors like social status of interlocutors, the degree of familiarity between them, degree of difficulty, and degree of imposition were significant in the use of politeness strategies and indirectness in requests.

Also, findings of different studies on the performance of different cultural groups regarding English requests (Kasange, 1998; Kim, 2000; Kitao, 1990; Trosborg, 1995), indicates that usually there happens a negative transfer of L1 pragmatics, supporting the significance of explicit instruction of making requests.

Considering politeness, Brown and Levinson (1987) divided politeness strategies into two types of positive and negative and politeness is mostly associated with indirectness in their
point of view. According to Searl (1975), indirectness occurs when there is a difference between locutionary sense (literal meaning) and illocutionary (speaker’s intention) force of an utterance. As a result, indirect requests lead towards decreasing the illocutionary force of the requests.

It is important to mention that different people in different cultures employ different degrees of indirectness and politeness. Put differently, politeness and indirectness are culture and language specific in nature (cited in Chen, 2000). In another study, Blum-Kulka (1987) indicates that the orders of politeness and indirectness are different in every language. Yet, in another study (Takahashi & DuFon, 1989), it was found that Japanese native speakers use different hints to demonstrate their high degree of politeness which is an important part of their Eastern culture.

2.3. E-mail pragmatics and discourse
As it was previously mentioned, with the development of new technologies, there has been a great interest to apply them to educational settings (cited in Celce-Murcia, 2001). They can be easily employed as tools of communication between learners. E-mail is one of the communication tools which put together the characteristics of both spoken and written language. A great deal of research papers and publications have dealt with how L2 learners use e-mail communication strategies and discourse styles (Chapman, 1997; Gonzalez-Bueno, 1998; Liaw, 1996).

Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1996) conducted a study in which they investigated the per-locutionary effect of e-mail requests of native and non-native speakers to their professors. The findings suggested that NNS used fewer downgraders and supportive moves in comparison with NS, influencing the effectiveness of their requests. In a similar vein, in another study by Weasenforth and Biesenbach-Lucas (2000), the variation in the e-mail requests of NNS and NS were compared. The findings indicated that NNS’ pragmatic strategies decreased the per-locution of their e-mail requests.

In 2001, Chen compared Taiwanese and American students on their e-mail requests to their professors; according to the findings, these two groups used different request strategies, because of their culture-specific notions of politeness and socio-cultural identities. Later, Ford (2003) investigated the use of pragmatics by non-native speakers and compared them with native speakers in terms of politeness and per-locution of their English e-mail requests. The results suggested that the participants differed with each other regarding politeness, per-locution, and specific pragmatic strategies.
Finally, Samar, Navidinia, and Mehrani (2010), explored the application of e-mail as a new medium of communication by Iranian and American TEFL students in academic settings. In the study, two e-mail sample corpora were compared and analyzed and the results showed that American and Iranian students’ e-mail purposes and strategies were different; Americans used more communication strategies, while Iranians tend to use more greetings and closing protocols in their e-mails.

In keeping with such views and in line with the literature on pragmatics and e-mail writing, the first issue to be tackled in this study has to be the investigation of per-locution of English e-mail requests by NS and NNS. Also, the current study set out to explore the differences between politeness level of NS and NNS English e-mail requests. The following research questions were thus addressed in this study:

1. Is there a significant difference between per-locution of NS and NNS English e-mail requests?
2. Is there a significant difference between politeness level of NS and NNS English e-mail requests?

3. Method

3.1. Participants: The participants of this study were two groups of male and female undergraduate students in Iran and the U.S.A. The first group of participants consisted of 20 Iranian undergraduate students who were studying English as a foreign language in Buali Sina University in Hamedan Province in the west of Iran. The second group included 20 undergraduate native American students who were studying at a university in the U.S.A. Their ages ranged from 21 to 29.

3.2. Procedure: The 40 participants were drawn from among undergraduate students of two universities in Iran and the U.S.A. Two corpora of e-mail samples were gathered from these two groups of participants.

First of all, in order to collect the e-mail samples of Iranian students, an electronic request was sent to 30 students in Buali Sina University via e-mail and they were asked to provide the researcher with e-mails containing requests written to their professors for academic purposes. Twenty volunteers indicated their willingness to participate in the study by sending 20 e-mails; likewise, by the help of an Iranian mediator, a sum of 35 requests was sent to the American students and in response, 20 students participated in the study and sent their e-mails. Finally, a total of 40 e-mail samples were collected.
It is important to mention that the participants completed informed consent forms and they were aware that their information would be kept confidential and used just for research purposes.

4. Data Analysis

After the data collection stage, the researchers coded each e-mail based on the coding form which was developed by Ford (2003) according to Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989), and Shea (1994) (see the Appendix). They developed a coding system for analyzing requests which is called “Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP)”. Based on this model, requests analysis includes three steps (Ford, 2003, p. 150):

1. Identification of the head act which constitutes the actual request;
2. Identification of non-essential elements that modify the head act internally;
3. Identification of non-essential elements that modify the head act externally.

In this study, the coding scheme of Ford’s (2003) study was used to analyze the different aspects of e-mail requests like the length of a message, the number of requests in a message, per-locutionary effect, and politeness level of the messages.

In order to compare and contrast the per-locutionary effect of different e-mail requests, a rating based on a 5-point scale was used which ranges from the least acceptable to the most acceptable. Thereafter, e-mail requests were coded as Least Acceptable = 1, Less Acceptable = 2, Acceptable = 3, More Acceptable = 4, and Most Acceptable = 5 (see Table 1) and their acceptability were investigated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 - Rating-Perlocutionary Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Least Acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Less Acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. More Acceptable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Most Acceptable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the current study, the raters made holistic judgment about the level of acceptability based on experience and pragmatic intuition (like Ford’s study). In order to compare and contrast the politeness level of different e-mail requests, a rating based on a 5-point scale was used which ranges from very impolite to overly polite. Thereafter, e-mail requests were coded as very impolite = 1, slightly impolite = 2, polite = 3, too polite = 4 and overly polite = 5 (see Table 2) and the politeness level of the requests were investigated.
Using data coding form (see the Appendix), the researcher coded and rated each message for its per-locutionary effect and politeness level. The coding process was carried out in two stages; first, all the messages were coded by the researchers based on the aforementioned coding scheme and then, they were rated by another trained coder. The inter-coder agreement rate was +0.74. This correlation of coefficient shows a high degree of agreement between the raters (Farhady, Ja'farpur, & Birjandi, 2007).

Table 2

Rating-politeness level:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Impolite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Slightly Impolite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Polite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Too Polite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Overly Polite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Results

5.1. Per-locution of NS and NNS English e-mail requests

In order to find an answer to the first research question, the data were fed into the computer and then analyzed by the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 19). Descriptive statistics was used to show the differences between two groups of NS and NNS on the per-locution of their e-mail requests. According to the output below, regarding the per-locution effect, NS's e-mail requests were “more acceptable” (M=4.20), while NNS's e-mail requests were “less acceptable” (M=2.05).

Table 3

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>NS</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.200</td>
<td>.89443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNS</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.050</td>
<td>.82558</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.050</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2. Politeness level of NS and NNS English e-mail requests

In order to find an answer to the second research question, again the data were fed into the computer and then analyzed by SPSS software (SPSS 19). Again, descriptive statistics was used to show the differences between two groups of NS and NNS on the politeness level of
their e-mail requests. According to the output below, regarding the politeness level, NS email requests were considered as “polite” (M=3.15), while NNS e-mail requests were considered as “too polite” (M=4.20). According to Chen (2001, as cited in Ford, 2003), NNS's over-politeness in e-mail requests is just because of cultural transfer. However, this may equally be because of their misconceptions (or no conceptions at all) about what is considered polite in the L2 worldview and culture.

Table 4
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>NS</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.150</td>
<td>.81273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNS</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.200</td>
<td>1.19649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering the per-locution and politeness level, two examples of NS and NNS e-mail requests are provided below.

The first example (written by a native speaker) was rated as a "polite" e-mail request because it follows the guidelines of stating a purpose briefly ("Could I please get the assignments for that day so I can prepare for Monday?"), requesting by just providing necessary information, and thanking (Shea, 1994; Rinaldi, 1998; cited in Ford, 2003) without including repeated expressions of gratitude, and politeness markers like “please” (Chen, 2001). Regarding the per-locution effect, this email request was rated as "more acceptable" (high per-locutionary effect), because it is an adequately formed request to persuade the recipient of the message to accept it and it is also at the appropriate level of politeness.

Example 1: NS

From   NS
To      Dr. X

Hi, Dr. X

I will be playing my cello for a friend’s conference performance in X, TX next Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday (September 19, 20 & 21).

I am afraid my Wednesday flight leaves before your Literature class. Could I please get the assignments for that day so I can prepare for Monday?

Thanks!

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Sincerely
Native Speaker

The second example (written by a non-native speaker) was rated as a "too polite" e-mail request in which politeness markers (e.g., "please", "apologize") are overused and redundant expressions of gratitude can be observed. Moreover, it is too formal and cautious (e.g., "Hello dear professor"). It can also be seen that the NNS employs the highly formal word ‘dear’ where the native speaker in example 1 simply uses the title of his professor (Dr). It is quite obvious that the NS is seeking to establish a higher degree of intimacy with his professor in comparison with the NNS or at least he knows what level of politeness is appropriate in such a request from such a person. Regarding the per-locutionary effect, it is notable that this e-mail request was rated as "less acceptable" (low per-locutionary effect), because it is not an adequately formed request to persuade the recipient of the message to accept it and it isn't at the appropriate level of politeness.

Example 2: NNS

From NNS
To Dr. X

Hello dear professor,

I have a request on the assignment of literature class.

Unfortunately, I have a problem and I do apologize that I can’t come to your class.

Would you please send me the assignment?

Thank you very much!

Yours truly,

Non native speaker

Comparing examples 1 and 2, it can be seen that both are generally formal in nature, but it seems that, pragmatically speaking, NS's request is working better than that of NNS's. Because the NS knows how to use an appropriate dosage of informal words like hi and thanks to establish a more intimate interpersonal relationship with the professor. Conversely, the NNS, lacking the pragmatic and cultural knowledge, fails to establish a working interpersonal relationship with the professor by distancing himself/herself using, for example, hello and thank you very much instead of the NS’s Hi and thanks. Furthermore, the NS in example 1 is presenting the facts as a natural course of events about which one does not need to apologize ("I will be playing my cello for a friend’s conference performance in X, TX next Wednesday, Thursday, and..."), but the NNS is directly apologizing for an unfortunate incident
Unfortunately,….) which has the implication of occurrence of some unfortunate disobedience on the side of the NNS. This is exactly where too much politeness does not work and does not pay, because our dear professor is more likely to reject the request in example 2 than the request in example 1.

6. Conclusion and Discussion

The findings of this study, based upon quantitative and in-depth analysis of all the e-mail requests, indicated that there was a significant difference between NS and NNS in the use of pragmatics in their e-mail requests. Results also demonstrated that NNS e-mail requests were too polite with low per-locutionary effect, while NS requests were polite with high per-locutionary effect. Many factors may simultaneously be interacting with each other, giving rise to such discrepancies between NS and NNS e-mail pragmatics. Some of these factors pertained to the students' command of English, cultural knowledge and the differences between the professor/student relationships in two communities.

As previously mentioned, according to Chen (2001, as cited in Ford, 2003), NNS's over-politeness in e-mail requests was just because of cultural transfer which may have some implications for teachers, materials developers, and syllabus designers to consider the role of teaching cultural and pragmatic aspects in their programs. Particularly, the pedagogical implications of the current study for second language teaching are rather enticing. Put differently, the inclusion and explicit instruction of content and structural features of e-mail requests such as greeting, introduction, closing, and signature in the messages, can impact the per-locution and politeness level of students' requests positively.

As to the best knowledge of the authors, the textbooks of EFL in Iran are mostly replete with instructions on either highly formal or informal types of letters which are mostly replete with out-of-context correspondences between imaginary correspondents. These letters and instructions accompanying them lack one of the basic requirements of EFL which is ‘authenticity of the material’. Studying and receiving instructions on writing authentic and realistic letters and e-mails, students must be explicitly reminded of the fact that there is a cline between formal and informal correspondences and they do not have to be highly formal and Queen-like in all their formal correspondences. An appropriate level of formality and politeness is going to pay back, not too much politeness.

Additionally, because the role of the pedagogical materials for systematic instruction of e-mail pragmatics is, much to our chagrin neglected, materials developers can strive for
inclusion of various textbooks of academic writing regarding e-mail pragmatics in ESL and EFL environments. Further, syllabus designers are to include courses regarding the cultural aspects of e-mail pragmatics.

As a concluding remark, it should be said that some caveats and disadvantages need to be noted. First, the process of coding and in-depth analysis of messages could be subjective and quite time-consuming. Second limitation pertained to the limited number of participants and e-mail requests. However, further studies are required to support and substantiate the arguments made in this article and other similar studies.

References


APPENDIX: Data Coding Form (Adopted from Ford’s study)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATA:</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>LENGTH OF MESSAGE: REQUESTS PER MESSAGE:</th>
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</thead>
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<td>HEAD ACT(S):</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary-</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<table>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recipient's title</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recipient's name</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>punctuation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intro-sender's name</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affiliation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Closing</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emoticons</td>
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<td>Grammar</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Freq</th>
<th>Upgraders</th>
<th>Freq</th>
<th>Downgraders:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>title/role</td>
<td>expletive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Syntactic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>surname</td>
<td>time intensifier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>interrogative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>first name</td>
<td>lexical uptoner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>negation of prep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nickname</td>
<td>determination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Subjunctive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>endearment</td>
<td>repetition of req.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
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<td>offensive</td>
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<td>aspect</td>
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<tr>
<td>pronoun</td>
<td>emphatic addition</td>
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<td>tense</td>
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<tr>
<td>attention getter</td>
<td>pejorative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>conditional clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategy Supportive Mode</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mood derivable</td>
<td>preparator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lexical &amp; Phrasal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>precommitment</td>
<td></td>
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<td>politeness marker</td>
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<td>grounder</td>
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<td>disarmer</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>promise of reward</td>
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<td>imposition</td>
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<td>downtoner</td>
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<td>insult</td>
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<td></td>
<td>cajoler</td>
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<tr>
<td>strong hint</td>
<td>threat</td>
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<td>mild hint</td>
<td>moralizing</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<td>1. Very impolite</td>
<td>1. Least acceptable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Slightly impolite</td>
<td>2. Less acceptable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Appropriate</td>
<td>3. Acceptable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Too polite</td>
<td>4. More acceptable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Overly polite</td>
<td>5. Most acceptable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Title

A Narrative Analysis of *The Adventures of Haji Baba of Isfahan*

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Abstract

Ideology has played a very important role in translation studies especially in recent decades since the works of scholars such as Bassnett, Lefevere (1990), etc. The notions of power and discourse are among those factors which may affect translations through the ideologies which they impose upon the translator. Influenced by Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis and based on Baker’s narrativity, the present study has attempted to investigate the ways in which translators may accentuate, undermine, or modify aspects of ideology encoded in the source text. Factors such as temporality, rationality, particularity and genericness are among those which Baker (2006) has introduced as the features of narrativity that exist in the discourse of a source text and its translation. *The Adventuress of Haji Baba of Isfahan* and its two Persian translations have been analyzed to see if such factors have been crucial in the translation process of this great literary work. Results showed that not only the Persian translation are ideologically different from the original English text, but even the two Persian translators have applied different strategies to maintain their own ideologies in the translation, due to the fact that each Persian translation has been done in a different era—one in the 1880s and the other in 2000.
Keywords: Translation, Ideology, Discourse, Narratives

1. Introduction

Communication plays a very important role in our life. Mankind needs to live a social life and therefore there must be a language with which he can express his feelings, talk about his needs, and negotiate his ideas. Not only the members of a society need to communicate but also societies and nations in the broader sense have to do so. In the globalized and modern life of this era, societies have to have relations with each other in order to survive. This is where translation emerges. Each society has its own language. Thus, some sort of transference of language must happen when communication takes place between different societies. This transference of language is called translation. Therefore; translation has gained a great deal of importance especially in the last few decades in which a new discipline called translation studies has been developed which is “related to the study of the theory and phenomena of translation” (Munday, 2001, p. 1). Since then, translation has been studied more scientifically and systematically. New approaches and theories have been introduced by scholars, new areas of study have entered into the discipline, and new interdisciplines such as translation and gender, translation and politics, translation and ideology, etc. have emerged.

1.1. Ideology

The term 'ideology' has always been accompanied by its political connotation as it is evident in its dictionary definition as 'a system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy' (The New Oxford Dictionary of English). Translation is political because, both as activity and product, it displays process of negotiation among different agents (Karoubi, 2005). At the micro-level, these agents are translators, authors, critics, publishers, editors, and readers'. Under the influence of Marx who defines ideology as action without knowledge (false consciousness), ideology is sometimes defined in its negative political sense as 'a system of wrong, false, distorted or otherwise misguided beliefs (Karoubi, 2005). Ideology can also be regarded as a system of ideas or world views or simply a fixed way of looking at the life issues, thus any theory of language that is serious about social functions must take it in to consideration (Rahimi & Sahragard, 1386). Ideology is ideas and beliefs which help to legitimate the interest of a ruling group or class by distortion or dissimulation. This view, in fact, forms the basis of post-colonial thinking which highlights the power relations which inform contemporary cultural exchanges. However, sometimes ideology is viewed in more positive sense 'as a vehicle to
promote or legitimate interests of a particular social group rather than a means to destroy
contenders. Scholars in the field of language-related, cultural and translation studies often
tend to extend the concept of ideology beyond political sphere and define it in a rather
politically neutralized sense as 'a set of ideas, which organize our lives and help us
understand the relation to our environment (Karoubi, 2005).

1.2. Ideology and translation

Translator like any other member of the society is affected by the ideologies which rule
over the society. This ideology affects the translation before the process is started, when
he/she selects the text, until it is finished. Choosing a special genre, a specific text, and a
favorite writer at the beginning of the process is totally influenced by the translator’s
ideology. Then, transferring the ideas of the ST into the TT, and finally having the text edited
by an editor or publisher also cause some ideological changes.

According to Lefevere (1992), there are two factors that determine the image of a work
of literature that is projected by a translation of that work. The first is the translator’s
ideology, while the second is the poetics that dominates in the target literature when the
translation is made.

Hatim and Mason (1997) have made a distinction between the ‘ideology of translation’
and ‘the translation of ideology’. Whereas the former refers to the basic orientation chosen by
the translator operating within a social and cultural context, in the translation of ideology they
examine the extent of mediation supplied by a translator of sensitive texts. ‘Mediation’ has
been defined as “the extent to which translators intervene in the translation process, feeding
their own knowledge and beliefs into processing the text” (p. 147).

1.3. Discourse and translation

One of the major areas of interest in CDA is to account for social power, and its relations to
discourse, and to see how a certain ideology, or any other social and cultural issue is
produced, reproduced or legitimized by certain discourse structure. Modern translation
studies according to two major influencing schools of post-culturalism and functionalism
believes that any translation is a product resulted not from the linguistic surface of the source
text (ST), but according to the target language norms and conventions, the source language
text is retextualized by the translator. The translator has to care about the cultural gap
between the source and target language and surely the translator’s own ideology and culture
will influence his or her translation. Using Critical Discourse Analysis the purpose of finding
such influence will be possible.

1.4. Narratives
One of the most recent notions which have entered into translation studies is the notion of *narratives*. Baker has defined narratives as “public and personal stories that we subscribe to and that guide our behavior. They are the stories we tell ourselves, not just those we explicitly tell other people, about the world(s) in which we live” (2006, p. 19). Narrative in this sense is very much similar to Foucault’s discourse. It shapes the way people understand and think about their world. Societies differ not only in the language they speak but also in the beliefs and values they have. Each society has its own ideology and culture which determines and affects the behavior of its members. This ideology is often defined and constructed by those who are in power in the society. The rulers of a society often decide which values and norms should be promoted and which ones should not. They may make stories about the past which affect people’s view about present. These stories are called narratives. Many political stories such as the story of the invasion of Iraq or the story of Holocaust or that of the December 11 are familiar narratives which Baker (2006) has pointed out as the political narratives which are told from many different points of view and are sometimes completely at odds with each other.

Given that each society wants to negotiate its narrative not just among its own community but in the international arena, translation and interpretation receive a very important status in this process. Translators like any other member of a society are influenced by the narrative which is imposed upon them. Each foreign term carries a wide range of ideological and cultural background with itself. Translators and interpreters face a basic ethical choice with every assignment: to reproduce existing ideologies as encoded in the narrative elaborated in the source text or utterance, or to dissociate themselves from those ideologies, if necessary, by refusing to translate the text or interpret in a particular context at all. However; there are many ways in which translators and interpreters can accentuate, undermine, or modify aspects of narratives encoded in the source text or utterance. Baker (2006) has introduced some procedures and has explained how a translator can apply them in his work. This study is to examine these procedures to see how much they are applicable in the translation of a literary text. These procedures are introduced bellow.

**2. Theoretical framework**

The translator may choose different strategies to transfer the narratives which are encoded into the discourse of the ST. He or she may decide to modify the narratives in such a way that they become acceptable to the TT reader, or to transfer them into the TT without making any
change in order to impose the discourse and ideology of the ST upon the TT. Baker (2006) has introduced some strategies with which the translator can do so. These strategies are as follows:

a) Framing

By framing Baker (2006) meant the sets of beliefs and expectations which participants bring with them in a community by their verbal and physical actions. She has defined framing as “an active strategy that implies agency and by means of which we consciously participate in the construction of the reality” (Baker, 2006, p. 106). An example she gave us of the way in which processes of framing are encoded in translation is that of “revelation” in the context of religious texts, which is discussed by Behl (2002). As he has explained, one of the main ways by which the Islamic community came to distinguish itself from Hindus was by pointing out that the latter ad no revealed book. The frame was thus set for any consequent dialogue with Hindus: “We have the truth because it came down from heaven and is present in the form of a book; therefore, in order to prove that they have a truth and it is the same truth, we must prove that a similar condition obtains among the Hindus” (Behl, 2002, pp.91–2). The main task for any translator who wanted to affect a dialogue between the two communities was therefore to demonstrate that the Hindus too had heavenly books that expressed the same mystical truth.

Baker has defined two subcategories for framing:

1) Frame ambiguity

The same set of events can be framed in different ways to promote competing narratives, with important implications for different parties to the conflict; this often results in frame ambiguity (Baker, 2006, p.107). An example she gave to clarify this notion is forms of violent conflict which can be frame as ‘war’, ‘civil war’, guerilla warfare’, terrorists acts’ or even ‘low intensity conflict’, based on who uses these words. For example suicide attacks might be considered as ‘Jihad’, which is a holy tradition in Islam, or as ‘intense terrorism’ on the other hand.

2) Frame space

The frame space of a participant is the situation in which he/she is located. This situation is created by the roles that participants lay in the interactions (announcer, translator, lecturer, parent, military officer), by the different capacities in which they engage (speaker, reader, over hearer), and by the different positions which they take in relation to the event and other participants (supportive, critical, disinterested …). For example grammatical errors may be very common in ordinary speech and one may not even notice such errors when talking to a
friend, but when the same errors are made by an announcer it will be glaringly evident to the hearer.

Like announcers, translators and interpreters act within a frame space that encourages others to scrutinize every aspect of their linguistic and – in the case of interpreters – non-linguistic behavior. One of the best ways of undermining the restrictive effect of frame space in translation is to adopt a strategy of temporal and spatial framing that obviates the need to intervene significantly in the text itself. This strategy is discussed in detail later. (Baker, 2006, p.110)

b) Temporal and spatial framing

Temporal and spatial framing involves selecting a particular text and embedding it in a temporal and spatial context that accentuates the narrative it depicts and encourages us to establish links between it and current narratives that touch our lives, even though the events of the source narrative may be set within a very different temporal and spatial framework. (Baker, 2006, p.112)

c) Selective appropriation of textual material

Selective appropriation of textual material is a process in which translator personally decides to omit some parts of the source text or to add some extra information to it, in order to accentuate or to elaborate particular aspects of narratives encoded in it. It might be done in the following ways: 1) Selective appropriation in literature, 2) Selective appropriation in media, and 3) selective appropriation in interpreting.

d) Framing by labeling

Labeling in Baker’s definition (2006) refers to any discursive process that involves using a lexical item, term, or phrase to identify a person, place, group, event, or any other key element in a narrative. Euphemism or counter-naming—e.g. IOF (Israeli Offence Forces) instead of IDF (Israeli defense Forces)—are familiar strategies which translators use in labeling.

e) Repositioning of participants

Any change in the position of participants (supportive, critical…) which is made through the linguistic management of time, space, deixis, dialect, register, use of epithets, and various use of self-and other identification is called repositioning of the participants. Regarding the part of the book in which it is made, there are two kinds of repositioning:
1) Repositioning in paratextual commentary: changes which are made in “introduction, prefaces, footnotes, glossaries and ... cover designs and blurbs” (Baker, 2006, p. 133).

2) Repositioning within the text or utterance: any change which is made in the text or utterance itself.

3. Methodology

The adventures of Haji Baba of Isfahan has been selected as the case study of this research not only because of the importance of this great literary work in Persian literature but mainly because of the ideological and historical backgrounds which lays both in the source text and its translations. Written by an English ambassador who overlooks Persian culture as an inferior one to his own, this novel contains many interesting clues which prove how effectively one’s ideological background might be rendered in a text and its translation. The source text was translated into Persian once in the 1880s by Mirza Habib Isfahani and another time in 2000 by Mehdi Afshar. This great time gap between the two translations could also be taken as an evidence of temporal feature and the effects it may have on transferring ideological concepts into a TT.

The selected data were analyzed based on Baker’s methodology (2006) to find out whether narrative aspects have been effective on translator’s decision making and also to clarify that if such factors have affected the translators which one has been more distinctive than the others or which strategies have been applied more frequently.

4. Data collection

The following examples have been chosen from the source text and its two translations. Below each case there is a short explanation about how the strategies mentioned earlier are applied.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The ST</th>
<th>Translation of Isfahani</th>
<th>Translation of Afshar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4.2.1.  The Arabian nights’ entertainment gave the truest picture of Orientals (p. 41). | كتاب "هار و یک شب" روشن ترین بهتر از همه "الف لیل" است که تصویر را از مشرق زمین بسی میدهد عادات و رسوم شرقیان را چانچه باید مجسم کرده (31). | (. p. 10)
In this example the title of a book has been stated in three different ways by the original writer and two translators. *Arabian Nights* is a name which is most known among western societies and still is much unknown to Iranians. However the first Persian translator has replaced this name by the Arabic translation of the original Persian title, اللم ليلي، and the second translator has replaced it by the original Persian name—شخب يكن و هزار.

So, a type of framing by labeling has been applied in the translation of this title.

4.2.12. Mohammedan… in his turn, looking upon the rest of mankind as unclean infidels, will continue to hold fast to his bigoted persuasion, until some powerful interposition of Providence shall dispel the moral and intellectual darkness which, at present, overhangs so large a portion of the Asiatic world (p. 60).

4.2.14. My father, Karbelai Hassan, was one of the most celebrated barbers of Ispahan (p. 63).

The author refers to an intellectual darkness which has overhung a large portion of Asia. The first translator hasn’t directly rendered this part of ST into TT due to the fact that he is an Asiatic himself. Instead he has applied some sort of euphemism to modify the original text, so another example of frame space can be identified here.

The first translator has substituted ‘barber’ with ‘دﻻک’ which is a very old form of the term ‘سلامانی’ or ‘آراشگر’.
second one, the difference of temporal narratives is clear in these two texts. Therefore, there is a kind of temporal and spatial framing in this case.

4.2.20. Haji Baba was quite the fashion among the men of taste and pleasure (p. 65).

4.2.25. I dare say you have through life, as I have, never omitted to unite the name of Omar with everything that is unclean, and at least once a day to repeat the curse which you were taught at school (p. 637).

The first translator’s use of linguistic devices to elaborate the TT (by adding a famous poem of Hafiz to his translation) shows another example of selective appropriation of textual material.

4.2.340. Employed in his official capacity, Hajji Baba gives a specimen of Persian despotism (p. 215).

Both translators have manipulated the text in order not to transfer Persian despotism directly into the TT. One of them has omitted the term and the other one
has replaced it with *oriental despotism*. It can be said that the same idea has been narrated in different ways; therefore, a sort of frame ambiguity has been applied.

4.2.43. It is the work of one of their own community (p. 41).

In this example and the next three ones which have been extracted from the introduction of the source book the author has used linguistic devices such as pronouns to make a distance between the reader and the Orientals about whom he talks. In other words he has positioned the reader in the text. this way of framing is called repositioning of participants in paratextual commentary.

4.2.44. Notwithstanding *they* have been put into an European dress, weeded of *their* numerous repetitions and brought as near to the level of *our* ideas as can be… (p. 41).

4.2.45. I have always held in respect most of the customs and habits of the Orientals (p. 44).

4.2.46. If I may be allowed the expression, a picturesqueness pervades the whole being of Asiatic, which *we* do not find in *our own* countries… (p. 45).

The next four examples have been extracted from the introduction which had been added to the translation of MirzaHabib by the editor in the 2009 edition. In these sentences the editor has used linguistic devices to reposition himself and the reader in the TT. The use of words such as *we* or *us* or *we Iranian people* shows that the editor has tried to make the reader closer to the TT.

4.4.47 در اینکه پروفیسور ادوارد برانن مؤلف کتاب بسیار عالی قدر "تاریخ ادبیات ایران" و کتاب‌های مقید را دوست می‌داشت است گمان می‌برد که دیگر جایی هیچ شک و شبهه ای نیست (20).

4.2.48 مؤلف کتاب حاجی بابا هم… در چند مورد به صراحت از علاقه خود به ما ایرانیان سخن گفته است (21).

4.2.49 این اثر یکی از ترجمه‌ها و شاهکارهای میرزا حیب است و ما کمتر کتابی در دوره قاجار داریم که نری به روایی آن را داشته باشیم (23).

4.2.50 بهتر از همه این اف لیل است که عادات و رسوم ایرانیان را چنان چه یاد نگیرد اما کرده است (31).
5. Conclusion

Analyzing the cases showed that the ideological background of the translator which is formed in the narrative of the society in which he/she lives can produce a great difference between the source and target texts. The translator may make some changes or modification in the TT to make it more appropriate for the TL audiences. There are some factors which can cause these changes and decide how they are made in the text. Analyzing the ST and comparing it with TTs, this study showed that these factors may include religious believes, time gap, racial and national prejudice, and the background knowledge of literature and culture of the receiver society. For example, the two translators had obvious differences in transferring the same concepts, due to the fact that each had lived in a different era and there was a great lapse of time between the first and second translations. Therefore, it can be concluded that the extent to which a translator may manipulate the ideological aspects of a text depends on the political, social, and ideological differences of the source and target culture. The more the ideologies imposed upon the ST are different from the norms and values of the TT, or in other words, the less they are acceptable to the TT receiver, the more the translator changes and manipulates the text.

References

Title

A Study of Semantic Opaqueness of Social Euphemisms in English via Maxims of Cooperative and Politeness Principles

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Abstract

Considering the semantic opaqueness of English euphemisms this study aimed to investigate whether and to what extent the maxims of Cooperative and Politeness principles were observed or flouted during the use of euphemisms and direct expressions. Initially, using questionnaires data from 100 Iranian EFL graduates on 60 bipartite English direct and euphemistic expressions in terms of observance or flouting of the PP and CP maxims were collected. The results indicated that the difference between occurrence of observance and flouting (of CP and PP maxims) and those of non-occurrence were significant. Considering rate of flouting of the CP maxims in euphemisms, the manner maxim ranked first and the quantity maxim ranked last; and in the case of the PP maxims in direct expressions, the tact maxim ranked first and the generosity maxim ranked last. Still, concerning EFL learners' recognition of semantic opaqueness in euphemisms, the supremacy of flouting of the manner maxim revealed that interlocutors may not always observe the CP maxims but frequently say
something vague to avoid embarrassing issues. Thus, it was indicated that EFL learners' recognition of euphemisms could characterize the semantic opaqueness of social euphemisms in English. Finally, conducting structured interviews unraveled prominent realities on the sociopragmatic and pedagogical state of English euphemisms in the Iranian EFL context. The findings of the present study are hoped to be of use in uncovering the implications of English euphemisms and lend a hand to the field of Applied Linguistics including Pedagogy, Teaching Methodology, Translation, as well as Testing or evaluation measures.

Keywords: euphemism, Cooperative Principle, Politeness Principle, maxim, semantic opaqueness.

1. Introduction
Van Dijk (1997, p.9) aptly maintains that "a text or expression is merely the tip of the iceberg", and thus it's the responsibility of the analyst or recipient to uncover the hidden meaning of that text or expression. It is almost safe to claim that the same sketch should be followed to uncover the hidden meaning of euphemisms, since they are words or expressions that are supposed not to be mentioned directly and cannot be interpreted on a word-by-word basis, yet as Abrams (1999, p.83) believes "they are devices to replace unpleasant words or expressions by conventionally more acceptable ones."

In the realm of English euphemisms, a man may get up from the table, explaining that he has to see a man about a dog, a young woman announces that her father is getting on in years. A secretary complains that her boss is a pain in the derrière. An undertaker asks delicately where to ship the loved one. A young boy may depend on others to pass his exams. The above expressions are examples for the application of euphemistic language, in which mild, agreeable, or roundabout words are used in place of painful and offensive ones.

Based on Abrams (1999, p.83) euphemism is "an inoffensive expression used in place of a blunt one that is felt to be disagreeable or embarrassing". Besides, "they are used frequently with reference to such subjects as religion ("Gosh darn!" for "God damn!"), death ("pass away" instead of "die"), bodily functions ("comfort station" instead of "toilet"), and sex ("to sleep with" instead of "to have sexual intercourse with")" (ibid.).

At educational level, learning euphemism means more than just mastering the pronunciation, words and grammar. It means learning the ways native speakers’ language reflects the ideas, customs, and behavior of the society. As a social tool, euphemism is widely
used in every level of society to show respect, humility, and politeness, as Alkire (2002), maintains euphemism could make our speech more expressive, vivid, and colorful, since it adapts speech to different situations. Also, in diplomacy, euphemism helps maintain a good relationship between nations, as politicians employ it to make eloquent language when in public, and the military corporations, often coin euphemisms of a more deliberate nature.

In brief, though scholars have defined "euphemism" differently from different perspectives, the definitions share some features, as follows:
1. Euphemism is a kind of polite, roundabout, and gracious mode of expression.
2. Euphemism is used to mitigate or beautify the unpleasantness of reality.
3. The main purpose of using euphemisms is to shun directly speaking out the unpleasant or taboo reference like death, the dead, the supernatural, etc.

1.1. Statement of the Problem
Despite the momentous prominence of euphemisms, it seems that very slight attention has been paid to them at different levels in EFL contexts; likewise, few studies have been conducted on them in EFL educational settings, especially in Iran. Regarding the semantic facet of euphemisms, a potential threat is that many EFL learners are unenlightened about the implications of euphemisms during the time they are exposed to them, or when they are recognizing or producing discourse. This may be mainly due semantic opaqueness or non-compositionality, defined as "the degree to which a multiple-word item cannot be interpreted on a word-by-word basis, but has a specialized unitary meaning" (Moon, 1997, p.44).

At educational level, considering that fluency in English cannot be achieved without a reasonable command of euphemisms, and that euphemisms represent a part of language largely untaught; a serious demand for research on them is felt, especially in EFL contexts. What's more, the educators' lack of familiarity with euphemisms in language use and usage may create a menacing 'academic lacuna' which could result in a dearth of attention to the high levels of linguistic development among learners.

1.2. Objectives of the Study
Considering the above caveats, this study aimed to investigate the status of euphemisms and the current mindset of the Iranian EFL graduates on the recognition and appreciation of euphemisms in practice. It was attempted to probe into the semantic opaqueness of English euphemisms and investigate it through Grice's maxims of Cooperative Principle and Leech's Maxims of Politeness Principle. In this vein, we were interested in realizing whether and how frequently EFL learners via euphemisms and direct expressions observe or flout one or more of the maxims of conversation and politeness, and in the case of flouting, which maxims of
CP and PP are flouted most and least by EFL learners. In this way, the results of the study could provide the interested readers with a lucid idea about the role(s) of observance and flouting in the use of euphemisms and direct expressions, and to account for the status of euphemisms in education and pedagogy. Also, it was hoped the study could pave the way for studies on euphemisms at discoursal and socio-pragmatic levels.

1.3. Research Questions
The following research questions were made out of the current needs in the research study:

1. Do EFL learners observe or flout the maxims of CP while using social euphemisms in English?
2. To what extent do EFL learners observe or flout the maxims of CP while using social euphemisms in English?
3. Do EFL learners observe or flout the maxims of PP while using direct (non-euphemistic) expressions in English?
4. To what extent do EFL learners observe or flout the maxims of PP while using direct (non-euphemistic) expressions in English?
5. Does EFL learners' recognition of English euphemisms characterize the semantic opaqueness of social euphemisms in English?
6. Which maxims of CP and PP are flouted most and least by EFL learners?

1.4. Research Hypotheses
In the research study, the following null hypotheses were made:

1. The EFL learners may not observe or flout the maxims of CP while using social euphemisms in English.
2. At no time may learners observe or flout the maxims of CP while using social euphemisms in English.
3. The EFL learners may not observe or flout the maxims of PP while using direct (non-euphemistic) expressions in English.
4. At no time may learners observe or flout the maxims of PP while using direct (non-euphemistic) expressions in English.
5. The EFL learners' recognition of English euphemisms may never characterize the semantic opaqueness of social euphemisms in English.
6. There is no difference among CP and PP maxims in terms of being flouted by EFL learners.

2. Review of the Related Literature
Based on Neaman and Silver (1990, p.1), the use of euphemism "was believed to date back to Ancient Greek where the principal purpose for its existence related to religion". Likewise, Williams (1975) believed that euphemism was in wide use in the Anglo-Saxon era, the golden age in the expression of language and the source of four-letter words. Also, Alkire (2002, p.1) argued that "a great number of euphemisms in English come from words with Latinate roots". In the same vein, regarding the difference between the respectful Latinate words of the upper class and the lusty Anglo-Saxon words of the lower class, Farb (1974) wrote:

After the Norman Conquest of England in 1066, the community began to make a distinction between a genteel and an obscene vocabulary, between the Latinate words of the upper class and the lusty Anglo-Saxon of the lower. As an example, while a duchess perspired and expectorated and menstruated, a kitchen maid sweated and spat and bled. (Farb, 1974, p. 80)

2.1. Studies on Euphemism in Western Countries

Euphemism has long been in use as a social device for various purposes and much research especially in Western world has been done on euphemism because of its prominence in language. Moreover, the previous study of euphemism seemed only to focus on language itself with paying little attention to the purposes of the speaker; however, many linguists presently think that the definition of euphemism needs to be framed in a broader sense.

Mencken (1936) in a valuable legacy for euphemism study fully discussed the rationale behind the use of euphemism and explained why hundreds of euphemisms had been born and become popular on the basis of American history and social cultural background. Also, Enright (1985) put forward a collection of essays on specific topics in relation to the different euphemistic uses which provide clues for a comprehensive study on the use of English euphemisms in different fields. Moreover, Rawson (1995) traced the history of euphemism, and widely accounted for characteristics of euphemism as well as its definition, classification, and scope of use. In addition, Neaman and Silver (1990) carried out some exciting research of great value to the study of euphemism.

Allan and Burridge (1991) studied euphemisms from pragmatic perspective, which was another breakthrough in the study of euphemisms. According to them, euphemism could be defined by reference to concerns about the face and concerns of immense significance of language interchange.

Hodge and Kress (1993) investigated the dichotomous categorization of 'euphemistic' and 'derogatory' in naturalization of ideologies and claimed that their dichotomy belonging to
the semantic component of any language could be regarded as one of the very prevalent and effective techniques in naturalization of ideologies.

Holder (1995) in the study of euphemisms attempted to highlight human tendency to use mild, vague, or roundabout expressions in preference to words that are precise, blunt, and often uncomfortably accurate. Likewise, he endeavored to unmask the language of hypocrisy, evasion, prudery, and deceit.

Van Dijk (2004) resorted to social analysis, cognitive analysis and discourse analysis of the text to uncover ideology generated in discourse, and used 'euphemism' as one of the many discursive moves to elucidate two main discursive strategies of 'positive self-representation' and 'negative other-representation'.

Ham (2005) diachronically studied the construction of English euphemism by extracting examples from three British novels: Jane Austen's *Emma*, D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, and Fiona Walker's *Well Groomed*. Initially, he studied Warren (1992)'s Model of Classification of the Main Devices for Constructing Euphemisms, and then the categories suggested by this model were tested against euphemisms from the novels. It transpired that improvements were required of the model to account for all examples.

Fernandez (2006) explored the euphemistic language on obituary pages from the mid-nineteenth century by tracing the different conceptual metaphors aiming at substituting the notions of death in Irish early Victorian newspapers within Lakoff (1980)'s Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The results indicated that there was a tendency to present sentimental obituaries in which the taboo of death can be accounted for by various conceptual metaphors, most of which view death as a desirable event under the influence of Christian beliefs.

### 2.2. Studies on Euphemism in EFL Context

Compared with those booming studies on euphemism in western countries, EFL scholars' theories on euphemism seem rather rare; however, some promising scientific and systematic researches have been done in this field especially in some recent decades.

In China, a number of scholars expanded the scope of euphemism study into the perspectives of rhetoric and social functions. For instance, Shu Dingfang (1989) expanded the study scope of euphemisms by applying pragmatic theories and proposed four principles: Distant Principle, Relevant Principle, Sweet-sounding Principle and Self-defending Principle. According to Shu Dingfang (1989), one of the motivations of using euphemisms is to defend oneself whereby one can establish a positive image in communication and protect and elevate his status in the minds of other participants. Additionally, he held that the Self-defending Principle is in mutual restriction and complementarity with the CP and PP.
Ling Hong-hui (2000) indicated that euphemisms have become an indispensable artistic skill for diplomatic personnel. Likewise, appropriate euphemistic wording can meet the special requirements of social contact and accomplish the communicative task.

Hai-Long (2008) paid particular attention to the relationship between cross-cultural communication and euphemisms, and the necessity of learning and teaching euphemisms. Also, the researcher examined the intercultural communication of English and Chinese by investigating how meanings changed, how they were coined, and how English euphemisms were assimilated into Chinese culture.

In Thailand, Charncharoen (1989) focused on three main aspects of Thai euphemisms: characteristics of euphemisms, their denotative and connotative meanings, and the Thai values and worldview reflected in these words. The results indicated that there were four ways of forming euphemistic words in Thai: distortion of a taboo word by abbreviation or phonetic corruption, using a foreign word, understatement, and use of metaphor. Likewise, Thiyajai (1992) analyzed the patterns and connotative meaning of Thai euphemism in substituted words or expressions which were contextually taboo, together with analyzing some social values reflected in these euphemistic terms. The findings revealed that the euphemistic terms employed circumlocution, resulting in an increase in the number of syllables. On the other hand, Jangjorn (2004) investigated the Internet users' techniques in avoiding impolite words in discussion messages on the web boards by analyzing the data into percentages. The findings showed that the most common ways to avoid the use of impolite words were pausing, changing letters, clipping, spelling in English, loanwords, and metaphor. However, interestingly enough, the least found technique was abbreviation.

In Iran, Rahimi and Sahragard (2006) took Van Dijk's framework in their analysis of euphemisms and derogatory expressions and investigated the discursive structures which lead to ideologically based parochial, prejudiced as well as antireligious statements in emails addressing the death of the late Pope, John Paul II. The use of CDA was, as the authors revealed, a means to show how language has been used as a shield and weapon to support austere catholic ideologies or, conversely, to inspire secular viewpoints.

In the same vein, Mirza Suzani (2009) paid attention to the translation of euphemism addressing different issues of background, classification, connotation, and semantic equivalence. In Translation of Simple Texts, an all-encompassing chapter on the translation of euphemism was presented through which different classifications of euphemism were examined from the angle of translation from English into Persian. Based on Mirza Suzani
euphemism study is not restricted to the lexicon level, but should be extended to the level of sentence and discourse, as was formerly suggested by Rawson (1995).

2.3. Grice’s Cooperative Principle and Leech’s Politeness Principle

Grice (1975) considered verbal exchanges as oriented to a common purpose or a set of purposes, for achieving which the participants should cooperate with each other. In this vein, he described the CP as "Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice 1989, pp. 26-27), and for further explanation of the principle, he proposed four maxims as follows:

A. Maxim of Quantity: Give the right amount of information.
   a. Make your contribution as informative as is required;
   b. Do not make your contribution more informative as is required.

B. Maxim of Quality: Try to make your contribution one that is true.
   a. Do not say what you believe to be false;
   b. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

C. Maxim of Relation: Be relevant.

D. Maxim of Manner: Be perspicuous and specific.
   a. Avoid obscurity of expression;
   b. Avoid ambiguity;
   c. Be brief;
   d. Be orderly. (Grice 1989, pp.26-27)

The CP accounts for the relationship between the literal and actual meanings, explaining how the "Conversational Implicature" is produced and understood, but it does not explain why people violate the conversational maxims so as to express themselves in an indirect way. Based on Grice (1975), people may fail to observe a maxim because they are incapable of speaking clearly, or because they deliberately choose to lie. Besides, there are four ways of failing to observe a maxim: opting out, maxim clash, flouting, and violating a maxim.

Since the CP cannot explain why people are so indirect in conveying what they mean, Leech (1983) proposed the PP from the pragmatic and interpersonal rhetorical viewpoint based on which it is justified why speakers resort to such oblique methods of communication as, for example, instead of saying more tersely and directly "Give me a light" they say "Could you give me a light". Leech (1983) connected illocutionary acts with politeness in the verbal exchange. Hence, to be polite means to be tactful, modest and nice to others and the more indirect the illocution, the more polite it should be reevaluated. Leech's proposal of the PP
(1983) includes a set of maxims where he pointed out the relationship between two participants who we may call self and other. The PP maxims tend to go in pairs as follows:

A. Tact Maxim
   a. Minimize cost to other;
   b. Maximize cost for self.

B. Generosity Maxim
   a. Minimize benefit to self;
   b. Maximize praise of other.

C. Approbation Maxim
   a. Minimize dispraise of other;
   b. Maximize praise of other.

D. Modesty Maxim
   a. Minimize praise of self;
   b. Maximize dispraise.

E. Agreement Maxim
   a. Minimize disagreement between self and other;
   b. Maximize agreement between self and other.

F. Sympathy Maxim
   a. Minimize antipathy between self and other;
   b. Maximize sympathy between self and other. (Leech, 1983, p.132)

3. Research Methodology

3.1. The Pilot Study

Before conducting the main research, a pilot study was carried out with 20 participants (including 8 males and 12 females) who were similar to the target population of the main study in terms of age and educational background. The reason behind conducting the pilot study was to see whether the items were sufficiently lucid and comprehensible for the prospective subjects in the main study, and whether there were any drawbacks in terms of applicability and intelligibility of the items. Based on the pilot study conducted, it was concluded that the procedure had to be clearly explained to the students in oral form. Meanwhile, some adjustments and modifications were made to improve the wording, diction, and projection of the questionnaire items.

3.2. The Main Study

3.2.1. Participants
The data for the study were collected from 100 participants (29 males and 71 females) ranging between 23 to 35 years of age in the Spring and the Fall 2012. The participants comprised 10 PhD students of TEFL at Shiraz Azad University, together with 22 MA students of TEFL and 68 MA students of English translation at Islamic Azad University, Fars Science and Research Branch. The major reason for selecting the participants from the graduate programs was their higher experiences, their higher analytic abilities, and their detailed familiarity with linguistic and pedagogical issues. It was expected that they could develop their insights into the recognition of euphemisms via CP and PP, and be conscious of different aspects of the linguistic, historical, and cultural overtones in the euphemistic expressions. It was also anticipated that graduate students would have a better grasp of the regulative power that CP and PP together with euphemisms hold to maintain the textual equilibrium and the relations between interlocutors.

3.2.2. Materials of the Study

In this research, instances of euphemisms and euphemistic expressions used in the questionnaire were taken from Rawson's Dictionary of Euphemisms and Other Double talks (1995), and Allan and Burridge's Euphemism and Dysphemism: Language used as shield and weapon (1991). Likewise, multiple maxims of PP proposed by Leech (1983) in Principles of Pragmatics and 4-odd maxims of CP proposed by Grice (1975) in "Logic and Conversation" were employed as frameworks for developing questionnaire items. Also, various authentic sources such as online data banks and the relevant internet sites were used. In addition, for analyzing the collected data the SPSS software (version 19) was employed.

3.2.3. Instruments

A pertinent questionnaire containing 60 bipartite items on euphemisms and direct expressions in view of the CP and PP maxims was designed and validated under the supervision of some experts. To check the content validity, a number of experts were asked to judge whether the items selected covered all aspects of the domain intended to measure and whether they were in appropriate proportions relative to the domain selected. To improve the quality of data obtained, the relevancy and clarity of questions were taken into account as well. In addition, to demonstrate the internal consistency of the items, the Cronbach's alpha reliability was calculated which yielded a reliability estimate of 0.86 for the questionnaire that was statistically satisfactory regarding the purpose of the study. The questionnaire survey was then complemented with a comprehensive list of interview questions comprising relevantly euphemistic issues on the pedagogical, social, and pragmatic functions of euphemisms.

3.2.4. Framework of the Study
A long list of questions on the dichotomous categorizations of euphemistic and direct expressions to be investigated in view of the CP and PP maxims was developed. It was then complemented with structured interviews with 50 participants via collecting their personal opinions on the pedagogical, social and pragmatic state of English euphemisms and direct expressions on relevant issues such as semantic opaqueness, linguistic features, social problems, death, gender, ailments, sympathy, respect, etc. The students were required to elaborate on the feature, role, implication, and significance of English euphemisms and direct expressions and whether and why they believed those expressions could flout or follow the maxims of CP and PP. The responses and comments given by participants were collected and then analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

3.2.5. Data Collection Procedures and Data Analysis

To collect the data, both questionnaire surveys and interview sessions were employed. The questionnaire comprised an inventory of 60 bipartite questions on English direct expressions and their counterparts in euphemisms together with the maxims of PP and CP. The participants' option was based on their recognition of the observance or flouting of the Leech's six-fold maxims of PP and Grice's four-fold maxims of CP respectively. They were required to decide on the matter of the observance or flouting of each expression, and in the case of flouting any maxim (of PP or CP) choose one or more of the options in front of the respective item. Besides, the opinions of the participants were collected through structured interviews. The main aim of the interviews was critically investigating the mindset of graduates about the social, pragmatic, and pedagogical state of English euphemisms regarding the context of ELT in Iran. For this purpose, the participants' various ideas on the status and application of euphemisms were collected and then categorized.

To analyze and interpret the data in this study, Chi-square as a relevant procedure was applied, using SPSS software. With regard to the first four research questions, Chi-square was used to examine the significance of the differences between the frequencies of the observance or flouting of the multiple maxims of CP and PP. Regarding the last two research questions, due to the lack of mutual exclusivity in the participants' options of categorizations and the existence of overlaps in the choices, the application of Chi-square test was practically impossible, then the frequency of each response was computed on the basis of descriptive statistics. The frequencies were then presented on a graph to report the percentage of responses concerning rate of flouting of the maxims of CP and PP.
4. Findings, Results and Discussion

4.1. Data Analysis

The data from the participants’ responses to the questionnaire items and their comments in interview sessions were collected to analyze the results quantitatively and qualitatively.

4.1.1. Results of the Data on the Survey Questionnaire

With regard to the first four research questions, Chi-square was used to examine the significance of the differences between the frequencies of the observance or flouting of the multiple maxims of CP and PP.

4.1.1.1. Results of the Data on the Observance and Flouting of the Maxims of CP

Considering the first and second research questions, Chi-square was used to examine the significance of the differences between the frequencies of the observance or flouting of the multiple maxims of CP.

4.1.1.1.1. Results of Chi-square Test for Individual Participants' Responses

To summarize the data and calculate $\chi^2$, a table was prepared and the observed frequencies of the observance and flouting of the multiple maxims of CP together with their expected values were given. Also, the modified values, based on the correction factor proposed by Hatch and Farhady (1981), were calculated and provided to the different frequencies. Then after calculating Chi-square the obtained $\chi^2$ value for each participant was compared with the critical value to decide if the null hypothesis could be rejected. The d.f. being based on the number of groups rather than the number of participants was also determined (here, 2-1=1). Since the critical value of $\chi^2$ with 1 d.f. was 3.84 for the 0.05 level, so we could feel fairly confident that the null hypothesis claiming that the individuals may not observe or flout the maxims of CP was rejected. To put it another way, in 81 cases out of 100 cases (i.e., 81%) the individuals held that the maxims of CP were either observed or flouted, and as a result, the difference between frequencies of observance and flouting appeared to be significant (since in 81% of the cases calculated, the value of Chi-square at the probability level of 0.05 was larger than critical value). Alternatively, only in 19 cases out of 100 cases, the individuals held that the difference between observance and flouting of maxims of CP was not significant i.e., in only 19% of the cases the value of Chi-square at the probability level of 0.05 was smaller than critical value.

4.1.1.1.2. Results of Chi-square Test for Total Participants' Responses
In Table 1 results of Chi-square test for total frequency of participants’ responses on observance and flouting of the CP maxims are illustrated:

Table 1  
Chi-square and Total Frequency for Observance and Flouting of the CP Maxims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maxim</th>
<th>Observed f</th>
<th>Expected f</th>
<th>O-E</th>
<th>(O-E)^2 /E</th>
<th>(O-E)^2 /3000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observance Maxim</td>
<td>1260</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>-1740</td>
<td>(1260-3000)^2</td>
<td>(1260-3000)^2 /3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flouting  Maxim</td>
<td>4740</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>1740</td>
<td>(1740-3000)^2</td>
<td>(1740-3000)^2 /3000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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As we know, the null hypothesis in a chi-square goodness-of-fit test states that the sample of observed frequencies supports the claim about the expected frequencies, so the bigger the calculated chi-square value is, the more likely the sample does not conform to the expected frequencies, and therefore we would reject the null hypothesis.

To verify the results obtained above, the SPSS software was employed to calculate the Chi-square for total frequencies, considering the number and opinion of the participants. The results are illustrated in the following table:

Table 2  
Chi-Square Results for Number and Opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (1-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>6000.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>5993.974</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>6167.480</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the significance reported in Table 2 is less than .05 (P<.05), the difference between frequencies of observance and flouting appears to be significant and we can feel confident that the null hypothesis claiming that the individuals may not observe or flout the maxims of CP is rejected.

4.1.1.2. Results of the Data on the Observance and Flouting of the Maxims of PP

With regard to the third and fourth research questions, the significance of the differences between the frequencies of the observance or flouting of the PP maxims had to be examined.

4.1.1.2.1. Results of Chi-square Test for Individual Participants' Responses

To compare the frequencies, a table was prepared and the observed frequencies of the observance and flouting of the maxims of PP together with the expected values were provided. Also, the modified values, based on the correction factor proposed by Hatch and Farhady (1981), were provided to the different frequencies. Then after calculating \( \chi^2 \) the obtained \( \chi^2 \) value for each participant was compared with the critical \( \chi^2 \) to decide if the null hypothesis could be rejected. The d.f. being based on the number of groups rather than the number of participants was also determined (here, 2-1=1). Since the critical value of \( \chi^2 \) with 1
d.f. was 3.84 for the 0.05 level, so we could feel fairly confident that the null hypothesis claiming that the individuals may not observe or flout the maxims of PP was most recurrently rejected. So to speak, in 75 cases out of 100 cases (i.e., 75%) the individuals held that the maxims of PP were either observed or flouted, and as a result, the difference between frequencies of observance and flouting appeared to be significant (since in 75% of the cases calculated, the value of Chi-square at the probability level of 0.05 was larger than critical value). On the other hand, only in 25 cases out of 100 cases, the individuals held that the difference between observance and flouting of the maxims of PP was not significant i.e., in only 25% of the cases calculated, the value of Chi-square at the probability level of 0.05 was smaller than critical value.

4.1.1.2.2. Results of Chi-square Test for Total Participants’ Responses

In Table 3 results of Chi-square test for total frequency of participants’ responses on observance and flouting of the PP maxims are illustrated:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maxim</th>
<th>Observed</th>
<th>Expected</th>
<th>O-E</th>
<th>(O-E)²</th>
<th>(O-E)²/E</th>
<th>(1500-3000)²/3000</th>
<th>(4500-3000)²/3000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observance</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>-1500</td>
<td>2250000</td>
<td>1499.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flouting</td>
<td>4500</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>2250000</td>
<td>4500.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering that the null hypothesis in a chi-square goodness-of-fit test states that the sample of observed frequencies supports the claim about the expected frequencies, so the bigger the calculated chi-square value is, the more likely the sample does not conform to the expected frequencies, and, hence we would reject the null hypothesis.

To verify the results obtained above, the SPSS Software was employed to calculate the Chi-square for total frequencies, considering the number and opinion of the participants. The results are illustrated in Table 4, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (1-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>6000.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>5994.668</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>6748.022</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>1499.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>6000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 4 as the significance reported is less than .05 (P<.05) the difference between frequencies of observance and flouting appears to be significant and we can feel confident that the null hypothesis that the individuals may not observe or flout the maxims of PP is rejected.
4.1.1.3. Results of the Data on the Flouting of the Maxims of CP

With reference to the last two questions, due to the lack of mutual exclusivity in the participants' options of the maxim categorizations, also the existence of overlaps in the participants' choices of frequencies of flouting of the CP maxims, the application of Chi-square was impossible. Thus, the frequency of each response was computed on the basis of descriptive statistics, taking into consideration the participants' recognition of nonobservance of the maxim(s) of CP. Likewise, considering the fifth question in the study, particular attention was paid to the maxim of manner as it could be, by definition, an illuminating factor in introducing and revealing the semantic opaqueness of euphemistic expressions. In Table 5 descriptive statistics of the flouting of the maxims of CP is illustrated:

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of the Flouting of the Maxims of CP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>5530</td>
<td>792.00</td>
<td>2198.00</td>
<td>1572.5363</td>
<td>535.03587</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 5 the minimum occurrence of the flouting of the CP maxims is 792, which belongs to the maxim of quantity, while the maximum occurrence is 2198, which belongs to the manner maxim. In Figure 1 CP maxims together with the percentage of the frequencies of flouting for each maxim are illustrated:

![Figure 1. CP maxims and percentage of the frequencies of flouting.](image)

Based on Figure 1, it is easily understandable that the maxims of CP in the use of euphemisms cannot be persistently observed and people sometimes flout one or more maxims of the CP to meet certain communicative needs. This is because the existence of the CP maxims makes the conversational implicature possible, and that allows a speaker of any side of communication to convey meaning beyond what is literally expressed.

4.1.1.3.1. Conclusion on the Use of Euphemisms and Flouting of the CP Maxims

The results indicated that the manner maxim ranked first in terms of flouting of the CP maxims, while using euphemisms (M>Q1>R>Qt), and 36.7% of the cases of flouting of the CP maxims allocated to this maxim, which, by far, put it in the first rank in comparison to the other maxims of CP. On the contrary, the quantity maxim with 13.23% ranked last among other maxims of CP. However, it is noteworthy that euphemisms may flout more than one
maxim of the CP at the same time. For example, when the maxim of quantity is flouted, the expression will be unclear and not concise by providing less or more information, and hence, the maxim of manner is flouted immediately. From this view, almost all the cases primarily flout the maxim of manner when they are placed under the flouting of other maxims.

4.1.1.4. Results of the Data on the Flouting of the Maxims of PP

Just like the data on the flouting of the CP maxims, to find the answer to that part of the last research question concerned with the PP maxims, due to the existence of overlaps in the participants' choices of the PP maxims, and lack of mutual exclusivity in the participants' options of categorizations, the application of Chi-square was practically impossible. Thus, the frequency of each response was computed on the basis of descriptive statistics, considering the participants' recognition of nonobservance of the maxim(s) of PP. In Table 6 descriptive statistics of the flouting of the maxims of PP is illustrated:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6</th>
<th>Descriptive Statistics of the Flouting of the PP Maxims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>6202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N</td>
<td>6202</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the above statistics, the minimum occurrence of the flouting of the PP maxims is 498, which belongs to the maxim of generosity, while the maximum occurrence is 2038, which belongs to the tact maxim. In Figure 2 the PP maxims together with the percentage of the frequencies of flouting for each maxim are illustrated:

**Figure 2.** PP maxims and percentage of the frequencies of flouting.

As illustrated in Figure 2, the maxims of PP in the use of direct expressions can be occasionally flouted so that by flouting people could meet certain communicative needs. Also, we have to remember that not all the maxims are equally important, and in general the core objectives of the multiple pairs of PP might be interpreted like this: to minimize the expression of impolite beliefs and maximize the expression of polite beliefs.

4.1.1.4.1. Conclusion on the Use of Direct Expressions and Flouting of the PP Maxims
Based on the results obtained, the tact maxim ranked first in terms of flouting of the PP maxims, while using direct expressions (T>Ap>S>M>Ag>G), so that 34% of the cases of flouting of the PP maxims allocated to the maxim of tact, while the generosity maxim with 3.32% ranked last among other maxims of PP. The results of the study confirmed Leech's (1983) claim that of the maxims of tact, generosity, approbation, and modesty, the tact maxim appears to be a more powerful constraint on conversational behavior than the generosity maxim, and the approbation maxim more powerful than the modesty maxim, since based on the results Tact>Approbation>Sympathy>Modesty>Agreement>Generosity. This reflects a more general rule that politeness is focused more strongly on "other" than on "self". Also, it is revealed that within each maxim, sub-maxim (b) seems to be less important than sub-maxim (a), which illustrates the more general rule that negative politeness or avoidance of discord is a more weighty consideration than positive politeness or seeking concord.

4.1.2. Results of the Data on the Structured Interview

As a complementary tool, a set of structured interviews were conducted to do an inquiry on the pedagogical and socio-pragmatic state of euphemisms in Iran. For this purpose, the participants' comments on diverse issues of euphemisms-including the status and the applications-were warily collected, recorded, sorted out, and then content analyzed.

4.1.2.1. Results of the Data on the Pedagogical State of Euphemisms

With reference to the frequencies of affirmative responses provided by the participants, results of the data enquiry on the pedagogical state of euphemisms were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Issue of Inquiry (Pedagogical)</th>
<th>Freq. of Affirmative Responses (Out of 50)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Iranian EFL students' ignorance of euphemisms</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>euphemisms inadequate inclusion in language courses</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>semantic opaqueness as a main problem</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>large extent of euphemisms' semantic opaqueness</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>the reason(s) behind euphemisms' semantic opaqueness</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>learners surmise why a euphemism is used</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>no language fluency without euphemisms</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>lack of notice to euphemisms, creating 'academic lacuna'</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>euphemisms absence from current English courses and textbooks</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>the need to include aspects of euphemisms to textbooks</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>learners' ability to appreciate texts, not knowing about euphemisms</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>euphemisms exclusion as a threat to the lofty pedagogical standards</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>euphemisms as an inseparable part of language teaching</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>learners need to learn and respect euphemisms in their local language</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>euphemisms as one of the necessities of a proficient language</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7
Results of the Data Inquiry on the Pedagogical State of Euphemisms in Iran (C: Confirmatory, HC: Highly Confirmatory)
1. One of the greatest problems with English euphemisms was reported to be inadequate inclusion of them or too little attention paid to them in the syllabus. As some interviewees complained "Sometimes, English euphemisms are covertly present in some courses; however, most of the learners are ignorant of them because there is little emphasis on them in teaching."

2. Some participants groaned that English euphemisms are, by nature, replete with a large degree of semantic opaqueness, which could be misleading: "The problem with euphemisms is that they are misleading. They obscure meaning, and are a form of disinformation and those who wield them, want others to believe something that is not true." Another grumble was concerned with distinguishing euphemisms: "Because in the first vision, we cannot distinguish that they are euphemisms, in order to find their meanings we face some difficulties."

3. Another grumble was concerned with the absence of euphemisms from English textbooks and also lack of notice to euphemisms, creating an 'academic lacuna': "If we consider the [current] courses and textbooks, we will see the absence of English euphemisms. We have little part that euphemisms are on them."

4. Considering the role of euphemisms in improving language skills and promoting standards, there appeared to be a remarkable consensus among interviewees that no language fluency was imaginable without a logical degree of euphemisms; likewise, having no knowledge of euphemisms, the learners will be unable to appreciate texts; and also excluding euphemisms from language classroom will be a threat to the lofty pedagogical standards.

5. Some participants claimed that during and even after their [undergraduate] college studies, they could stumble on little exposition to the English euphemisms and euphemistic expressions. Therefore, they craved for further inclusion of aspects of euphemisms into the language courses and syllabi. One participant proposed "To increase the level of learning and to ease the process of learning it is good to include more aspects of English euphemisms in language courses in Iran."

6. There were mostly positive reactions to the postulation that euphemisms are considered as one of the necessities of a proficient language learner, as a participant remarked: "They are part of language and you can't separate them from language. So while teaching English, you
should pay attention to euphemistic expressions." And another held "It can be supplementary and enrich the fluency and help the academics."

**4.1.2.2 Results of the Data on the Socio-pragmatic State of Euphemisms**

Considering frequencies of affirmative responses provided by the interviewees, results of the data enquiry on the sociopragmatic state of euphemisms in Iran were as follows:

**Table 8**

*Results of the Data Inquiry on the Sociopragmatic State of Euphemisms in Iran (C: Confirmatory, HC: Highly Confirmatory)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Issue of Inquiry (Sociopragmatic)</th>
<th>Freq. of Response (Out of 50)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>English euphemisms leading learners to appreciate social and pragmatic values</td>
<td>25 5</td>
<td>50 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>little knowledge of euphemisms creating misunderstandings in communication</td>
<td>26 17</td>
<td>52 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>EFL learners' need to be familiar with the change(s) each word/expression can bring about</td>
<td>25 2</td>
<td>50 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>learners' familiarity with euphemisms, making them conscious of the linguistic, historical and cultural overtones</td>
<td>14 2</td>
<td>28 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>learners' getting what's going on in the language, language user's minds, and culture by tracing euphemisms</td>
<td>23 2</td>
<td>46 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>English euphemisms promoting socio-pragmatic behavior of learners</td>
<td>19 5</td>
<td>38 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>students need to a critical look at euphemisms besides being exposed to more of them in language courses</td>
<td>24 7</td>
<td>48 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>learners' need to impede use of euphemisms to observe the maxims of CP</td>
<td>28 4</td>
<td>56 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>learners' need to impede use of direct expressions to observe the maxims of PP</td>
<td>29 1</td>
<td>58 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>EFL students being unenlightened about shades of meanings of euphemisms during the exposition</td>
<td>32 5</td>
<td>64 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>euphemisms being appealing in encircling a range of emotions, reactions, attitudes and opinions</td>
<td>40 1</td>
<td>80 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>the need to critical thinking for learners to reflect on both local and English euphemisms</td>
<td>20 1</td>
<td>40 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>euphemisms' helping learners to be better world citizens</td>
<td>31 7</td>
<td>62 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of the responses in the interviews with reference to the sociopragmatic state of English euphemisms uncovered the following motivating points:

1. Regarding little knowledge of euphemisms creating misunderstandings in communication, most participants maintained a confirmatory attitude. For instance, it was claimed that "If there is not enough knowledge about them, it may cause problems to perceive and convey some messages correctly." Also, it was confirmed by another comment: "Surely knowing little about euphemisms and derogations, not only creates various misunderstanding in communication, but it can be threatening and sometimes makes problem in communication."

2. Many participants strongly held the idea that euphemisms often lead learners to appreciate social and pragmatic values; also, EFL learners need to become familiar with the change(s)
each word or expression can bring about; in addition, their familiarity with euphemisms could make them conscious of the linguistic, historical and cultural overtones. Considering social and pragmatic values it was maintained that "The way people communicate is part of their social behavior", and that "Knowing about English euphemisms in language courses causes some motivation in learning about social or pragmatic values." Regarding EFL learners' familiarity with the effect of euphemisms on the meaning of each word or expression, it was asserted "If we want to learn and understand a language perfectly, we should know what happens in it and be familiarized with all changes and know them." Likewise, concerning learners' consciousness of the linguistic, historical and cultural overtones, it was held that "By knowing English euphemistic expressions, learners can be familiar with different aspects of the linguistic background and cultural overtones."

On the contrary, with reference to the above issues, there were some comments which were divergent to others, as the following: "I think euphemistic expressions have nothing to do with different aspects of the linguistic background, and the historical and cultural overtones, and they are completely two different issues." "I myself know lots of euphemistic expressions but I know nothing about the historical and cultural overtones. Some euphemistic expressions may have such information but not all of them."

3. Many participants asserted that by tracing euphemisms learners could get what's going on in the language, language user's minds, and culture: "Because cultures have something in common, learners can become aware of similarities by extending their knowledge about source and target cultures." Another respondent argued "As euphemisms inspire from cultures, religions, taboos, and aesthetic features of a society, by knowledge of euphemisms learners can feel writer's aims more tangible." Nevertheless, there were some opposing comments to the above assumptions, as an interviewee objected "Euphemisms may not consider all aspects of language, and also the users of one language may have different cultures." And another one said: "It may be possible that some euphemistic expressions serve this function, but mostly they are two different issues."

4. A number of students groaned that most EFL students are unenlightened about shades of meanings of euphemisms during the exposition, as a student thought "I think most of EFL students are unaware about the meanings of euphemisms while they are producing discourse or when they are exposed to them. So they may use euphemisms in their speaking but most of them do not know what a euphemism is." Another interviewee believed "Without familiarity with euphemisms or just knowing little about them, learners cannot use or even understand
them and they will be confused. But if they learn critically, they have no problem with them."

On the contrary, there were some comments a bit different from the above viewpoints:
"I think it depends on each individual. May be there are some students who are not familiar with euphemisms and their meanings in mother language and foreign language."
"Knowing about all euphemisms is really hard. EFL students should know about their culture to understand their meanings and the ways they should use euphemisms needs a lot of time."

With reference to the critical thinking for EFL learners to reflect on both local and English euphemisms, a respondent maintained "I think providing learners with critical thinking will be helpful, as when they know local euphemisms, it will help them to learn English euphemisms easier." And another said "By critical thinking learners learn euphemisms deeply and do not memorize them only, and learn their usage more professionally."

5. A large number of exciting comments were offered concerning euphemisms being alluring in a range of emotions, reactions, and attitudes, and also as an aid to learners' becoming better world citizens. In this regard, a participant believed that "Euphemistic expressions have lots of emotions, reactions, attitudes and opinions within them, so that using them makes us more familiar with exact feelings of the speaker." Likewise, another participant maintained "Because when real emotions, reactions, and attitudes are conveyed and the receivers get the same effect as producers, they may use euphemism in their actual language use."

By the same token, with reference to euphemisms as a help to learners' becoming better world citizens, it was asserted "By knowing about English euphemisms, learners can use the appropriate status of social class. Then they can be better citizens in this regard." And another one claimed "Knowing about English and local euphemisms helps learners in society, because euphemism is polite and indirect language that can be effective in communication."

6. Based on the interviewees' responses it was witnessed that the questions concerning the observance/nonobservance of the maxims of CP and their relation with English euphemisms as well as the observance/nonobservance of the maxims of PP and their relation with English direct expressions proved to be among the most sophisticated and distorted issues that engrossed quite a lot of pros and cons. In this regard, some responses were ingenuously irrelevant while others could signify the shallow knowledge of the participants on the above issues. The reason for superficiality of the responses on the above issues could be partly attributed to the hazy nature of euphemisms and partly to the interviewees' lack of awareness of CP and PP and their related maxims. Also, it could be somewhat ascribed to the participants' being short of notion and knack to make decision on the impeding or facilitating role of euphemisms and direct expressions as to the observance or nonobservance of the
maxims of CP and PP. By the way, with reference to the impeding use of English euphemisms to observe the maxims of CP, a number of responses seemed to be more logical, tenable, and relevant, which could show participants' relative degrees of awareness to the euphemisms and CP maxims. For instance, a participant maintained "Because euphemisms make ambiguity, it violates the maxim of manner. We may find some euphemisms as cases that violate both the quality maxim and the quantity maxim. Hence, in a broad sense we may say that euphemisms that violate the quality maxim can be regarded as special cases that violate the quantity maxim because the two maxims are closely related."

However, some interviewees seemed to be too conservative, conformist, and middle-of-the-road, taking no sides in their responses:"I think it depends on the audience, and their knowledge of understanding the euphemisms."

On the other hand, some responses appeared to be too general, hazy, shallow, and even irrelevant wherein the participants could not present a plain piece of their mind. A participant said "Learners can use euphemisms in order to achieve the maxims of Cooperative Principle (CP). It may improve their social status." And another asserted, "The CP maxims are subordinate to euphemisms, as it is a polite language, and CP is a part of it. We observe quantity, quality, relation and manner, these are subsidiary for euphemism."

Regarding the impeding use of English direct expressions to observe the maxims of PP some responses seemed to be more pertinent, reasonable, and defensible, which indicated the interviewees' perceptiveness of the PP maxims and direct expressions: "I think in some cases we should impede use of English direct expressions in order to observe the maxims of PP. Because one part of this principle is “maximize cost for self” which means the strategy of attending to hearer’s interests, wants, and needs. And because the hearer likes to hear polite expressions so we should use euphemism instead of direct expressions." However, some interviewees appeared to be too conservative and run of the mill in their remarks. For instance, one claimed "Although we can show politeness without using euphemisms (by choosing more formal vocabularies), euphemisms help to be polite in speech and behavior." Another argued, "Because some phrases or expressions have negative meanings and may show impoliteness, in order to respect the others it is better to use euphemisms." On the other hand, a number of responses seemed too general, indistinct, and obscure in which the participants did not provide a lucid idea or credible reason as to whether impede or facilitate the use of direct expressions to observe the PP maxims. Some comments in this category were as the following: "In the language communication, euphemisms always observe the
Politeness Principle. In fact, in order to observe the maxim of PP, learners should use euphemisms expressions and they shouldn’t use direct expressions."

"It is better to use euphemism rather than direct expressions, because it shows politeness, and it may lead to increase social class and make him more admirable."

"We observe the maxims of politeness principle (PP) in order to consider polite and indirect language and make a good society. So the learners should reject use of direct expressions."

5. Conclusion

Considering the semantic opaqueness of English euphemisms as a central issue, this study aimed to investigate whether and to what extent the maxims of Cooperative and Politeness principles were observed or flouted during the use of euphemisms and direct expressions. Following a mixed research design, both questionnaire surveys and interviews were employed. By using pertinent questionnaires, data from 100 Iranian EFL graduates on 60 paired English direct and euphemistic expressions in terms of observance or flouting of the PP and CP maxims were collected and analyzed by $\chi^2$ procedure. The results of $\chi^2$ indicated that the difference between occurrence of observance and flouting (of CP and PP maxims) and those of non-occurrence were significant, as in 81% of the CP and 75% of the PP maxims, the maxims were either observed or flouted, so the null hypotheses holding that the individuals could not observe or flout the maxims of CP and PP were rejected. Alternatively, considering rate of flouting of the CP maxims in euphemisms, the manner maxim ranked first and the quantity maxim ranked last; and in that of the PP maxims in direct expressions, the tact maxim ranked first and the generosity maxim ranked last. Thus, the null hypothesis claiming equality among the CP and PP maxims in terms of rate of flouting was also rejected. Still, concerning EFL learners' recognition of semantic opaqueness in English euphemisms, the supremacy of flouting of the manner maxim, connoting opaqueness and ambiguity, revealed that interlocutors may not always observe the CP maxims but frequently say something hazy and vague to avoid unpleasant and embarrassing issues. Thus, the null hypothesis that EFL learners' recognition of English euphemisms could not characterize the semantic opaqueness of social euphemisms in English was rejected as well. Finally, by conducting structured interviews, data on the social, pragmatic, and pedagogical state of English euphemisms were collected and content analyzed, the results of which revealed prominent realities on the current status of euphemisms, conforming to the previously obtained results in the Iranian EFL context.
By analyzing quantitative and qualitative data in the study, it was indicated that the maxims of CP and PP cannot be observed or flouted at all time, and people occasionally flout or observe one or more of the maxims to meet certain communicative needs, also there will be no conversational implicature if people *always* follow the maxims of CP or PP.

In order to maintain effective communication, users of language are supposed to do their best to preserve certain regulative goals. They should try to be appropriately informative, truthful, relevant, clear and orderly; however, it was revealed in the study that it is not the case that the users' euphemistic utterances scrupulously follow the maxims of CP so that they could reduce the amount of interpretive work that recipients would have to do. And if a speaker manifestly appears not to observe these precepts of good communicative behavior, then a reason may be that he intends the hearer to infer from his utterance some meaning(s) additional to the conventional sense of the words and other signals he has uttered. Actually, in order to meet certain communicative needs, participants may seldom speak by faithfully observing all four maxims of the CP, so an intriguing way to deal with the maxims of conversation is flouting. When a maxim is flouted, a speaker doesn't observe the maxim, but cannot be accused of violating it either, as the transgression is so obvious that the speaker knows he/she is not observing it and realizes everyone else in the conversation knows it too.

Another notable point is the significant goal of being polite in communication. Euphemisms are used to avoid crudeness and indecency for the sake of polite conversation. Politeness is, therefore, a very important function that euphemisms serve in social life. Yet considering Grice's (1975) formulation of manner maxim defined as "Be perspicuous and specific; avoid obscurity; avoid ambiguity; be brief and orderly", this goal may conflict with the illocutionary and regulative goals subsumed under CP. In other words, the need for courtesy may lead one to discard truthfulness and clarity, and to tell "white lies" and become "semantically opaque", so the roundabout nature of euphemisms goes against the maxim of manner. The dilemma can be, however, fairly explained well by Leech's (1983) approbation maxim of Politeness Principle: "minimize dispraise of other, maximize praise of other." Thus, to put it in a nutshell, euphemisms are to minimize impolite expressions and maximize polite expressions, *while making indirection, haziness and obscurity in the utterance*.

### 5.1. Pedagogical Implications

The relation between language and euphemism is so close that it is impossible to study one without an analysis of the other. First, language is the vehicle of euphemism. We can say that where there is language, there is euphemism, as Wardhaugh (1986, p.229) maintained "Language is used to avoid saying certain things as well as to express them." Secondly,
euphemism is one form of language; so that we can derive euphemism from family talks, official meetings, literary words, scribbles on walls, telephone talks, television programs, letters, advertisements, E-mails, etc. Thirdly, euphemism has experienced the process of growth, development and decline. Thus, euphemism not only expands and enriches English vocabulary but also contributes to the appropriate and effective use of language. In the same vein, euphemism is used as an alternative to a dispreferred expression to avoid possible loss of face. Also, euphemistic effect enables communication to go smoothly and successfully.

Theoretically speaking, studies of this kind can shed some more light on the current literature on pedagogy, by illuminating the sections and characteristics of language which have been ignored in the previous studies. In addition, due to its concern with cultural qualities, the findings of this study can be applied for the enrichment of the previous theories of language learning such as Language Universals, and Acculturation. Furthermore, the issues provided could provide the interested readers with the ability to enhance effectiveness and comprehensiveness in detecting potential ideological inculcations beyond idiomatic power of euphemistic expressions. More specifically the study encompasses a whole range of emotions, reactions, attitudes and opinions on the part of the participants. Thus, another important insight gained from this research is to unravel how language could be a strong device in distorting the unwelcome realities, and putting positive and negative spins; also, in covering social bigotry, social and political taboos, cultural conflicts, etc.

This study can be a foundation stone for future studies regarding the semantic ideological potentials of languages in developing, maintaining and expanding realities. In addition, it is closely concerned with pragmatics, comprising a number of phenomena such as conversational analysis, speech act theory, conversational implicatures and maxims (Grice, 1975), politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Leech, 1983), relevance theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1995), critical linguistics, CDA, sociolinguistics, and social pragmatics.

The findings of the study can also give some insights into the linguistic, pedagogical, socio-pragmatic and even ideological factors which determine the strategies applied in translation. There are a number of different factors, including rhetoric, stylistic and contextual ones that affect the pragmatic inference and appreciation of euphemism by receivers and ultimately the expressive effect of it. Thus, it is advisable to attach great importance to these factors while paying constant attention to cross-cultural differences in uncovering euphemisms.

In general, language teachers, material developers, translators, and learners can benefit from studies on the linguistic dichotomy of euphemistic and non-euphemistic
expressions as well as extensions of the multiple maxims of Grice's CP and Leech's PP; besides, based upon the above discussion and analysis, the following pedagogical statements can be made:

1. The Iranian EFL teachers should make the learners aware of the cultural differences so that when the students are reading English texts, they don’t become surprised about the way the euphemistic expressions are used in that language. Learners are also advised to learn the contrast between euphemism and direct expressions, and to distinguish the taboo and uncomfortable subjects in English that give rise to most of euphemisms in language.

2. The students should be encouraged to enhance their ability in identifying euphemisms in authentic texts, as well as boosting their awareness of observing or flouting of the CP and PP maxims in English, since it makes them better language learners so that they would use language more fruitfully and to the point.

3. The students should recognize basic rules and principles of euphemisms' formation; likewise, they ought to identify different classifications of English euphemisms based on the scope of source, scope of sense, and sphere of application.

4. Learners should be able to recognize and appreciate euphemisms' chief properties including semantic opaqueness, beautification, politeness, and disguising; in the same vein, they should surmise, to a reasonable degree, why a euphemism is used, and what it connotes as compared to the original word it stands for.

5. The field of translation would also benefit from translators’ awareness of English euphemisms and the differences in SL and TL cultures. Hence, it seems evocative to put further emphasis on the cultural aspects of euphemisms in the translation works in future.

6. In order to develop their insights into more effective learning and teaching techniques and procedures related to euphemisms, learners are advised to become conscious of different aspects of the linguistic background, and the historical and the cultural overtones in texts with euphemistic expressions.

7. It is suggested that EFL learners, by probing into euphemisms, develop the essential power for critical thinking, fostering thoughtfulness, profundity, and perceptiveness via integrating stages of educational levels into a pattern for critical thinking and self assessment.

5.3. Suggestions for Further Research

This study can be a starting point for conducting more comprehensive research on the linguistic, pedagogical, and sociopragmatic functions of euphemistic expressions. It is hoped that the study open scholars’ perspectives to this area of study in EFL contexts like Iran. For this purpose, more endeavors are expected to be done on the analogous or related issues such
as replicating the study by employing other pragmatic theories or within other theoretical frameworks, investigating the impact of euphemisms on language awareness and language acquisition, and adopting strategies for translating euphemisms in particular genres.

In addition, the study could raise some more interesting and challenging questions for the continued research such as the following:
1. How does an awareness of direct and euphemistic expressions affect students' language proficiencies and applied linguistic studies?
2. How could pedagogical programming be affected by an awareness of direct and euphemistic expressions in applied linguistic studies?
3. How could an awareness of direct and euphemistic expressions be reflected in ordinary or everyday language?

Also, as for the researchers interested in continuation of the study, the following topics and issues are proposed:
1. Performing a comparative study in this area can reveal similar and/or different aspects of English and Persian euphemisms in use, means of formation, and communicative functions.
2. By conducting a comparative study the cultural differences or the national characteristics reflected by euphemisms in Persian and English could be disclosed.
3. A comparative study may also reveal the effect of euphemisms on the EFL learners’ awareness of and using the English language skillfully in cross–cultural communication.

It should be mentioned that the research made in this study is definitely open to further discussions and there could still be some problems to be solved out of the researcher's restricted knowledge and materials. Thus, this study can be considered as an impetus for further research on this area of study so that the authors sincerely hope this humble paper will evoke more attention and study on both euphemisms and noneuphemistic expressions.

References


### Appendix I

**A Survey questionnaire on the state of the English direct and euphemistic expressions in view of observance or flouting of the maxims of PP and CP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Direct (Non-euphemistic) Expression</th>
<th>The Type(s) of Maxims of PP Flouted</th>
<th>Euphemistic Expression</th>
<th>The Type(s) of Maxims of CP Flouted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Liz looks fat.</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>Liz looks traditionally built.</td>
<td>Q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Some office workers had to be fired imminently.</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Some office workers had to be rightsized/downsized imminently.</td>
<td>Q</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bill is in his old age.</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>Bill is in his golden years.</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The immigrants came from an African poor nation.</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>The immigrants came from an African emerging nation.</td>
<td>R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Her house is two years old.</td>
<td>Ag</td>
<td>Her house is two years new.</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The conscientious teacher attempted to push the poor students.</td>
<td>Ap</td>
<td>The conscientious teacher attempted to push the underperformers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>He was working as an illegal worker abroad.</td>
<td></td>
<td>He was working as an undocumented worker abroad.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The soldiers were being accused of genocide.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The soldiers were being accused of ethnic cleansing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The young man failed to meet the required qualifications for job.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The young man fell short/went out of business to meet the required qualifications for job.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>-Do you think she is pretty? -No, she isn’t.</td>
<td></td>
<td>-Do you think she is pretty? -She is quite knowledgeable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The schoolboy was clumsy in his writing skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The schoolboy was gravitationally challenged in his writing skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Where could I find some toilet paper?</td>
<td></td>
<td>Where could I find some T.P./bath tissue?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The dishonest student had a constant tendency toward cheating.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The dishonest student had a constant tendency toward peer homework help/comparing answers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sorry. Your zip is down.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sorry. Your fly is undone.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The patient suffered from simultaneous existence of mental and physical health issues.</td>
<td></td>
<td>The patient suffered from comorbidity.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Unluckily, he has fallen into drug addiction.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unluckily, he has fallen into chemical dependency/substance abuse.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The war between the two opposing</td>
<td></td>
<td>The force/peace process/conflict</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
sides lasted for some eight years.

18 He had to confess under torture.

19 For over 25 years, he has been working as a bin man/garbage man.

20 Mary is a picky eater.

21 The doctors diagnosed her disease as cancer.

22 He is interested in used cars.

23 His main job was to work in a garbage dump.

24 The army officer banned soldiers from killing of innocents.

25 The patient was having both mental illness and drug problems.

26 The sick man enjoyed benefits and treatments in times of sickness.

27 It was entirely inconsiderate to show individuals having sex together.

28 He was provided with some bribe to do the job right away.

29 She is known to be a lesbian.

30 It didn't appeal to her whatever to look so short.

31 The poor man had to live in a ghetto/slum.

32 The imprisoned man could no more resist against torture.

33 The proposed suggestion was a very poor/bad way to deal with the problem.

34 He had to be kept in a mental illness center for several years.

35 It is startling that sex change is on vogue in some communities.

36 The man met his divorced spouse by accident.

37 A new series of attacking was on track by military forces.

38 Where can I find a toilet?

39 The passengers were informed how to use vomit bags.

40 All her friends surprised when they heard she was pregnant.

41 The newly-employed clerk proved to be lazy.

between the two opposing sides lasted for some eight years.

He had to confess under persuasion.

For over 25 years, he has been working as a garbologist/sanitation engineer/sanitation officer.

Mary is specific about what she eats.

The doctors diagnosed her disease as the big C.

He is interested in pre-owned.

His main job was to work in a sanitary landfill.

The army officer banned soldiers from collateral damage.

The patient was dual-diagnosed.

It was entirely inconsiderate to show individuals acting like rabbits/getting it on.

He was provided with some motivation to do the job right away.

She is known to be a woman in sensible shoes.

It didn't appeal to her whatever to look so vertically-challenged.

The poor man had to live in an economically depressed neighborhood/culturally-deprived environment.

The imprisoned man could no more resist against torture.

The proposed suggestion was an ill-advised way to deal with the problem.

He had to be kept in a mental health center for several years.

It is startling that gender reassignment is on vogue in some communities.

The man met his pre-loved by accident.

A new series of active defending was on track by military forces.

Where can I powder my nose/meet john/wash my hand?

The passengers were informed how to use motion discomfort bags/air-sickness bags.

All her friends surprised when they heard she was in the family way.

The newly-employed clerk proved to be not working to the full
potentially having a rather relaxed attitude to work.
Unfortunately, the number of under-privileged/economically deprived is increasing rapidly.
The doctor was a pro-choice.

Louise Braille was suffering from visual impairment.

- Are these fruits luscious?
- Some are very luscious, but others could be better.

Don't be such economical with the truth.

The children were banned from watching pornographic movies.

My cousin is presently unemployed/jobless.

She failed the test because of being disruptive.

Frank is loud and arrogant.

The natives were neutralized.

He is acting as a spy.

The murderer was sentenced to the capital punishment.

The people protested against increasing user's fees.

She was so adamant that everybody knew her behavior above critical.

The police accused the thieves of covert operation.

The president was well-known for his plausible denial.

Some people collect huge wealth through cleaning dirty money.

The employee was given life insurance.

John's mother has gone the way of all flesh for almost five years.

Total Percentage (%)

Appendix II
Interview questions on the pedagogical and socio-pragmatic aspects of euphemisms

Euphemisms at Pedagogical level:

1. Do you think that the majority of Iranian EFL students are presently ignorant of euphemisms?
2. Do you guess English euphemisms are adequately addressed in English language courses in the Iranian colleges or not?
3. Do you think a main problem with euphemisms is their semantic opaqueness?
4. To what extent may euphemisms and euphemistic expressions remain semantically opaque for language learners?
5. For what reason(s) could euphemistic expressions remain semantically opaque for language learners?
6. Can Iranian EFL learners surmise to a reasonable degree, why a euphemism is used, and what it connotes as compared to the original word it stands for?
7. In your opinion, can fluency in English be achieved without a reasonable command of euphemisms in language?
8. Do you believe that lack of notice to the dichotomy "euphemisms vs. direct expressions" in language use and usage has created an 'academic lacuna' in the Iranian EFL context?
9. Do you believe that presently a large part of English euphemisms is unintentionally absent from current English courses and textbooks?
10. Is it obligatory to include aspects of English euphemisms to textbooks due to their compatibility with learners' social values?
11. Can language learners use and appreciate English texts perfectly with knowing little about English euphemisms?
12. Do you think excluding English euphemisms from language courses and textbooks is a threat to the lofty pedagogical standards?
13. Do you consider teaching about English euphemisms as an inseparable part of English language teaching?
14. Do language learners need to learn about English euphemisms while learning to respect euphemisms in their local language as well?
15. Do you think the ability to understand and respect English euphemisms (i.e., developing intercultural competence) is one of the necessities of a proficient language learner?
16. Do you think knowing about English euphemisms makes English language learning process easier?
17. In general, is there an integral need to include more aspects of English euphemisms in language courses in Iran?

Euphemisms at Socio-pragmatic level:

18. Will knowing about English euphemisms in language courses lead learners to appreciate their social and pragmatic values?
19. Do you believe that knowing little about English euphemisms and derogations might create various misunderstandings in communication?
20. Is it important to make EFL learners familiarized with the enormous change(s) that each individual word or expression can bring about?
21. Can familiarity with euphemistic expressions make learners conscious of different aspects of the linguistic background, and the historical and cultural overtones in texts?
22. Is it possible that learners by tracing euphemisms could see what is going on in the language, language user's minds, and their culture?
23. Can knowing about English euphemisms promote socio-pragmatic behavior of learners in English contexts?
24. Do you think that students need to learn how to take a critical (analytical) look at English euphemisms besides being exposed to more of English euphemisms in language courses?
25. Do you think in order to observe the maxims of Cooperative Principle (CP) learners should impede use of English euphemisms?
26. In order to observe the maxims of Politeness Principle (PP), should learners impede use of English direct (non-euphemistic) expressions?
27. Do you believe most EFL students seem to be unenlightened about the implications of shades of meanings of euphemisms while they are producing discourse or during the time they are exposed to them?
28. Do you believe the study of euphemisms is appealing in that it encompasses a whole range of emotions, reactions, attitudes and opinions on the part of the participants?
29. Do you believe language learners should be taught critical thinking skills to reflect on both local and English euphemisms?
30. Do you believe knowing about English euphemisms helps learners to be better World citizens?
Title

An Evaluation of the Spectrum Textbooks in Shokuh Language Institute

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Biodata

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Abstract

Textbooks play a very crucial role in the process of language teaching and learning. This study aimed to evaluate four R&R textbooks from Spectrum series by Prentice Hall published in 1994. The term textbooks refer to the pupil's books, the workbooks, the supplementary materials, and the teacher's manual of the series. A total of 45 English students and 20 English teachers respectively completed a 33-item and a 50-item questionnaire which was made with reference to some critical features extracted from Cunningsworths (1995) material evaluation checklist. The data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative procedures. Results indicate that there were significant differences in each of the fourteen categories ratings regarding both teachers and students’ rankings, whereas mostly students ranked them higher than teachers. However, the comparison of male and female students groups showed no significant difference in their ratings except in Visual category. Besides, while these textbooks were perceived as moderately adequate books the participants generally felt the need for some revisions in textbooks’ (a) supplementary materials, (b) phonology, (c) Workbook and (d) Gradation and Recycling. Finally, the evaluation offered recommendations for improvement in the teachers' performances, their understanding of the textbooks objectives and reconsideration of supplementary materials.

Keywords: Evaluation, Material, Material development, Material Evaluation, Visuals
1. Introduction

English is used as a medium of communication by one-third of the world’s population: it is regarded as the global language. It achieves this status because it is taken up by many other countries around the world: by becoming the official language being used as a medium of communication in such domains as government, the law courts, the media, and the educational system; and by being made a priority in a country’s foreign language teaching. English is now the language most widely taught as a foreign language in over 100 countries (Crystal, 1997).

There are different elements which are effective on English language teaching that should be considered during this process. Tomlinson (2001) argued that interest in material development for language teaching, both as a field study and as a practical task has been increased. The most obvious and common form of material for language instruction comes through textbooks as Brown (2002) stated. The textbook is an almost “universal element of English language teaching and no teaching-learning situation; it seems is complete until it has its relevant textbook” (Hutchinson and Torres, 1994, p53).

Therefore, the act of judging and evaluating the worth of textbooks particularly in the face of the broad variation in teachers’ opinions and the diversity in the learners’ objectives in learning English is very important. Alderson and Bretta (1992) contrasted the lack of attention given to evaluation studies in language programs with the wealth of work in other areas of education. The need to measure the value of a set of materials and making judgments about the effect of them on people using these materials is a beneficial case which can be called textbook evaluation. Therefore, textbook evaluation is an applied linguistic activity through which teachers, supervisors, administrators and material developers can “make judgments about the effect of the materials on the people using them” (Tomilinson, et al, 2001, p. 310). He remarked while material evaluation is initially a time-consuming, difficult undertaking and a demanding task but it is rewarding too. Before conducting an evaluation a comprehensive set of principles criteria is required. Many researchers and practitioners suggest some checklists and lists of criteria which provide a useful starting point of anybody conducting an evaluation.

However, one of the most important works in EFL/ESL textbook evaluation is Alan Cunningsworth’s book Choosing your Coursebook (1995). Cunningsworth suggested evaluation criteria for each category, which are outlined at the end of each section. He proposes general criteria for textbook evaluation, which include 45 criteria in 14 categories:

2. Literature Review

Literature related to textbook evaluation was reviewed as the basis for a decision on which form and approach of evaluation would be appropriate and how an evaluation should be implemented.

2.1 Textbook Advantages and Disadvantages

To do book evaluation in a correct way, first defining characteristics and giving a good definition about textbook is necessary. The definition which Ur (1996, p. 183) gave is a simple one, but it is very useful and easy to understand as he argued a textbook is what a teacher and each student has a copy and which is in principle to be followed systematically as the basis for a language course. Therefore, from the above definition one can get that a textbook must have at least being available in the hand of students and teachers, and used systematically in a course of study, and a course of study here refers to an English course of study. As Ur (1996) put forth, in some places textbooks are taken for granted while in others they may not be used at all. In that case the teacher works according to a syllabus or according to his or her own program, and uses text book or supplementary materials as the need arises. A third, ‘compromise’, situation is where a textbook is used selectively, not necessarily in sequence, extensively supplemented by other materials. The problem arises when we speak about selecting the textbook, a book which must be used in a homogeneous class or in the worst situation for a heterogeneous class in a course of study. So, which quality must that book have?

Hutchinson (1994) argued in spite the fact that textbook is regarded as “the visible heart of any ELT program” (p.315) and that “textbook is an almost universal element of ELT teaching” (Sheldon, 1988, p. 237), controversy over the roles EFL textbook play in teaching and learning a foreign language still apparently exists. Sheldon (1988) revealed both theoretical and practical problems with textbooks, the main idea is “textbooks merely grow from and imitate other textbooks and don’t admit the winds of change from research, methodological experiment, or classroom feedback” (p. 239). Hutchinson and Torres (1994), on the other hand, argued that the textbook has a vital and positive role to play in teaching and learning process, especially during periods of change. They believe textbooks argue,
survive and prosper primarily because they are the most convenient means of providing the structure that the teaching-learning system particularly the system of change requires. The situation has shown us that problems do exist with our teaching materials, yet the necessary of the textbook cannot be neglected. The situation also implies that as teachers it is important for us to evaluate, select and adapt teaching materials to meet our teaching and students learning needs in order to maximize learning potentials.

Other theorists such as Sheldon (1988) agreed with this observation and suggest 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. Haycroft (1998), for example, suggested that one of the primary advantages of using textbooks is that they are psychologically essential for students since their progress and achievement can be measured concretely when we use them. Second, as Sheldon (1988) has pointed out, students often harbor expectations about using a textbook in their particular language classroom and program and believe that published materials have more credibility than teacher-generated or "in-house" materials. Third, as O'Neill (1982) has indicated, textbooks are generally sensitive to students' needs, even if they are not designed specifically for them, they are efficient in terms of time and money, and they can and should allow for adaptation and improvisation. Fourth, textbooks yield a respectable return on investment, are relatively inexpensive and involve low lesson preparation time, whereas teacher-generated materials can be time, cost and quality defective. In this way, textbooks can reduce potential occupational overload and allow teachers the opportunity to spend their time undertaking more worthwhile pursuits (O'Neill, 1982; Sheldon, 1988). A fifth advantage identified by Cunningsworth (1995) is the potential which textbooks have for serving several additional roles in the ELT curriculum. He argued 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.

While many of the aforementioned theorists are quick to point out the extensive benefits of using ESL/EFL textbooks, there are many other researchers and practitioners who do not necessarily accept this view and retain a feeling of doubt because they don’t agree completely on the subject.

Cunningsworth (1995) provided four interrelated disadvantages to an approach which is heavily dependent on a single coursebook. Firstly, there can be a lack of variety in teaching
procedures. Secondly, innovations toward individual student’s needs are reduced. Thirdly, spontaneity and flexibility are diminished. Fourthly, there can be a lack of creativity in teaching techniques and language use. Cunningsworth stated heavy dependence on coursebooks is far from ideal as it reduces the importance of the individual contributions that good teachers make at all levels in the learning process.

2.2. Textbook Evaluation and Textbook Evaluation Tools

Many scholars offer checklists based on generalized criteria. Since teachers rely heavily on textbooks in their teaching, there is a need for textbooks to be evaluated. Cunningsworth (1984) argued one of the reasons for textbook evaluation is the intention to adopt a new textbook. Another reason is to identify particular strengths and weaknesses in textbooks already in use, so that optimum use can be made of the strong points, whilst their weaker areas can be adapted or substituted from other books. Textbook analysis and evaluation can help teachers to gain good and useful insights into the nature of the material. The idea of evaluating textbooks is seen by some to be closely linked to the selection of textbooks. The evaluation helps the selection, which serves as an important decision-making process, as Sheldon (1988:273) argued the selection of a particular core volume signals an executive, educational decision in which there is considerable professional, financial and even political investment, this high profile means that the definition and application of systematic criteria for assessing course books are vital.

Ellis (1997) differentiated between two types of materials evaluation: a predictive evaluation and a retrospective evaluation. A predictive evaluation is designed to make a decision regarding what materials to use, whereas a retrospective evaluation designed to examine materials that have actually been used. A brief review of the literature relating to materials evaluation reveals that the research focus to date has been more or less exclusively on predictive evaluation. Retrospective evaluation provides teachers with information regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the used syllabus. It also serves "as a means of testing the validity of a predictive evaluation, and may point to ways in which the predictive instruments can be improved for future use" (Elis, 1997, p. 37). As textbooks are used widely by teachers, it is important to produce a good textbook. Although the vetting has already been done by the Textbook Division before the textbooks are printed, it is still necessary to carry out an analysis to examine if the textbooks meet the demand of the syllabus. Furthermore, textbook analysis and evaluation is also useful for teacher development.

Preeminent theorists in the field of ELT textbook design and analysis such as Williams (1983), Sheldon (1988), Brown (1995), Cunningsworth (1995) and Harmer (1996) all agreed,
for instance, that evaluation tools should have some criteria pertaining to the physical characteristics of textbooks such as layout, organizational, and logistical characteristics. Other important criteria that should be incorporated 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.

One of the most important works in EFL/ESL textbook evaluation is Alan Cunningsworth's book *Choosing your Coursebook* (1995) where he lists four main guidelines to help you evaluate your coursebooks which are as follows:

1. Coursebooks should correspond to the learners' needs. They should match the aims and objectives of the language-learning program.
2. Coursebooks should reflect the uses (present or future) which learners will make of the language. Select coursebooks which will help to equip students to use language effectively for their own purposes.
3. Coursebooks should take account of students' needs as learners and should facilitate their learning processes, without dogmatically imposing a rigid 'method'.
4. Coursebooks should have a clear role as a support for learning. Like teachers, they mediate between the target language and the learner.

Cunningsworth suggests evaluation criteria for each category, which are outlined at the end of each section. He proposes general criteria for textbook evaluation, which include 45 criteria in 8 categories: aims and approaches, design /organization, language content, study skills, topic, methodology, teacher's book, and practical considerations.

### 3. Statement of the problem

A large group of teachers and learners often feel positive about textbooks as for the former a textbook gives them a consistent syllabus and also dependable teaching sequences and for the latter textbook is reassuring and give them a chance for what’s coming and reviews what they have done. Various problems with materials have been addressed by a number of researchers during evaluation of the textbooks that we can see some of them in Spectrum series. Spectrum is a six-level course designed for adolescent and adult learners of English which have been taught at Shokuh Language Institute in Kerman, Iran for years. Since implementation of Spectrum there these textbooks have been criticized by supervisors and teachers as well as students for many reasons that some of them are as follow:
- Covering a high amount of contents in a short time
- Being overloaded with difficult vocabulary, expressions and grammar points.
- Lacking a systematic gradation of items from simple to complex
- Using incomprehensible cultural points not appropriate for Iranian
- Holding difficult quizzes and exams usually higher than students’ abilities.

In this study the researcher intends to investigate criticisms which are mentioned about these books by evaluating the textbooks based on Cunningsworth (1995) criteria. Moreover, it examined the validity of the above mentioned claims made by some teachers, supervisors and students. This evaluation is significant because it reveals the strengths and weaknesses of the Spectrum and determines how well these books meet the standards of a good book and provides guidance and feedback for Spectrum revisions as well. It may also enhance teachers own personal and professional development by encouraging them to adopt a reflective approach to their own teaching practice. Thus, the result of the study is hoped to benefit English language teachers, learners, and textbook developers to improve their teaching, learning, and designing of the textbooks.

4. Research Questions

1. Are there any significant differences in the ratings of each of the fourteen categories when ranked by both teachers and students?
2. Are there any significant differences in the ratings of each of the ten categories when ranked by both males and females groups of students?
3. To what extent does the content of the Spectrum meet the standards of a good book based on Cunningsworth criteria of evaluating 14 categories?

5. Research Design

This study provided both qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the 4 R&R textbooks from Spectrum series. The term textbooks were used here to refer to the Pupil's Books, the Workbooks, the Supplementary Materials, and the Teacher's Manual of the series. The study was supported by the qualitative data collected from the interviews with supervisors, teachers and students and from the questionnaire's demographic data. The quantitative data collected by questionnaire aimed to investigate participants’ judgments and opinions regarding the
content of the textbooks. Both male and female teachers-supervisors and students participated in the study by completing the questionnaire.

6. The Participants and Instruments
The number of teachers working in Kerman Shokuh Institute is 20 and all of them were asked to participate in this study. Furthermore, the number of students who studied in Spectrum R&R levels at the time of doing this study was 45 learners both male female who were asked to participate in this attempt and to fill in the questionnaire carefully and honestly and to issue their opinions about the textbooks followed by conducting a short interview with both teachers and students.

7. Data Collection and Analysis Procedures
To achieve the goal, four R&R Spectrum textbooks were evaluated from two different aspects and in two different steps. First, a number of teachers were asked to scrutinize the book with the mentioned criteria in the questionnaire. Totally, there are 50 questions within 14 categories. All the research questions and hypotheses were tested for “statistical significance” at the $\alpha = .05$ level. Using a known statistical evaluation tool SPSS 16.0, the researcher evaluated both students and teachers answers firstly, based on the differences in the students answers according to their gender and secondly, based on the differences between teachers and students answers to the same questionnaire. An experimental study was carried out and data were analyzed using statistical means such as Leven test and Independent Sample T-test. The reliability of questionnaire was measured by Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha$) as referred in Hesham Suleiman Dawood Al-Yousef thesis (2007) in which the questions were tailored specifically for special studies. Generally speaking, a strong reliability coefficient ranges from about 0.65 to 0.95. Alpha coefficients of 0.70 or higher were considered acceptable (DeVellis, 1991).

The more items a questionnaire have, the higher the reliability. Overall reliability of all the 50 individual statements of questionnaire was 0.96. It can be said that it had an acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .96$) in which the Content validity was assessed by asking five teachers to test and review the 50 statements and to make their suggested changes. The Likert scale format, ranging 1-4, was used to reflect participants' level of agreement with a list of statements. Then the Students will complete the same questionnaire, to allow for comparison across groups, although the teachers and the supervisors' version include some additional items.
While both questionnaires contain ten major categories (statements 1-33) the teachers and supervisors’ questionnaire has four additional categories. (Statements 34-50).

8. Results

Using a known statistical evaluation tool SPSS 16.0, the researcher evaluated both students and teachers answers firstly, based on the differences in the students answers according to their gender and secondly, based on the differences between teachers and students answers to the same questionnaire. An experimental study was carried out and data were analyzed using statistical means such as Leven test, Independent Sample T-test and descriptive statistics including maximum, minimum, frequency tables, cross tables, frequency percentage, cumulative frequency, graphs and box plot, mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis to evaluate the teachers and students answer to questionnaire items.

8.1. Description of Demographic Criteria

The demographic information contained information related to students’ gender. In this study 28(%62.2) out of 45 students were female while 17(%37.8) were male. (graph1 illustrate detailed information of students’ gender)

8.2. The Research Questions Analysis

Are there any significant differences in the ratings of each of the fourteen categories when they are ranked by teachers and students and which of them are ranked higher during evaluation?

In order to answer this question a T-test was used to compare 10 categories of textbooks based on teachers and students answers. Since the values of −p(significance) measured less than the significant level of $\alpha = 0.05$ therefore at this level H0 was rejected.
Consequently, a significant difference was found between the students and teachers' opinions in all 10 categories of textbooks and regarding mean scores it was revealed that students evaluated 9 categories higher than teachers, whereas teachers ranked the supplementary material of textbooks higher than students. (Table 10 and graph 2)

Table 1. The t-test statistic to compare the content of textbooks based on teachers and students opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>sig</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19.089</td>
<td>3.18250</td>
<td>8.98</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12.000</td>
<td>2.27110</td>
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Table 2. The t-test statistic to compare the grammar of textbooks based on teachers and students opinion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11.02</td>
<td>1.840</td>
<td>8.91</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>1.410</td>
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Table 3. The t-test statistic to compare the vocabularies’ of textbooks based on teachers and students opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5.11</td>
<td>1.434</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.005</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>1.572</td>
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Table 4. The t-test statistic to compare the phonology of textbooks based on teachers and students opinions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phonology</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6.60</td>
<td>1.116</td>
<td>11.25</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>1.031</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. The t-test statistic to compare the language skills of textbooks based on teachers and students opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Skills</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8.56</td>
<td>2.159</td>
<td>6.72</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>1.165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. The t-test statistic to compare the methodology of textbooks based on teachers and students opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
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<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Methodology Student</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>8.47</td>
<td>1.984</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.001</td>
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<td>Teacher</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>1.881</td>
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Table 7. The t-test statistic to compare the study skills of textbooks based on teachers and students opinions

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<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
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<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Study Skills Student</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10.27</td>
<td>2.580</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.55</td>
<td>3.154</td>
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</table>

Table 8. The t-test statistic to compare the visuals of textbooks based on teachers and students opinions

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<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visuals Student</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>5.20</td>
<td>1.687</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.725</td>
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Table 9. The t-test statistic to compare the practice and testing of textbooks based on teachers and students opinions

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practice and Testing Student</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>13.53</td>
<td>2.809</td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.50</td>
<td>2.626</td>
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</table>

Table 10. The t-test statistic to compare the supplementary material of textbooks based on teachers and students opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supplementary Material Student</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>.925</td>
<td>5.54</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>.887</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Graph 2. The box plot to compare the supplementary materials textbooks based on teachers and students opinions

8.3. The Comparison of the Study Components According to Students’ Gender

Based on third research question which was evaluated by independent t-test, no significant differences was found in the ratings of each of ten categories when ranked by both males and females groups of students except in one category which was visual. Therefore their ranks were different according to both gender answers, while female students evaluated the visuals of textbooks higher than male. The comparison of the study components according to students’ gender showed that just visual component is different according to males and females opinions.

A T-test was used to compare the textbooks visuals according to male and female students’ opinions. Since the value of –p (significance was less than the significant level of $\alpha = 0.05$ therefore at this level $H_0$ is rejected. Consequently, it is concluded that there is a significant difference between the male and female students’ opinions about the visuals of textbooks and by comparing the means it is clear that female students evaluated the visuals of textbooks higher than male. (Table 11 and graph 3)

Table 11. The t-test statistic to compare the visuals of textbooks based on male and female students opinions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visuals boy</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>1.875</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visuals Girl</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5.64</td>
<td>1.420</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Graph 3. The box plot to compare the visuals of textbooks based on male and female students opinions
9. Conclusion and Discussions

In this study both the quantitative and the qualitative findings showed that the Content and the practice and testing of the textbook were among the categories that gained the most support by both teachers and students answers; since the mean scores of students and teachers ranking for the content are respectively 19.08 and 12 while practice and testing mean scores for students and teachers are 13.53, 9.5 respectively. Most respondents agreed that the practice and testing of textbooks were not only reasonably well produced and attractive, but also an integral part of teaching.

Besides, based on interview results both teachers and students stated that the textbook contains some writing and reading tasks that are too difficult for the learners. Thus, syllabus designers and managers could take into account the level of the course, the characteristics of learners, and the degree of preparation of teachers when choosing a particular approach to syllabus design. Finally, Workbook should be merged with the Pupil's Book so that students will refer to only one book when preparing for exams and will not forget one of the two books at home.

Moreover, while students ranked just one category (supplementary materials) unfavorably, the teachers rated three categories (supplementary materials, phonology and visuals) as the most unfavorable ones. The most poorly rated category based on teachers opinions was supplementary materials (M=3.05, sd=.887), followed closely by phonology (M=3.3, sd=1.03). Gradation and Recycling was to some extent not given greater concern by teachers since the selected items are sometimes beyond learners' level and are not graded according to the learners' level, as discussed earlier in chapter one according to interviews findings. On the other hand, the results of the Teacher's Manual accurately reflected the teachers’ perceptions. Since all teachers were provided with the Teacher's Manual, the findings of the study showed this category ranked the highest among the teachers as in these books learning difficulties are predicted and appropriate advice is given in addition to the guidelines for evaluating how well lessons went. Besides, they contain a lot of useful information on how to use the Pupil's Book in class as well as transcripts of the speaking activities in the Pupil's Book.

The results of research question 2 (Are there any significant differences in the ratings of each of the ten categories when ranked by both males and females groups of students?) showed no statistically significant differences among variables based on male and female students opinions and their ratings of the textbooks except in one Visual category. Therefore,
there is a significant difference between the male and female students’ opinions about the visuals of textbooks and by comparing the means it is clear that female students evaluated the visuals of textbooks higher than male (Table 11 and graph 3). Moreover, according to the findings in question 6 which is related to contextualization in the content of the textbooks, 16 out of 17 male students ranked it completely favorable that showed the male students care more about contextualization than female who 18 out of 27 of them ranked it high. Also male students graded “principle of immediate use” which is categorized in vocabulary category higher than female students that revealed the males use language more immediate than females. The results of questionnaire showed that the Spectrum textbooks were perceived as moderately adequate since the mean scores for each category exceeded 2, except for Supplementary Material (for students). Therefore, students rated the textbooks more favorably than the teachers in all but one category which is Supplementary Material.

The findings of this study provide immense views to teachers and management about effectiveness of a textbook depends on the level of the teachers’ beliefs about the nature of language and teaching/learning. Such awareness is important because teachers’ actual results of the evaluation and interviews analyses revealed that there is an urgent need for training teachers on the use of communicative language and for better performing and better using of textbooks. Therefore, management should adopt a long-term project that aims not only to improve the teachers' performances, but also to acquaint them with the methods of teaching the textbooks.

Selected teachers also need to be involved in the future development of teaching material, in order to draw on their knowledge of learners' needs. This may also improve their understanding objectives of the textbooks. Finally, supervisors need to reconsider the supplementary materials which were provided to teachers and students based on a new and acceptable mode; for example they can encourage students to make PowerPoint presentations, which contain animated pictures of the textbook's content or they can urge students to acquire a simplified monolingual dictionary.

The research findings may be used as a guide for revising the current textbooks. The following points need to be taken into account when modifying textbooks:

• The management, as well as syllabus designers, should take into account the level of the course, the characteristics of learners, and the degree of preparation of teachers when choosing a textbook.

• Adopting a long-term project that aims not only to improve our teachers' performances, but also to acquaint them with the methods of teaching the textbook.
References
Title
Discourse Markers in the Essay Writing of EFL Learners

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Abstract
This study aimed to investigate whether discourse markers (DMs) instruction leads to a better writing performance of the EFL learners. The participants of this study (N=31) were male Iranian students at Sharif University of Technology. They received instruction on the application of Fraser’s (2006) classification of DMs to their essay writings. Two instruments were used in this study: a pretest and a posttest of writing. The results of this study showed that (a) there was a significant difference in the participants’ pretest and posttest of writing scores with regard to the use of DMs. (b) There was no significant difference in the use of Contrastive markers in the pre and posttests of writing, whereas there were significant differences in the use of Elaborative, Inferential, and Temporal markers between the pretest and the posttest. The findings of this study revealed that the DMs instruction has been effective in helping the language learners perform better in the application of the Elaborative, Inferential, and Temporal markers in their essays. This study suggests English language instructors to familiarize the students with the different functions and classifications of DMs in the essay writing tasks.
Keywords: essay writing; elaborative markers; contrastive markers; inferential markers; temporal markers

1. Introduction

Writing abilities are vital for second language proficiency, and the main concern of many ESL or EFL learners is learning how to write efficiently in English. One important feature in writing is the use of rhetorical cues known as discourse markers (DMs). The literature in writing research provides support for the importance of DMs in the L2 written products in that many researchers have focused on the investigation of different aspects of DMs in L2 learners’ compositions (e.g., Chen, 2006; Dastjerdi & Shirzad, 2010; Field & Yip, 1992; Fung, 2011; Granger & Tyson, 1996; Jalilifar & Alipour, 2007; Johnson, 1992; Jones, 2011; Martinez, 2004; Rezvani, Abdullah & Baki, 2012; Simin & Tavangar, 2009; Tavakoli & Amirian, 2012; Yoon, 2006; Zhang, 2000). Although these studies showed different results, they acknowledged the facilitative role that metadiscourse elements play in the L2 writing performance.

2. Review of the Related Literature

To date, a number of researchers (e.g., Chaudron & Richards, 1986; Fortuno, 2006; Fraser, 1999, 2006; Hansen, 1998; Hyland, 2000; Schiffrin, 1987; Schourup, 1999) have attempted to characterize DMs in terms of definition, meanings, and functions in a general way. However, no consensus has emerged among scholars in this regard. DMs, as Hansen (1994) defines, are “organizational signals that appear at the beginning and/or end of a unit of talk and are used by the speaker to indicate how what is being said is related to what has already been said” (p. 143). In Fraser’s (1996) view, a DM is “an expression which signals the relationship of the basic message to the foregoing discourse” (p. 186).

As Fraser (2006) argues, DMs share a common characteristic, (i.e., they impose a relation between the discourse segment which host them (S2) and the previous discourse segment (S1)). He further notes that DMs do not syntactically constitute an individual category. In other words, there are three sources of DMs: (1) conjunctions (coordinate and subordinate) which function primarily but not exclusively as DMs, such as and, but, so, while, and since. (2) Adverbs which serve to function as DMs such as conversely, similarly, and consequently. (3) Prepositional phrases that function as DMs such as in particular, as a result, on the other hand, and because of.

It is observed that there are different views on the functions of DMs. Schiffrin (1987), characterizing DMs with a coherence-based perspective, notes that DMs can cue different coherence
relations. That is, they explicitly guide relations and directions in the discourse pattern. Fraser (1996), on the other hand, suggests that DMs be regarded as a pragmatic class which contributes to the interpretation of the message rather than to its propositional meaning. In his view, pragmatic markers are featured as syntactic, lexical, and phonological linguistic devices, which play no part in the semantic meaning of the content of propositions; instead they have an important role in the interpretation of utterances. However, within Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) framework, DMs function as conjunctions which play an important role in creating semantic links between linguistic items.

Organization markers have been classified in different ways by different scholars (Chaudron & Richards, 198; Fortuno, 2006; Fraser, 1999, 2006; Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Hyland, 2000). The focus of this study is on one of the most recent classifications of DMs, which is proposed by Fraser (2006). DMs, as Fraser (2006) suggests, are categorized into four basic classes: Contrastive, Elaborative, Inferential, and Temporal markers. Contrastive markers are those markers which signal a contrast either in message content or between a previously uttered message and the current message. Elaborative markers, as Fraser (1996), indicates, has to do with “the following utterance which constitutes a reinforcement of some sort on the preceding discourse” (p. 188). Inferential markers indicate that “the force of the utterance is a conclusion which follows from the preceding discourse” (Fraser, 1996, p. 188). The last category in this classification is called Temporal, which chronologically relates the current discourse segment to the preceding one. This classification was the basis for the instruction phase of this study. In Table 1, the categories of DMs, as suggested by Fraser (2006), along with some examples of each category are presented.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Fraser’s (2006) Model of Discourse Markers (the Primary DM of Each Class is in Bold)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contrastive markers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but, alternatively, although, contrariwise,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contrary to expectations, conversely, despite (this/that),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>even so, however, in spite of (this/that), in comparison (with this/that), in contrast (to this/that),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of DMs instruction, based on the classification proposed by Fraser (2006), on the writing performance of L2 learners. Accordingly, the following research questions were addressed.

1. Does training DMs lead to a better performance in the writing skills among EFL learners?
2. Which category of Fraser’s (2006) model of DMs is used more frequently by those who received DMs training?

A number of researchers have shown interest in conducting research to examine the effect of metadiscourse awareness on the written performance of L2 learners (e.g., Dastjerdi & Shirzad, 2010; Jalilifar & Alipour, 2007; Martinez, 2004; Simin & Tavangar, 2009; Tavakoli & Amirian, 2012). For instance, in a study by Martinez (2004), the DMs use was explored in the expository compositions of Spanish students. Seventy-eight university students were asked to write an essay on a given topic. The collected essays were then marked by two raters on the basis of a certain criteria. Then, the essays were analyzed for DMs based on the Fraser’s (1999) taxonomy of DMs. The results indicated that the students used some types of DMs more frequently than the others; Elaborative markers were the most frequently used, and Contrastive markers were the second most frequent markers. The findings also revealed a significant relationship between the scores and the number of DMs used in the learner’s composition. Finally, it was suggested that the essays with more Elaborative and Contrastive DMs achieved the higher scores.

In another study, Simin and Tavangar (2009) investigated EFL learners’ writing products focusing on the use of metadiscourse elements. Ninety Iranian L2 learners took an Oxford Placement
Test (OPT) and based on their scores were divided into three groups of lower-intermediate, intermediate, and upper-intermediate. They, then, were trained to write essays on argumentative topics for one semester. At the end of the term, their sample essays were collected and marked based on Vande Kopple’s (1985) classification of metadiscourse and the correct use of metadiscourse markers. The results showed that there were significant differences in metadiscourse use for different levels of proficiency, (i.e., more proficient learners made more use of metadiscourse items in their writing). The findings also revealed that the instruction of metadiscourse markers had a facilitative effect on the writing quality and the correct use of metadiscourse items.

In a very recent study, Tavakoli and Amirian (2012) investigated how and to what extent metadiscourse knowledge in the Iranian learners’ writing develops after receiving the treatment in this regard. First, 86 university students in a composition course took an OPT test to be homogenized in terms of their language proficiency. Then, 60 participants were selected and divided into two control and experimental groups. Portfolio assessment as a teaching technique was employed for the experimental group while control group received the traditional method of teaching during the semester. Two samples of writing on argumentative topics were collected from the participants in both groups. Then, the number of appropriate metadiscourse items was counted. The data analysis showed more correct and efficient use of metadiscourse markers by L2 learners in experimental group than that of participants in the control group. The findings also revealed that participants in the experimental group performed better than those in the control group.

3. Method

3.1 Participants
The participants in this research ($N = 31$) were all male learners aged between 18 to 20 studying Mechanical Engineering at Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) level at the Sharif University of Technology. They were participating in a General English course which offered them three hours of instruction per week.

3.2 Instruments and Materials
In this study, two instruments were used. With regard to the first one, (i.e., the pretest), the learners were requested to write an essay on a topic entitled ‘some people say that physical exercise should be a required part of every school day. Other people believe that students should spend the whole school day on academic studies. Which opinion do you agree with? Give reasons to support your answer’. The purpose of administering the pretest was to investigate if the learners had knowledge regarding the correct application of DMs in their writing.
The second instrument, the posttest, was a writing task entitled ‘if you could invent something new, what product would you develop? Use specific details to explain why this invention is needed’. The second instrument was administered at the end of four week instruction on the correct application of DMs in essay writing. It aimed to find if DMs instruction had any impact on the performances of participants in the posttest of writing.

In this study, a handout of writing which was the basis for DMs instruction to the learners during the treatment phase was employed. It included instruction on different categories of Fraser’s classification of DMs along with a number of essay samples. In the instruction phase, the participants were required to write two essays entitled ‘Do you agree books are not needed any more because people can read information on computers?’ and ‘Many students choose to attend schools or universities outside their home countries. Why do some students study abroad? Use specific reasons and details to explain your answers’. Additionally, they were given a number of cloze tests and were asked to supply the DMs. One sample of cloze test used in the instruction phase is presented in the appendix B. The purpose of these activities was to help learners generate essays using DMs appropriately.

3.3 Procedure

At the beginning of the study, a pretest of writing was administered. The participants, then, received a four week instruction regarding the different categories of DMs. Additionally, they were given a number of writing tasks in which they were required to use DMs properly. Finally, in order to investigate the impact of DMs instruction on learners’ writing skill, they were given a posttest of writing. It is important to note that two raters marked and counted the correct application of DMs based on Fraser’s (2006) classification of DMs.

3.4 Data Analysis

A paired samples t test was used to compare the pretest posttest scores of the learners to investigate if training DMs leads to a better performance in the writing skill. To determine which category of DMs was used more frequently by learners, the descriptive statistics of the categories of DMs were calculated. Paired samples t test and Wilcoxon Signed Rank tests were used to investigate whether any significant difference exists in the learners’ writing performance with regard to the use of different categories of DMs.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Comparing Pre and Posttests of Participants’ Writing Scores

Before investigating whether DMs training leads to a better performance in the writing skill,
normality tests of pretest and posttest of writing were calculated. Table 2 shows the results of the tests.

### Table 2 Tests of Normality of Pretest and Posttest of Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov</th>
<th></th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>.103</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>.200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test of Kolmogorov-Smirnov was used to assess the normality of the distribution of pretest and posttest scores. As appeared in Table 2, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic for both pre and posttests was not significant ($p > .05$), suggesting that the distribution of scores in the pretest and posttest was normal. Therefore, to compare learners’ performance on the pre and posttests of writing, a paired samples t-test was used. Table 3 shows the learners’ scores on the pre and posttests of writing ability.

### Table 3 Paired Samples t test Comparing Students’ Pre and Post Test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>8.03</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>.712</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>12.23</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>.724</td>
<td>-5.671, -2.716</td>
<td>-5.796</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 3 demonstrates, the mean in the posttest was greater than that of pretest. It can be claimed that there was an improvement in the learners’ writing performance from pretest to posttest ($M_{pre} = 8.03$, $M_{post} = 12.23$). However, the scores were more heterogeneous in the posttest ($SD_{pre} = 3.96$, $SD_{post} = 4.03$). This implies that the DMs instruction did not have a similar impact on learners.

The results of $t$ test showed a significant difference in participants’ pretest and posttest of writing scores with regard to the use of DMs, $t(30) = 5.79$, $p = .000$. The eta squared statistic (.53) indicated a large effect size. This implies that DMs instruction was effective in helping the language learners perform better in writing. This finding is in line with studies of Simin and Tavangar (2009) and Tavakoli and Amirian (2012) in which they found that those who received instruction on MDs performed better on essay writing test.

### 4.2 Learners’ Use of Fraser’s (2006) Categories of DMs
Before investigating whether there was any statistically significant difference in the use of the categories of Fraser's (2006) classification of DMs, normality tests for the categories in pre and posttests were assessed. Table 4 presents the results of the tests.

**Table 4 Normality Tests of the Categories of Discourse Markers in Pre and Posttests of Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrastive</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>.177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaborative</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>.195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>.146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferential</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>.165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>.322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>.223</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test of Kolmogorov-Smirnov was used to assess the normality of the distribution of the categories of discourse markers in pre and posttests of writing. As can be seen in Table 4, Contrastive, Inferential, and Temporal categories showed the violation of the assumption of normality (p< .05). However, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistic for Elaborative markers was not significant (p>0.05). Therefore, the distribution of discourse markers was normal in this category.

**Table 5 Paired Samples t test Comparing Learners’ Use of Categories of Elaborative Markers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>Lower</th>
<th>Upper</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tests</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaborative Markers</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>.390</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>4.97</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-2.664</td>
<td>-.498</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As demonstrated in Table 5, the mean in the posttest was greater than that of pretest; therefore, it can be argued that there is a significant difference in the use of Elaborative markers, \( t(30) = -2.981, p = .006 \), in the pre and posttests of writing. The eta squared statistic (.23) indicated a large effect size.

### Table 6  Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test Comparing Learners’ Use of Contrastive, Inferential, and Temporal Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Markers</th>
<th>Tests</th>
<th>( N )</th>
<th>25(^{th} )</th>
<th>50(^{th} )</th>
<th>75(^{th} )</th>
<th>( z )</th>
<th>( p )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contrastive</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>-1.908</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inferential</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>-2.588</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporal</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-2.692</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 6, Inferential markers received the highest median both in pre and posttests \((Md_{pre} = 2.00, Md_{post} = 3.00)\) while the lowest median belonged to Temporal markers both in pre and posttests \((Md_{pre} = 0.00, M_{post} = 1.00)\). As Table 4 shows, the categories can be hierarchically ranked as Inferential, Temporal, and Contrastive markers.

A Wilcoxon Signed Rank test did not show a statistically significant increase in the use of Contrastive markers after receiving instruction, \( z = -1.908, p = .056 \). The median score increased from pretest \((Md = 1)\) to posttest \((Md = 2)\). However, for the use of Inferential markers, a Wilcoxon Signed Rank test demonstrated a statistically significant increase after receiving instruction, \( z = -2.588, p = .010 \), with a medium effect size \((r = .33)\). The median score increased from pretest \((Md = 2)\) to posttest \((Md = 3)\). Similarly, a Wilcoxon Signed Rank test revealed a statistically significant increase in the use of Temporal markers after receiving instruction, \( z = -2.692, p = .007 \), with a medium effect size \((r = .34)\). The median score increased from pretest \((Md = 0)\) to posttest \((Md = 1)\). It can be claimed that there was something causing statistical variation in the use of DMs. This could be the teacher’s treatment in the form of DMs instruction. In other words, the results imply that the DM instruction has been effective in helping the language learners perform better in the application of the Elaborative, Inferential, and Temporal markers in their essays. The findings of this study is to some extent in line with those of Martinez (2004) as the students used some types of DMs more frequently than the others; Elaborative markers were the most frequently used and Contrastive markers were the second most frequent markers.
5. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of DMs training on the L2 learners’ writing ability. To this end, 31 undergraduate EFL learners received a four week instruction concerning the Fraser’s (2006) classification of DMs. The results of this study showed a significant difference in participants’ writing scores. That is, the learners performed better in posttest of writing than that of pretest. The findings of this study revealed that the DMs instruction was effective in helping the language learners perform better in essay writing. Additionally, DMs instruction has been effective in helping the language learners perform better in the application of the Elaborative, Inferential, and Temporal markers in their essays.

One of the limitations of this study was the relatively small number of participants which was due to the problem of availability of learners. The representativeness of the participants, therefore, should be considered cautiously. Additionally, the participants of this study were not randomly selected. In fact, the research was conducted following Intact Group design. Therefore, the results of this study should be generalized with caution.

This study may be helpful to teacher trainers to inform perspective teachers about how important role DMs play in understanding texts by L2 learners. English instructors can also familiarize students with the different functions and classifications of DMs in written and spoken discourse. Additionally, materials designers can develop textbooks in a way that students are provided with enough information about different types of DMs and their functions in a text.

This study was carried out based on Fraser’s (2006) classification of DMs. It would be valuable to conduct more studies investigating the effects of instruction of other classifications of DMs, (i.e., those proposed by Fortuno (2006), Halliday and Hasan (1976), and Hyland (2000)) on writing performance of L2 learners. Furthermore, the main focus of this study was on essay writing. Other studies can investigate the impact of different DMs on other text types. Still, another area awaiting further research is to investigate the relationship between proficiency level and DMs instruction. That is, whether DMs training affects high-achievers and low-achievers differently or both groups make similar improvement in this respect.

References


**Appendix A**

The Participants’ Use of DMs in Pre and Posttest of Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Also-so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>However (2)- but (2)- as-so (2)- and- nowadays – when</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Although- but-and(2)- also (2)- as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>For example (2)- although (2)- then- but-therefore- in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>addition to- in conclusion- otherwise- -and (3)- because- when (2)-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>And- such as- in addition- so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Such as- in addition to- first- furthermore(2)- and (4)- due to- but (2)- however- then- whether...or - so-now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>But- first of all- since- also (2) - so- as- nowadays- and (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Since (3)- hence- firstly- as a result- next- in fact- finally- last but not least - and- despite- in other words- moreover- in addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>But (2)- such as- on the other hand- and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Because- however- accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>because of-bu-tsuch as- because- in addition- therefore- first- and-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondly- also (2)- now- therefore (3)- hence (2)- additionally- for example(2)- furthermore- in conclusion- so that- because (2)- because of- especially-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>also- at first- because of(2)- because- so(3)-and(5)- as – as well-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Because(3)-but(2)-as(2)- finally- and(4)-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>in addition - in order to- so- finally- as- but- in conclusion- because- not only/but also- and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In order to- for example- and- at first - on the other hand- in conclusion - thus- therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>But(2)- and(3)- not only/but also- also(3)-in conclusion - too(2) –so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whether...or first- also(2)- in order to- next- at last- in conclusion- because-today- nowadays - and (3)- therefore (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>So(4)- for this reason- for example- because- in other words- and(2)-but- in conclusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for this reason- but(3)- due to- so (4) - for example- in conclusion- because - and (2)- because- in order to- furthermore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>And(2)- such as(2)- because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In order to- because-besides- because of-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>first-for example – but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In order to- - at first- in other words - on the other hand- in conclusion- though- so-first-these days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>But(2)- and- so(4)- in other words- also- therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>while (2)- firstly- secondly- additionally- in conclusion-and-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Because- first of all- also(3)- and(3)- but- because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And (2)-especially (2)- also- in conclusion- rather</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td><strong>Because-and (2)- such as(2)- so(2)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td><strong>So- unlike- but- and -because- in addition to-furthermore</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td><strong>Because- but(3)- and(4)- in addition - also</strong> and (5)- also- but(2)- furthermore- today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td><strong>Such as- due to(2)- but(3)-because- in addition to- and (2) – also</strong> Furthermore- because of- also- in addition(2)- for example- because(2)- in other words- due to- for this reason(2)- finally- in conclusion- and(5)- therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td><strong>In addition- so(4)-first of all- also (3)- then- therefore</strong> Such as- and- also(2)- in comparison with-in addition(2)- but- for example- in conclusion- nowadays(2)- so (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td><strong>too(2)- for example (2)- thus- but(3)- and (3)- also- because of- at last-</strong> for example- -but(3)- also- in addition- since- additionally- because- too- and(4)- in conclusion- because- furthermore (2)- in the end</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td><strong>But-besides-because of-and (2) -as-so(2)</strong> but-first of all- so (3)- after that-in comparison to- or- and(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td><strong>After that- because (2)- and(2)</strong> Also- for example- in addition- and(2)- finally- so(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td><strong>But - also-moreover - and (2)- so</strong> Moreover (2)- since- otherwise- also- while(2)- not only/but also- in addition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td><strong>But (2) -for example - because(2)- and(2)- now- also-</strong> but(2)- in other words- also(3)- because (3)- so (2)- in addition to- besides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td><strong>Instead of- however- now-or</strong> But-in addition- while- to sum up- and (2)- on top of that- not only/but also</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td><strong>So (2)- nowadays- but (2)- also</strong> Nonetheless-in order to- because- and (2)- because of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td><strong>For example- and(5)- also- on the other hand- so</strong> as(2)- first of all- and- also- for example- so(5)- or (2)- because- but (2)- in order to- in conclusion- too</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B
Sample Writing Task
Complete the paragraph, using the words listed. Use each word only once. (Carroll Washington Pollock, 1997)

as a result Consequently Therefore nevertheless Still

Besides Furthermore Moreover however Then

At the beginning of the quarter, the students in the section 3 of nine-O’clock grammar class were miserable. They could not enjoy a cup of coffee during the break; …….. , they asked the instructor if she would think of a way to solve this serious problem. She told them she would buy a large coffee pot if everyone gave her two dollars. ………, she told them she would buy coffee, sugar, and cream if everyone gave her seventy-five cents a week. The instructor, ………, didn’t collect the money for many days; ………, the students became more miserable. ………, they couldn’t stay awake during the second hour of her class. One student from Saudi Arabia was especially thirsty for a good cup of coffee. ………, every day for the next two weeks he reminded the teacher to get the money from the students. Finally he decided to collect the money himself. He collected two dollars and seventy-five cents from everyone in the class. ………, he gave the money to the teacher. Now everyone is happy. The teacher,………, is worried about the mess in her office every day after the students get their coffee. ………, she is happy, too, because the students are satisfied; ………, they will be awake for her class.
Title

Disposition in Teacher Education: A Case of Iranian EFL Teachers in Pre-service Training Programs

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Abstract

Teachers need to have an understanding of the social, cultural, moral, ethical, and pedagogical issues of education and practice teaching in real situations. The teachers need to have knowledge, dispositions, and performances to support the learners with the needed skills and competences. This study was taken under the form of survey research that yielded descriptive information about English teachers' dispositions. A questionnaire of 37 items consisting of INTASC model standards for beginning teachers was administered to 147 teachers, consisting of 70 pre-service teachers, 37 beginner teachers, and 40 experienced teachers in one session that lasted an hour. The participants self-evaluated themselves by stating their ideas in a five-level Likert scale. Statistical analysis revealed that the mean of English teachers' disposition scores was 3.68 out of 5. It demonstrated that pre-service English teacher training programs in Iran train disposed teachers. In order to improve the quality of pre-service English teacher training programs, the existing strong and weak points were analyzed by reviewing the related INTASC model principles and at the end, suggestions were presented correspondingly.

Keywords: Iran, pre-service programs, Teacher training, Dispositions, English teachers, INTASC model standards
1. Introduction

Dispositions are defined as the "values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviours toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation and development as well as the educator’s own professional growth." (Bunch, 2006, p. 5) Teachers need to have subject knowledge, knowledge of pedagogy, the skills and competences needed to support learners, and an understanding of the social and cultural dimension of education (Donaldson, 2012). We need to help our students with developing the appropriate skills, knowledge, attitudes, and perspectives to live in this globalized world successfully.

1.1. Teacher Preparation

Dörnyei (2000, as cited in Tercanlioglu, 2001) suggests that teaching has always been associated with an internal desire to educate people, to impart knowledge and values, and to advance a community or a whole nation. Pre-service teachers should be able to see the various components of a teacher education program as parts of a whole instead of unrelated or isolated pieces. According to Dahlman (2004), teacher education courses should include activities that promote the ability to analyze by having pre-service teachers consider how different issues relate to their own teaching context. Cole and Knowles (1996) propose a model for pre-service teacher education in which pre-service teachers explore questions that are fundamental to the development of reflexive teachers. Norton (2004) also discusses that learners, teachers, student teachers, and teacher educators are part of wider socio-cultural communities in which there is unequal access to power, so proposes a model of language teacher education as critical practice. Norton suggests that student teachers should learn in language education programs to ask not only the questions of "What do I teach?" and "How do I teach it?" but also the questions of "Why do we teach what we teach?" and "Why do we teach the way we teach?"

According to Kramsch and Ware (2004), the purpose for teaching foreign languages is to help students learn other ways of making meaning in the world. So language teachers should be trained to be able to act as a cross-cultural mediator to mediate between different languages, cultures, generations, and ethnicities, go beyond linguistic form, and discuss all sorts of grammatical, semantic, social, cultural, political, and ideological meanings through language as discourse.
1.2. Teacher's Dispositions

Teachers' dispositions are as crucial as teachers' pedagogical and content knowledge for students' achievements (Singh & Stoloff, 2008). Katz (1993, as cited in Schulte, Edick, Edwards, & Mackiel, 2004) defines disposition as a pattern of behaviour exhibited frequently and in the absence of coercion, and constituting a habit of mind under some conscious and voluntary control, and that is intentional and oriented to broad goals.

There is a significant body of research indicating that teacher's disposition is a crucial factor which influences the student's learning, achievement, and development (Collinson, Killeavy, & Stephenson, 1999, as cited in Schulte, Edick, Edwards, & Mackiel, 2004; Singh & Stoloff, 2008). Several key dispositions of professional educators include a caring attitude, sensitivity to student differences, democratic values, and commitment to teaching (Schulte, Schulte, Edick, Edwards, & Mackiel, 2004). According to the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (2002, as cited in Schulte, Edick, Edwards, & Mackiel, 2004), teacher candidates should be able to work with students, families, and communities to reflect the dispositions of professional educators as delineated in professional, state, and institutional standards. Schulte, et al. (2004) developed and validated a quantitative instrument: Teacher Dispositions Index (TDI) that measures the dispositions of effective teachers. They maintain that TDI is a reliable and valid instrument for measuring the dispositions of effective teachers and offers the opportunity for early self-assessment to help teacher candidates develop their dispositions.

Raths (2006) states that a concentrated effort to reform teacher education was undertaken by Linda Darling-Hammond under the flag of INTASC principles which included the notion disposition rather than getting a license simply because of a good academic grade average. According to INTASC standards (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1987, as cited in Roth & Swail, 2000), teachers' dispositions mean:

- The teacher has enthusiasm for the discipline that is teaching and sees connections to everyday life and engages in professional discourse about subject matter knowledge.
- The teacher appreciates diverse talents of all learners, and is committed to help them develop self-confidence and competence.
- The teacher values human diversity, shows respect for students' varied talents and perspectives, helps them learn to value each other, and persists in helping all children achieve success.
The teacher understands how participation supports commitment, and recognizes the importance of peer relationships and intrinsic motivation in growth and learning.

The teacher recognizes the power of language and communication for fostering self-expression, identity development, and learning.

The teacher believes that plans must always be open to adjustment and revision based on student needs.

The teacher values ongoing assessment as essential to the instructional process and necessary for monitoring and promoting student learning.

The teacher values critical thinking and self-directed learning and is committed to reflection, assessment, and supporting appropriate professional practices for self and colleagues.

The teacher is willing to consult with other adults and professionals to improve the overall learning environment for students.

Hawkins (2004) explains that the field of teacher education experiences a huge shift from a technical endeavour (needing to acquire specific skills and practices) to viewing teaching as a cognitive process, with a focus on shaping teachers’ thinking and now shifting to critical teacher education, a view of teachers as transformative agents who engage in thoughtful, and reflective critical practices. The reflective teachers are professionals who reflect on their teaching and analyze its effects and have the following qualities:

- engaged in the process of learning;
- decision makers; and
- their thoughts, knowledge, judgments, and decisions have a profound effect on their teaching and on their students’ achievement (Al-Weher & Abu-Jaber, 2007).

According to Bercaw and Stooksberry (2004), the goal of a critical pedagogy is preparing citizens for participation in a democratic society and teacher education programs can implement the INTASC principles in light of social change where the critical reflection of oneself and one’s society and the action upon and within social injustices are incorporated in the programs.

To develop authentic reflection on practice which leads to improvement in that practice, pre-service teacher needs to be pragmatic and eclectic in terms of classroom practice and comfortable with a social professional self that is complicated and inconsistent. According to Moore (2007), the reflexive and self-critical approach includes putting teachers
more in touch with their feelings which broadens their perspectives; Self-understanding makes better and happier teachers who are more fulfilled in the work that they do. Kabilan (2000) states that teachers need viewing their learners differently from what they had presumed and adopt a more flexible attitude towards their teaching to facilitate and encourage creative and critical thinking skills; Teachers' views of themselves also need to be changed.

"When program expectations focus primarily on knowledge and skill acquisition, important dispositions are often ignored"(Ros-Voseles & Haughey, 2007, p.3). This study takes account of trainee teachers' dispositions to integrate different views in teacher education as a technical, professional, cognitive, empirical, socio-cultural, analytical, reflective, and critical process. This study hopes to be able to show the existing strong and weak points in Iran’s English teacher preparatory programs to improve the quality of pre-service English teacher programs in Iran. By improving the quality of pre-service English teacher programs in Iran, the quality of teaching English will be improved and more competent and effective English teachers will be prepared; Consequently the teachers can teach the students English more confidently and successfully and the students will use English more communicatively and effectively.

1.3. Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study poses some questions about the beginner teachers' dispositions.

Question 1: Do English teacher training colleges in Iran train skilful teachers?
Question 2: Do English teacher training colleges in Iran train critical teachers?
Question 3: Do English teacher training colleges in Iran train disposed teachers?

To answer the stated questions in the study, the following research hypothesis was formulated and tested:

Hypothesis 0: English teacher training colleges in Iran do not train disposed teachers.

2. Literature Review

Aleotti (1991) discusses Brazilian teacher education and concluded that problems can be solved in association with other professional, academic, and social problems; economic conditions are the source of most obstacles to change and quality is the key to making the issues effective. Ekmekci (1992) discusses the teacher training program in English language teaching department at Çukurova University in Turkey and believes that not enough emphasis is put on the methodological aspect of language teaching and students are confronted with some problems during the practice sessions.
The teacher training program in India suffers from poor quality standards, weak accreditation and monitoring, and official focus on inputs rather than on results. Shortage of resources; limited exposure to modern teaching, learning methods and materials; isolation and outdated pedagogy without connections to the international community of teacher educators and education researchers; and poor responsiveness to demand for teachers also exist as widespread problems in India's teacher training programs (World Bank, Human Development Unit South Asia Region, 2009).

Coskun and Daloglu (2010) pay attention to the importance of program evaluation for teacher education programs and reveal the strengths and weaknesses of pre-service English teacher education program in a Turkish university by using Peacock’s (2009) evaluation model. The most common strength of the program is that the program provides student teachers with effective theoretical background in ELT. Another strength of the program is that the students and teachers are allowed to decide on the content of some courses. The weaknesses are: (a) lack of practice opportunities, (b) overuse of presentations as a teaching technique, and (c) lack of assessment of instructor by student teachers.

Sarwar and Hussain (2010) discuss the problems and solutions for Pakistan’s student teaching preparatory programs. They acknowledge that Pakistani teacher education institutions prepare teachers without considering the needs of the schools; the trainee-teachers are weak in discipline, lesson planning, classroom management, and content knowledge. They believe that the problems must be handled by more rigorous training in the weak areas.

Shulman (1987, as cited in Borowski, et al., 2012) categorizes teachers’ knowledge into seven categories of content knowledge; curricular knowledge; pedagogical content knowledge; general pedagogical knowledge; knowledge of learners and their characteristics; knowledge of educational contexts; and knowledge of educational ends, purposes and values. Many researchers believe that pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is an important topic in science education. To consolidate different point of views on PCK in the natural sciences, Borowski, et al. select several researchers who use qualitative and quantitative methods to connect biology, chemistry, and physics PCK research. For example, a large-scale paper-and-pencil model for measuring Physics PCK has been developed that shows the expected results: teachers who did not study or teach physics got poor results. Physics Gymnasium (GY) teachers were shown to have a significantly higher PCK than teachers teaching at lower level school tracks. The existence of different PCK models has resulted in different tools developed and used to measure teachers’ professional knowledge as well as focusing on the relationship between teachers’ PCK and their other knowledge bases or the relationship.
between teachers’ PCK and student achievement. The hope is to create stronger synergy in research definitions, tools, methods, and assumptions to improve teacher knowledge and practice.

Adediwura and Tayo (2007) investigate the effect of students’ perception of teachers’ knowledge of subject matter, attitude to work and teaching skills on students’ academic performance. A questionnaire with four sections was developed and administered on 1600 students from 15 secondary schools in the South West Nigeria. The results show that students’ perception of teachers’ knowledge of subject matter, attitude to work and teaching skills has a significant relationship on students’ academic performance.

Wilkerson and Lang (2008) use disposition indicators of the INTASC principles to assess teacher dispositions. The process used to develop the instruments was the five-step design model that was called: "Dispositions Assessments Aligned with Teacher Standards" or DAATS. A self-report 50-item form aligned with each of the INTASC Principles has been field tested at four different institutions with about 2000 examinees. This self-report requires the teacher to respond to eight questions aligned with various INTASC principles and is designed to elicit specific instances of behaviour that reflect the targeted principles. This form provides a record of the teacher’s demonstration of a negative disposition, sometimes correlated with the code of ethics, sometimes with a lack of valuing of skill-based attitudes. Institutions can discover that there are areas of the curriculum (e.g., parental involvement) that candidates are not convinced of the necessity or value and can redesign their programs to help candidates learn to value such dispositions. The large number of participants is really helpful to provide useful results; but, unfortunately the results are not presented in detail statistically.

Guyton (1991) compares teaching attitudes, teacher efficacy, and teacher performance of first year teachers prepared by alternative and traditional teacher education programs. The findings from this study of Georgia teachers state that condensed pedagogical preparation and a supervised internship are a reasonable alternative to traditional teacher preparation programs for persons with degrees in the subject they will teach.

Oh, Kim, and Leyva (2004) use five efficacy measures through data reduction of 25 question items and teachers’ background variables to explore eighty-seven inner city teachers’ sense of efficacy and their attitudes towards students of Latino, language minority, and low socioeconomic status backgrounds in three low performing schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District. The efficacy measures include: instructional practice, expectations, confidence level, external factors, and efficacy. The results show high
confidence level in instructional practices but low expectations of student achievement. Teachers’ level of confidence is significantly correlated with expectations and instructional practices. Data analysis shows the main source of high confidence for teachers is their positive previous teaching experiences. The results indicate that teachers view other teachers as having lower expectations of their students than themselves and students other than their own would exhibit lower academic achievement. Teachers with a master degree tend to show higher means in all efficacy measures than those with a bachelors degree. In order to improve schools, teachers’ low sense of efficacy in low performing schools should be seriously reconsidered.

Too few research studies have been conducted to measure teacher's knowledge and dispositions, especially in the field of English. According to Grossman and Shulman (2002), much of the research in teachers' knowledge has concentrated on the areas of science and math, perhaps because of the nature of knowledge in English which cannot be easily unpacked. The published literature on the quality of pre-service teacher education is also sparse. According to Grossman (2002), few studies have investigated teacher education within the field of English systematically. Studies on the preparation of English teachers also have mostly focused on teachers' knowledge of English and on how to teach English rather than on whole teachers' knowledge or teachers' dispositions, so this study investigates English teachers' dispositions.

3. Methodology

3.1. Overview
This study was taken under the form of survey research that yields descriptive information about English teachers' dispositions. First the participants, the materials, and the procedure were explained. At the end, the data were analyzed.

3.2. Participants
The participants in this study were 70 undergraduates in the fourth year of English teaching and 77 English teachers. To homogenize the subjects, the teachers whose major was bachelor degree in ELT were chosen to complete the questionnaire. The student participants in this study were men and women who sampled randomly from south and north branches of Islamic Azad universities in Tehran. The teacher participants were men and women who were sampled non-randomly from Qarchak (a city near Tehran, the capital of Iran) and district 14 in Tehran, based on their availability to the researcher and had (5-17) years of experience in
teaching English. The teachers were divided into two groups of beginner and experienced teachers based on their years of experience: Among the 77 teachers, 37 teachers had (5-7) years of experience in teaching English and 40 teachers had (11-17) years of experience in teaching English. Forty- two teachers were teaching in middle schools and 35 teachers were teaching in high schools.

3.3 Materials

The instrument used in data collection procedure was a questionnaire consisting of INTASC model standards for beginning teachers. The INTASC model, according to Roth and Swail (2000) consists of ten principles and each principle takes account of trainee teachers' knowledge, dispositions and performances with the aim of rethinking teacher licensing and assessment. Schulte (2008) developed a follow-up survey for teacher preparation programs in a doctoral applied statistics course, using the INTASC principles as the framework, provided evidence of content validity. Reflecting upon the reliability estimates, the students said the coefficients indicated that respondents were very consistent in their responses to items measuring each construct, so there is no problem considering the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

The principles were omitted and disposition components of all principles were gathered in a questionnaire consisted of 37 items in a five level Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. For being more familiar with the appearance of INTASC model, the first principle and its component of dispositions are presented below.

Principle #1: The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students.

Dispositions

1. The teacher realizes that subject matter knowledge is not a fixed body of facts but is complex and ever-evolving. S/he seeks to keep abreast of new ideas and understandings in the field.
2. The teacher appreciates multiple perspectives and conveys to learners how knowledge is developed from the vantage point of the knower.
3. The teacher has enthusiasm for the discipline(s) s/he teaches and sees connections to everyday life.
4. The teacher is committed to continuous learning and engages in professional discourse about subject matter knowledge and children's learning of the discipline.

(Council of Chief State School Officers, 1987, as cited in Roth & Swail, 2000, p .39)
3.4. Procedure
The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire in a session which lasted an hour. The researcher submitted the questionnaire and explained that it was related to her MA thesis. The subjects asked some questions about the meanings of some sentences of the questionnaire during the administration. Two student participants didn't accept to answer because they were in a hurry. The questionnaire was administered to the student participants in three classes before their final exam. Two classes were held in south branch of Tehran Islamic Azad university and one class was held in north branch of Tehran Islamic Azad university. The teacher participants were asked to complete the questionnaire in middle and high school English teachers' in-service classes in Qarchak and district 14 in Tehran.

4. Findings
Once the data were collected, it was statistically analyzed. The student teachers', less experienced, and experienced teachers' responses to dispositions questionnaire ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree which were scored from 1 to 5. The responses of each group of participants to the questionnaire and the responses of all participants to the questionnaire were tallied up. Then the frequency of each group of participants' responses and the frequency of all participants' responses were calculated.

4.1. Descriptive Statistics
The mean of Iranian English teachers' score of disposition (as an indicator of central tendency), SD, and SE (as an indicator of the dispersion of the set of scores) were calculated for the purpose of the description of the data characteristics.

According to the Table 1, the mean of English teachers' disposition score is 3.68, its Standard Deviation is .17, its Standard Error is .028; its minimum score is 3.33 and its maximum score is 4.00.

4.2. Normality Tests
As the descriptive statistics of English teachers’ disposition scores are frequencies, the two-way chi-square analysis is needed to test the normality of the frequencies by comparing the observed frequencies with the expected or theoretical frequencies.

According to the Table 2, the disposition chi-square is 718.76 and Yates’ Chi-square is 712.30; the disposition chi-square is more than Yates’ Chi-square where the degree of
freedom is 8 and $P$-value is 0. It means that the observed statistic is greater than the critical statistic. So the observed disposition frequencies deviate sufficiently from what would be expected by chance alone and is statistically significant at the probability level of $(P=0)$.

4.3. Testing the Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 0

English teacher training colleges in Iran do not train disposed teachers. According to the Table 4.2, the mean of English teachers' disposition score is 3.68 that is also shown in Figure 4.1. According to the Table 4.6, the disposition chi-square is more than Yates’ Chi-square ($df=8, P=0$). It means that the observed statistic is greater than the critical statistic. So, there is 100% probability that the observed disposition frequencies were due to factors other than chance. Consequently, the second null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, English teacher training colleges in Iran train disposed teachers.

4.4. Comparing Three Groups of Participants' Dispositions

Here the participants' dispositions are analyzed one by one.

Figure 1 displays the results obtained from the participants' dispositions questionnaire. Figure 1 shows the frequency of each group of participants' responses to disposition questionnaire in five levels of Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (1-5). In each level, the bars are related to student teachers, less- experienced, and experienced teachers' responses from left to right in turn.

According to the figure 1, the experienced teachers have disagreed and disagreed strongly with beginning teachers' INTASC model dispositions standards less than the other two groups. The less experienced teachers have agreed strongly less than two other groups. "Neither agree nor disagree" level is ignored. In other levels of the Likert scale, the participants have self-evaluated themselves almost like the other groups.

4.5. Analysing the Participants' Responses to Dispositions Questionnaires

The participants' responses to disposition questionnaire are analyzed separately. Disposition questionnaire consists of 37 items. The statistics related to the responses to each item of disposition questionnaire are presented in Table 3.

According to Table 3, the highest means of the participants' responses to disposition questionnaire are 4.00 and 3.99. They are related to standards 5 and 9. Each one is analyzed one by one:

Table 4 and Table 5 show the statistics related to item 5 and 9. The frequency and percentage of responses to these items are presented in five levels of Likert scale. [Table 4 near here]
According to Table 4, all of 147 participants have answered this item. The mean of the participants' responses to this item is 4 out of 5 which is very high. The standard error of mean is .05. The standard deviation is .68 and its variance is .46. The frequency of the most chosen answer is 96. In other words, 65.3% of the participants have agreed with standard 5: The teacher appreciates individual variation within each area of development, shows respect for the diverse talents of all learners, and is committed to help them develop self-confidence and competence.

According to Table 5, all of 147 participants have answered this item. The mean of the participants' responses to this item is 3.99 out of 5. The standard error of mean is .07. The standard deviation is .91 and its variance is .82. Among the participants, 81 persons have chosen the "agree" level. In other words, 55.1% of the participants have agreed with standard 9: The teacher respects students as individuals with differing personal and family backgrounds and various skills, talents, and interests.

Standard 5 which encompass the highest mean of the participants' responses to disposition questionnaire is related to principle 2 of INTASC Model principles: The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social, and personal development. Standard 9, which has the next highest mean of the participants' responses, is related to principle 3 of INTASC Model principles: The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners. It means that these principles are among the participants' strong points.

According to Table 3, the lowest means of the participants' responses to disposition questionnaire are 3.33, 3.34, and 3.39. They are related to standards 28, 29, and 1. The following Tables show the statistics related to items 28, 29, and 1. The frequency and percentage of responses to five-levels Likert scale are also presented. Each one is analyzed one by one:

Table 6 displays that the mean of the participants' responses to this item is 3.33. The standard error of mean is .09. The standard deviation is 1.09 and its variance is 1.19. The frequency of the most chosen answer is 68. It means that 46.3% of the participants have agreed with standard 28: The teacher values critical thinking and self-directed learning as habits of mind.

According to Table 7, all of 147 participants have answered this item. The mean of the participants' responses to this item is 3.34. The standard error of mean is .09. The
standard deviation is 1.19 and its variance is 1.43. The frequency of the most chosen answer is 64. In other words, 43.5% of the participants have agreed with standard 29: The teacher is committed to reflection, assessment, and learning as an ongoing process.

According to Table 8, all of the participants have answered this item. The mean of the participants' responses to this item is 3.39. The standard error of mean is .08. The standard deviation is 1.06 and its variance is 1.14. The frequency of the most chosen answer is 80. It shows that 54.4% of the participants have agreed with standard 1: The teacher is committed to reflection, assessment, and learning as an ongoing process.

The difference between the highest and lowest means of the participants' responses is very little and most of the participants have agreed rather than disagreed with disposition standards. Nevertheless to find the participants' weak points, the INTASC Model principles that are related to the standards, which have gained the lowest means of the participants' responses to disposition questionnaire, should be reviewed. These standards are: 28, 29, and 1. Standards 28, 29 are subcategories of principle 9: The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professionals in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally. Standard 1 is a subcategory of principle 1: The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and can create learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful for students. Although the second hypothesis was rejected and it became clear that preservice English teacher training programs in Iran train disposed teachers, to train much more disposed teachers the above principles should be worked more seriously in the colleges.

5. Discussion

The mean of English teachers' disposition was 3.68 out of 5. The null hypothesis was rejected. So, English teacher training colleges in Iran train disposed teachers. Standards 5 and 9 encompassed the highest means of the participants' responses to disposition questionnaire. They were related to principles 2 and 3 of INTASC Model principles respectively. In other words, these principles are among the participants' strong disposition points. The mean of English teachers' disposition was high which in my opinion, it is concerned with the Islamic moral and ethical training. But, to find the participants' weak points, the INTASC Model principles related to the standards that had the lowest means were reviewed. These standards
were: 28, 29, and 1. They are indicators of principles 9 and 1. In principle 9, the teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on students, parents, and other professionals and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally. In principle 1, the teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of English. In order to value such dispositions, the above principles should be enhanced in the colleges. Stover and members of National Council of Teachers of English (2006) believe that the key to successful teaching is considering personality, personal engagement, and enthusiasm which are some components of teacher dispositions. According to Imig and Imig (2007), teacher education must focus on the moral and ethical issues. In order to bring about a reflective attitude toward teaching, teachers' dispositions must be promoted as well as gaining professional knowledge and expertise as Bates (2007) refers to cultural communication and democratic negotiation that should be improved by the teachers themselves. Accordingly, Greenwood and Brown (2007) express that the teachers should collaborate with the parents and communities and Thaman (2007) states that the students should have a right to learn about their own cultural knowledge and values systems. Al Issa (2009) shows that peer collaboration is very effective in helping the teachers to develop their skills of critical reflection to become efficient and informed agents of positive change.

6. Conclusion
It was demonstrated that the participants self-evaluated themselves positively and pre-service English teacher training colleges in Iran train disposed teachers. The related questions were also answered. Consequently, English teacher training colleges in Iran train skilful and critical teachers. Accepting that teaching is a profession, according to Newby (2007), raising standards of qualification within this profession should be considered. So in order to improve the teachers' dispositions, the INTASC model standards can be accounted for the pre-service ELT programs.

According to Loughran (2007), teachers' research including the teachers' perspective and drawn from teachers' experiences of their classrooms should be valued because of intertwining two worlds of theory and practice, both of which play important roles in better understanding the nature of teaching and learning, but are often viewed as separate and distinct rather than interdependent issues. Indeed, such studies are needed to evaluate the programs at least every two or three years to design the programs by making necessary changes or even to redesign them. Wilson, Floden, and Ferrini-Mundy (2001) also refer to
this kind of research as a key for policy makers to reform educational programs that will lead
to increases in teacher quality. Finally, there are strong potentials for educational reforms in
schools and universities in Iran. The authorities need to be engaged in "re-assessing what
happens in our schools, in examining what needs to change, and in finding effective ways to bring about that change"(Greenwood & Brown, 2007, p. 66). Stimulating thoughtful and purposeful change in education is not an easy task. According to Avendaño-García and Blunck (2004), involving teachers is essential to making substantial changes. Helping teachers develop and implement new ideas while respecting their individual needs and situations is a challenge for programs that provide professional development, therefore, support is needed from the moment of entry into training (and in some cases before) to retirement (Stephenson, 2000).

References


**Appendix A**

**Table 1** *Descriptive Statistics: Distribution of English Teachers’ Disposition Score*
### Table 2  Contingency Table for the Disposition Two-Way Chi-Square Analysis

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<td>disagree</td>
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<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>neither agree nor disagree</td>
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<td>195</td>
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<tr>
<td>agree</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>1127</td>
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Chi-square: 718.76  
Degree of freedom: 8  
$P$-value: 0  
Yates' Chi-square: 712.30  
Yates' $P$-value: 0

### Table 3  Descriptive Statistics of Disposition Questionnaire

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Answers to item 5

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Figure 1. The participants' dispositions frequencies
Title

Academic Discourse and Reading Strategies: A Contextual Study to Strategy Use

Author

Zahra Zargaran (M.A)
Jondi Shapour University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz, Iran

Biodata

Zahra Zargaran M.A in TEFL. She has taught at Islamic Azad University and Jondi Shapour University of Medical Sciences for several years. She is an IELTS instructor and has published some articles and participated as a presenter in several national/ international conferences. She is interested in research based on task-based instruction, second language acquisition, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and second language learning strategies.

Abstract

Learning Strategies and their application has been living with the ideal curriculum and language learning/ teaching programs for many years. Amongst all strategies established in language programs, reading strategies are of utmost attention in EFL situations. For this purpose, this article tries to make answers to points under the horizon in the realm of reading strategies and the discursive manipulation of texts. Therefore, this study purports to find convincing evidence whether discourse and reading strategies fight against power in reading comprehension. To this aim, around 40 medical students studying at Jondi Shapour University of Medical Sciences in Ahvaz, Iran were selected from an intact group of learners and went under the investigation. To find out the possible impact of discursive context on use of reading strategies, the participants read two different academic and general texts with the same level of difficulty and immediately filled in the reading strategies questionnaire after reading each text sequentially. A correlational study was tallied on the data collected out of the questionnaires and conclusively, interesting finding revealed that discourse and reading strategies are not correlated, in other words, reading strategies used for both texts were significantly similar. The result represents particularly the dominance of cognitive processing (reading strategies) over the text (discourse) that is individuals determine how to manipulate the text as input not the inherent criteria of the text.
Key words: Discourse, Strategic behaviour, Academic text, General text, Pharmacist students

1. Introduction

Browsing the related language learning journals, you will find a plethora of research conducted on learners’ strategic behaviors in ESL/EFL settings in reading comprehension area. To define strategic knowledge, enough to say that strategy is a conscious reaction to the times a gap is felt in doing a task when different capabilities are supposed to be at work normally; in other words, strategies are the knowledge in act whenever a conscious booster is required in order to recover the demand. In the same vein, users will be consciously aware of the required strategy, or procedural knowledge, to gain the goal; gradually, automatic strategy use in a completely known situation makes the related skill, then it can be said that contribution of strategies is namely automaticity of the learner in the similar or identical contexts of use (Macaro, 2009); in this case, Oxford (1989) considers strategies as operations necessary for acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information.

In the same vein, the factors that hugely affect learning strategies are under the shelter of context of use, individual differences, task demands, and learners’ belief/motivation (Yang, 1999) to achieve the success in strategy utilization. All the mentioned factors correspond with strategic awareness and strategic behaviour of language learners in distinct fashion.

Global spread of English as a Lingua Franka, especially in academic settings has changed some situations and has created several new ideas of how to treat academic English (Mauranen, Heyninen, and Ranta (2010). A bunch of research in the realm of ESL reading strategies (Dhieb-Henia, 2003; Askan, Kisac, 2009; Cotteral, Murray, 2009; Sheorey, Mohktari, 2001; Mohktari, Richard, 2004) is the evidence of the lack of investigation in EFL settings, though few studies are available (Ikeda, Takeuchi, 2006; Yang, 1999, and Malcom, 2009).

This study mainly centers on strategies used by Pharmacist students in EFL academic setting, Iran. In Iran, the utmost of English language learning academically is the professional pre-requisite of the future goal, the career, which commences from the first or second year at university that is fundamentally based on the students’ empowerment of reading comprehension and vocabulary learning known as general English. General English is introduced to learners through some books containing texts with general discourse, however, some university teachers prefer to involve students with texts of more semi-technical content.
to make them prepared for the semesters ahead when the technical English will be a part of students’ educational life. Juniors and sophomores benefit from specialized English, albeit, reading pure academic discourse remains an integral part of pharmacists during education and afterwards.

Consequently, general and academic courses would have distinctive discourse, either affecting students’ strategic behavior towards discursively different text types. The question is whether difference in discursive content implements change of strategy use; in other words, the types of strategies pharmacist students may use respected to the discourse of the text is under the horizon.

2. Review of Literature

Recent information revolving round learning strategies and reading comprehension is not rare; the rising bunch of research in this realm has created new debates on the connection existed between strategic reading and enhancement of comprehension either critically or textually, dependent on the task demand, and goal features of the reading task.

The core studies root from the fact that reading comprehension has founded itself a new generation of focus on learning, not only in language learning of ESL context but also it has painted a long lasting picture in EFL academic context. However, the shift of reading characteristics from introducing art and culture into a language learning device was a brilliant outcome of precise look into strategies that hinted access to the desired goal which was generally based on more comprehensive empowerment and evaluative assessment of the reading skill.

The most primary efforts in reading strategies investigation date back to the studies which centered their results on first language reading and its distinguishing points with second language strategies (Pritchard, 1990; Jiminez, Garcia, Pearson, 1996). Then, such studies were extended into distinction that culture yields out and the differentiations that native/non-native speakers grow in reading strategies usage (Sheroey, Mokhtari, 2001).

Amongst other factors influencing reading strategies usage and results are gender, reader characteristics (Ikeda, Takeuchi, 2006), and situational motivation (Huang, 2006; Bonney, etal, 2008); the latest effort in this area, reading strategies, has been devoted to context; the context in which learners try to make use of reading strategies, in both ESL and EFL settings. In many recent works, EFL setting has taken the floor since reading skill is assumed to distort readers from developing the capability of being able to read text in order to learn a language.
In other words, reading is for learning the subject particularly in EFL setting that academic environment says the first words in most occasions.

Reading strategies in academic setting has been the concern of many studies. As a result, in a recent study (Cogmen, Saracaloglu, 2009) the frequency of metacognitive reading strategies in two departments of an academic setting was investigated; in addition to the strategic frequency of use some other factors namely, analytic and pragmatic resources of reading strategies went under the question. Finding simply showed that academic students often use strategies to deal with academic reading texts.

In a study, Malcom (2009) investigated the strategic awareness of Arab students in EFL as well as academic (Medical) setting. According to the level of proficiency, she reported that whatever the proficiency level was, the students utilized a high range of strategies among which metacognitive ones were on the top. The result concluded that discipline familiarity is a factor to enhance metacognitive reading awareness regardless of proficiency level. However, the rank of strategies was still distinct related to language proficiency level.

Transferring and reconstruction of reading strategies from EGP context to EAP context has been investigated (Errey and Li, 2010) to find out the difference between taught reading strategies in EGP and EAP contexts. The results represented that in EGP reading strategies were the focus of the textual interaction between readers and the text, but in reverse, readers had to be inter-textually equipped to be able to interact comprehensively with the academic text. Although EAP students showed a rise in meta-cognitive strategies use but EAP teacher should be cautious about embedding strategy training into task-based performance and not over focusing on textual performance.

Ikeda and Takeuchi (2006) founded their study on portfolio to extract reading strategies used by students in EFL setting. Portfolios revealed that higher proficiency group reported on the deeper understanding of the purpose and the merit of each strategy use and the condition in which each strategy is used effectively; moreover, they knew how to combine the strategies to obtain the extra benefit of the strategies.

In line with the mention that has been made in above, the number of studies conducted on the role of academic setting in reading strategies usage is not scant. All investigations turned their focus on academic reading strategies, through either training or the assessment of the competent capability of readers to use the required strategies. Reading is multi-componential and multi-layered (Sheroey and mokhtari, 2008), thus, taking any aspect of it even in a single, limited area, there is still room for more research. On the other hand, strategies are context specific (Pintrich, 2000) and any factor other than context that can go under the impact of the
specificity of context should be taken into consideration in order to figure out a clear picture of the situation. All the above-mentioned studies, more or less, painted the same picture, without pointing directly to the main idea of how context and text are related discursively. Errey and Li (2010) made some moves towards the difference between EGP/EAP contexts of reading strategies use but it still lags behind the fact that how textual factors can make a distinction in reading strategies usage. The present study, though the complementary of the previous research, is prior in bringing discursive strength of the text neck to neck with the critical amalgamation of readers’ subject matter competence. To be more precise, Oxford (1989) cited in Sheroey and Mokhtari (2008) broached some involving characteristics of reader, task, and context as reading related variables.

It is argued that different text types demonstrate different reading strategies (Dhieb-Heina, 2003). In other words, any text type envisages distinct demands on the reader; hence the strategic behavior on the behalf of the reader will change in different context of reading. This assumption is not out of the center of the difference in subject matter texts (ESP/EAP) and General English. The present study will look into this case more profoundly.

3. Method
The center of the investigation revolved around whether reading strategies used by students were the same if they confronted different discursively managed contexts.

In this case, some questions were developed:
1. Are strategies in discourse, general and academic, correlated?
2. Do students use different strategies while reading texts with distinct discourse content?
3. Is discourse and reading strategies use correlated?

In order to obtain suitable, convincing answers the following methods were worked out.

1.3. Participants
Two core concepts discourse and reading strategies, particularly controlled the research, hence, making choice of proper students had to be done in a more serious fashion as the students’ major might have an important role in the investigation, even if this variable was carefully controlled.

A tacit group of around forty who were Medical students studying pharmacist at Jondi Shapour University of Medical Sciences, Iran participated in this study. The teacher was also the researcher, therefore, she was informative enough about the students’ level of proficiency
which was estimated at intermediate and furthermore, no student had troublesome extra language knowledge especially in reading comprehension. Past class quizzes and exams represented the same reading capability amongst learners. They were studying in the second semester taking general English course, but administratively and according to what the teacher proclaimed, the book selected was basically on academic texts that required medical discourse information; this was done to help students control the following specialized English course in coming semester. No strategies were taught and it was claimed that the investigation would be individualized and personal in essence to show the exact use of reading strategies via reading different discursive texts. To come up with such awareness some instruments were utilized.

2.3. Instrumentations

Learners were supposed to use their strategic knowledge in reading comprehension against two different texts. Thus, two texts were found with the same level of difficulty whose readability level was tallied on the basis of Flesch Reading Ease Formula. It was shown that the texts, albeit distinct in discourse, were on the same boat in readability, at intermediate level. A text was discursively general and another contained academic information in discourse.

The question of using strategies was answered through using reading strategies questionnaire which was assigned to students; in other words, each student had two texts, general and academic, and a strategy questionnaire was given to them at the same time. Each questionnaire had an answer sheet marked with the appropriate space to write answers about either text. The answers were based on Yes/ No Reply and corresponded with the plausibility of strategy use in each distinct text. The questionnaire was taken from Phakiti (2003) with the reliability of 0.89 that was estimated on basis of the participants taken part in this investigation. It consisted of 57 questions, regarding use of cognitive, meta-cognitive and socio-affective reading strategies.

It is argued that the line dividing quantitative and qualitative research into two poles is fuzzy (Brown and Rodgers, 2004) therefore; this study amalgamated both and added an interview in the end. Some students, five boys and five girls, were randomly selected and asked about the feelings and use of strategies while reading each text separately, hence, the results were more safely warranted.

3.3. Procedures

Whole parts of the investigation were conducted in a session. Students were told about the research at the extent not to produce the affective behavior on the part of students, Hallow
effect. Then each student, received two different texts, general and academic discursively, and a reading strategies questionnaire on which they had to make their answers based on Yes/No Reply whether each strategy was put into use in each reading text. To make it easier to conduct, the answer sheet to the reading strategies questionnaire was marked and labeled to guide the participants the parts they had to devise to each text and related strategies they made use of while reading each text.

To prevent student from confusion in reading and selecting related applied reading strategies they were confined with reading only one of the text at a time and taking control of required strategies. In the same vein, for every part there existed a time allocation during which students needed to read the passage and do the questionnaire. Completed the first text, the second one was distributed to the whole students in the same manner as was done with the past text. Consequently, no student was puzzled with the way and types of strategy they used for each different text.

Finally when all the students were finished in a limited, reliable time estimated and allocated to do the reading and questionnaire, ten out of forty students were randomly interviewed to maximize the reliability and validity of the results. To do so, five boys and five girls answered questions regarding their feelings (linguistic feelings) and respected strategies available to them while reading each text. Next section will supportively cope with what was resulted after conducting the research.

4. Result
The eminent purpose of the investigation was to find out any plausible relationship between meta-cognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective reading strategies utilized by Pharmacist students while reading two discursively distinct texts, general and academic. Therefore, the data were gathered through students’ reading of different discourses (general and academic) and assignment of a questionnai re on using required strategies for the texts. Then the data were analyzed through the correlation coefficient formula and the following results were obtained.

Table No. 1 correlation between three classes of strategies in reading different texts

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>0.601**</td>
<td>0.243</td>
<td>0.618**</td>
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<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>0.590**</td>
<td>0.667**</td>
<td>0.364*</td>
<td>0.664**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>0.480**</td>
<td>0.548**</td>
<td>0.522**</td>
<td>0.619**</td>
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<tr>
<td>TG</td>
<td>0.681**</td>
<td>0.708**</td>
<td>0.402*</td>
<td>0.733**</td>
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</table>
Table No.1 illustrates the correlational relationship between strategies utilized in general/academic texts and reading strategies. It is statistically envisaged from the data that all three classes of reading strategies (meta-cognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective) are correlated for both general and academic text types. Statistically speaking, the total score of meta-cognitive, cognitive, and socio-affective reading strategies that students applied for general texts quantitatively equal the number of strategies that students made benefit in order to comprehend an academic text. In other words, learners made equal benefit from reading strategies in order to ease the comprehension of both text types. This is shown by the highly correlated total scores in both discursive contexts, general and academic texts, which is 0.73 at the 0.01 level of significance. Thus, the answer to the first question, namely if reading strategies in general and academic are correlated is positive.

This presents no distinction in use of strategies in either of two reading discourses. Learners’ equal demonstration of strategic awareness in both texts supports the idea that discourse had no overestimated effect on Pharmacist students’ strategic behaviour.

To be statistically more precise, when the data were tallied, it was revealed that meta-cognitive strategies for general and academic reading texts are sufficiently correlated (0.64 at 0.01 level of significance) which is an absolute evidence to express no definite difference between students’ use of reading strategies for two general and academic texts with distinguishing meta-cognitive reading strategies.

Cognitive strategies are basically responsible for those strategic behaviours in tasks whose nature demands users’ cognition and mnemonic control. Interestingly, in this study, Pharmacist students took control of their cognitive strategic behaviour the same in both general and academic texts. Students all used cognitive strategies with correlation of 0.66 at 0.01 level of significant; hence no critical feature was contributed to any of reading texts that increased the demand of more cognitive processing. In other words, students were all aware of how to behave cognitively whenever confronting a general or an academic text.

Another statistical finding due to strategic awareness of students in this study was the third critical class of strategies largely defined as socio-affective strategies. There is a consensus that this class of strategies is complementary and critically necessary options to allow readers touch on the text the way they would feel and the way they expect writers to express the idea between the lines. Importance of socio-affective strategies among Pharmacist students, being investigated, was very clever as they used to take control of their complementary strategies with correlation of 0.52 at the 0.01 level of significance. The score devoted to this class of strategies was so sufficient to say that none of general and academic reading texts did deviate...
the students’ utilization of this kind of strategies at an absolute extreme. Precisely, there existed similarity between discourses in terms of socio-affective reading strategies use.

The dominancy of reading strategies in both text types lends support to the convincing result which is concluded as non-existence of domination over the strategies, especially meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies in reading neither general nor academic text types. Use of strategies was significantly at the same range that is students preferred to use similar rage of reading strategies in different text types.

The aforementioned data on the relationship between strategies in general and academic text types (0.73) corresponds with the fact that discourse and reading strategies are not correlated which means students used their required reading strategies regardless of the points related to the discourse, therefore, the reason behind variety of discourse and its impact on the selection and assignment of reading strategies should be found in other alternatives.

In order to reinforce the validity of the investigation, a structured interview was implemented with 10 students randomly. Student’s reports represented that academic reading text had less demand on their cognitive strategic capabilities. They hold that the most problematic part had been dealing with was new vocabulary and especially in general text. The argumentation lies in the fact that discipline familiarity caused them to feel more comfortable in response to academic text type as they had been studied the topic in a way in their L1 subject matters previously, Precisely, this professional familiarity covered the likelihood misperception of unfamiliar vocabulary consistent with the subject knowledge. Therefore, reader’s implicational content knowledge can dominate strategic behavior bringing about immense change in strategy use while reading a text with familiar topic.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Academic setting and reading skills are tightly interwoven as Grabe (2002) expresses reading as the important language skill in academic setting. Although academic setting indicates a large place in language skills still second language fluency works efficiently upon the ‘most complex skill’, reading (Grabe, 2002). Another reason for the importance of attention to reading strategies in academic settings lends support to the fact that academic students are known as non strategic and non-selective while reading academic texts (Cogmen, Saracaloglu, 2009), therefore, strategies would be beneficial for learners in such situations. Generally speaking, the main application of reading strategies is reported as the assistance with acquisition, storage, and retrieval of information (Huang, Chern, Lin, 2008).
This study proposes a new dimension of relation between strategic behavior of learners and text type which is in opposition to Dhieb-Heina(2003) who believes that reading strategies are applied distinctively in accord with text type.

In other words, existence of strategies mingled with reading skill and its entire goals was activated towards training skilled readers and creating reading comprehension as a re-born skill. Strategically speaking, reading strategies enhance readers’ ability to conceive a task as comprehensively as possible, and guide them to make sense of the textual clues and all other factors integrated with comprehensive reading (Block, 1986 cited in Song, 1998). Therefore, the current study attempts to investigate the relationship between academic discourse and strategic status of students.

On the correlational effect of text type and reading strategies usage, it was supposed previously, in present study, that content and sets of strategies required to deal with different text type likely vary and this variation is not solely guided via text features, but readers’ characteristics carry inherently some criteria to reading comprehension phenomena. Thus, the results rejected Dieb Hein (2003) claiming that context changes the strategic demands of learners.

The first assumption on the probable impact of content either, general or academic is that academic context fosters the discussion of no difference in the strategic awareness and sets of strategies utilized by readers significantly. In other words, the degree of strategic competence prerequisite in both text types in comparison to the cognitive load and the comprehensive demand that each text was likely to evoke did not yield out a big difference strategically. This result resembles the finding reported by Haung, Chern, Lin (2008) pointing out that a fixed sets of strategies is used regardless of text difficulty which contradicts the previous revealing results (Smith, 1991) arguing that difficult materials require more distinctive strategies.

However, needless to say that, texts difficulty was tailored and adjusted logically through students’ reading ability, albeit, the original reason may lie in students’ parallelism of major and the academic content as the controversial part of the story. It was supposed that the academic text type, even persuasive in comprehension for the existence of similar prior knowledge or the topic definitely included in the subject matter of the university students would contribute to a conclusive evidence of dissimilar general, academic strategies usage; on the contrary, the findings gave rise to the reverse situation. In other words, subject familiarity might affect the choice of reading strategies, that is background knowledge would activate some mental processes that may act superior to strategies. Another possibility is that
overreliance on academic knowledge could suppress the strategic awareness. Thus, schematic knowledge based on top-down processing may have blocked the use of strategies and the correlational result is due to learners’ academic information rather than reading strategies.

In compatible with factors mentioned above, learner’s characteristics other than academic awareness or the discipline familiarity may have produced the dramatic outcome of identical strategy utilization for different text types in the present population. To put it another way, Kobayashi’s (2009) argument concerning the impact of text topic and prior knowledge to enhancement of text comprehension is confirmed according to this study. Generally speaking, the perceived information from this investigation can be abridged in four distinct terminologies of strategic underestimation, strategic emptiness, strategic multidimensionality, and misconception.

The main reason that blocked the readers’ distinctive strategies usage in the two dissimilar, general and academic, text types may reside in either students’ underestimation of possible strategies to bridge the comprehension gap, or insufficient strategic knowledge. Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) emphasized the consensus on the benefit of strategic awareness as one of the critically important aspects of skilled reading. One direct way towards strategic awareness is strategy instruction whose evidential utility is repeatedly confirmed in the literature.

More precisely, strategy implication is not definitely restricted to which strategies to use but also resides in how to apply successful strategies (Huanh, Chern, Lin, 2008). Anderson (1991) concluded no difference in proficiency level of the kind of strategies used in reading academic texts. The students under the study, the same predicted level of proficiency, did not show any significant difference in three major types of strategies, meta-cognitive, cognitive and socio-affective. In this case, another viewpoint is directed from the result that proficiency, though an affecting point in reading, other cues might be in act to reading strategically. In this regard, Malcom (2009) maintains that academic mature readers are more of using variety of strategies not language proficiency playing a part. The emphasis on matured readers may be a hint to conclude that our readers had no acceptable mutuality level in strategic reading. It is suggested as in Malcom (2009) that meta-cognitive awareness of reading strategies could be identified as a characteristics of academic students in university level due to having loads of reading texts they generally face though the texts are in L1 or L2. Conversely, this study is reverse in the finding as all three types of strategies had the same reflection of use to the readers. It may mean that the students have not been academically
equipped for they were in the second semester having no sufficient opportunity to face academic texts strategically even in their L1.

It is needless to say that strategies awareness is a crucial factor in determination of beneficial strategies. Consequently, limited use of reading strategies supports the idea that level of awareness or the flexibility of using strategies may cause readers to have problems with gaining positive outcomes in strategy utilization. In this view, Carrell, et al, (1989) make an emphasis on the attention to the purpose of the task and the required strategies accompanying the sufficient level of awareness and certain flexibility in task problem solving. According to this, the readers in this study lacked the actual ability to recognize the texts differently and treated the either on content the same and this may lie in their weak sense of text evaluation, or insufficient experience in reading academic texts.

The next reason for the available result could be based on multidimensionality of strategy utilization. Strategy utilization is not a unidimensional option; it roots in the psycho-sociological behaviour of users. Individual’s ego is a realization of cognitive structure and cognitive manifestation of reader’s goals (Cotteral, Murray, 2000). Personal factors, such as reader’s attitude to the second language, his motivation for the content of reading, the belief behind the importance of reading skill and attached capabilities to strategic reading all affect the way readers treat the situation. It is a problem counted for EFL situations in which English as an educational choice has no serious demands on readers hence, making them look into learning English as a subsidiary course at university. Reading English texts is not viewed as an ever- demanding skill but some credits to pass. The same may be true for the present students which made them unaware of the possible, best choices of strategies in reading with different contents.

Last but not least, the concept of academic and general are not recognized properly and causes a sort of misconception administratively or officially. Curricular selection of academic or general may sometime produce some malfunctioning of the related courses. Academic English should propose its structure after students feel confident for handling texts in general content or the administrative institution would decide on the proper time of presenting a more technical text type officially. The question is raised as to what extend the official presentation of courses are reliable or if the students’ scores give rise to a true confidence? Students in this study might have had the same problem.

Generally speaking, content of the text adds sense to the increase or decrease of comprehension. In line with the previously mentioned points, Evans (2008) holds the assumption that the difficulty for L1 and L2 readers facing an expository text is similar. In his
view, difficulties are categorized into micro and macro levels (p. 24). In macro level, the reader would find the text difficult dealing with issues of marked structures or specialized vocabulary; in micro level, the readers requires to activate the prior knowledge including rhetorical structures or organization of the text; therefore, unfamiliarity of such things would give rise to incomprehensibility of the text.

Totally, this study was centralized on the plausible correlation found between reading strategies utilized by pharmacist students in two different discursive contents of general and academic text types. The results showed a constant stabilization in three types of reading strategies usage that is text type had no dramatic impact on the students’ assessment of strategy utilization and related context of use.

In this regard, Dieb Henia (2003) proposes that EAP students would call for metacognitive strategies to cope with multiple texts that is in opposed to the fact that EGP students are reported to benefit from top-down- bottom-up cognitive strategies. And it is emphasized that the reading approach to EAP students is far from the activities practicing to EGP reading practices. This finding comes in conflict with the conclusion of the present study in contradiction with the fact that the academic students in our study might not be aware of the academic capabilities when confronting a topic-familiar text academically, or it might lag behind the insufficient opportunities to expose academic texts even in L1.

Last but not least, students reported that familiarity of the discipline might hint the incident of confronting unfamiliar words and structures but it was not really at work when it came to use the subject knowledge strategically. The factual argumentation fosters the issue that discourse and discipline come into play accompanying one another when an exact perception of discourse is achieved. Strategy instruction specified to academic needs and wants of the students neck to neck with students stabilized academic knowledge can reduce or in times remove the problem.

5.1 Implications

Clearly EAP context governs its own rules upon the academic atmosphere and in EFL setting its manifestation of power would be reflected in the dominance of reading skill. Although reading skill is a major element of academic context, it may highlight its role in EFL setting, to some extent, more than ESL setting.

Therefore, practitioners and material developers should turn their attention to the main function of boosters in learners’ reading comprehension ability. The present study aimed to find the discriminating factors in strategies use when two distinctive text types were evaluated in terms of reading strategies use and the results came out to support the idea that
topic familiarity, albeit a key point in enhancing comprehension of reading texts can have a counterproductive effect when comes in conflict with lack of strategy awareness and amateur application of reading strategies. Therefore, Materials developers need to devote enough space to introduce academic-based reading strategies to equip learners with some tactics to tackle incomprehensive problems. On the other hand, practitioners are responsible for instructing the required reading strategies. Since strategic behavior of learners can compensate for lack of discourse knowledge and increase the ability of readers to overcome the comprehension barriers. Therefore, reading strategies should accompany the reading compression materials to meet one of the primary requirements of reading courses.

References


Title

Using Vocabulary Profiles to Predict Academic Achievement

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Abstract

For the selection of applicants to English Literature and English Translation undergraduate programs, valid and reliable predictive measures are required. This study investigated the potential of vocabulary profiles as predictors of academic achievement. 108 students in four intact classes of an Iranian university participated in this study. They were majoring in English Literature and English Translation. Compositions written by the students on a general topic, at the start of the semester, were used to establish vocabulary profiles. Students’ GPA, writing quality scores and reading comprehension scores were used as measures of academic achievement. Then, GPA, writing quality, and reading comprehension scores were correlated with and regressed against vocabulary profiles. The findings of the study revealed that students’ vocabulary profiles correlated significantly with writing quality and reading comprehension scores. Vocabulary profiles explained 14.5 and 13.3 percent of variance in writing quality scores and reading comprehension scores, respectively. Since the correlations between vocabulary profiles and measures of academic achievement were moderate, it was concluded that vocabulary profiles cannot be used as stand-alone predictive measures of academic achievement.
Keywords: Vocabulary knowledge, Vocabulary profiles, Academic achievement, Vocabulary size, Vocabulary depth, Vocabulary in use

1. Introduction

Given the need to acquire knowledge through the medium of English for English Literature and English Translation (EL/ET) majors at Iranian universities, the selection of candidates who are likely to perform well academically is an important consideration. For selection purposes, reliable and valid predictive measures are required. Thus the purpose of this study was to examine the potential of vocabulary profiles in predicting the academic performance of EL/ET students at an Iranian university.

Since English is used in the teaching and learning process of EL/ET majors, the students have to manage most of the learning tasks in English such as comprehending the textbooks, understanding the teachers’ explanations, writing reports, doing tests, carrying out conversations and discussions academically or socially. It is assumed that the students who are to acquire knowledge through the medium of English in their schools should have a certain level of proficiency in the language. In terms of second language competence in schools where most of the content subjects are learned in the second language, Saville-Troike (1984) claims that vocabulary knowledge is the most important competence for academic needs compared to grammar and competence in social communication. L2 lexical knowledge is found to be strongly related to general L2 language proficiency (Laufer & Nation, 1995; Golkar & Yamini, 2007). Size and depth of second language word knowledge seem to predict general reading comprehension (Laufer, 1992; Qian & Schedl, 2004; Golkar & Yamini, 2007). Breadth and quality of L2 vocabulary predicts performance on L2 academic reading tasks (Qian, 1999, 2002). All aspects of L2 lexical competence have significant relationships with academic achievement (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1993; Morris & Cobb, 2004). Vocabulary also influences subsequent word acquisition and success of inferencing strategies (Nassaji, 2004). Since vocabulary knowledge has considerable influence on the academic success, it is necessary to assess learners’ vocabulary knowledge.

VocabProfile (Cobb, 2007) is the online adaptation of Nation and Hwang’s (1995) vocabulary assessment instrument. Laufer and Nation (1995) demonstrated the validity and reliability of Nation and Hwang’s instrument as a measure of vocabulary knowledge. This measure is a computer-based analysis of vocabulary use in the written expression of second language speakers. VocabProfile checks learners’ compositions against West’s (1953)
General Service List (GSL) and Xue and Nation’s (1984) University Word List (UWL) to see what percentage of the tokens in their writings are covered by the four frequency ranges of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 1000 most frequent words (K1 and K2 respectively), academic words (AWL) and ‘off lists’ words (OL). The goal of the present study was to investigate the potential of vocabulary profiles (VocabProfile indexes) as predictors of academic achievement of EL/ET students at an Iranian university. To this end, opinion essays were used to establish vocabulary profiles for these students. The obtained results were correlated with the students’ GPA, writing quality, and reading comprehension scores in a bid to measure the predictive power of the instrument.

2. Review of the Related Literature

Findings in the fields of vocabulary knowledge assessment and academic achievement have contributed to this study. A summary of the developments relevant to this project are presented in this section.

2.1. Assessment of Vocabulary Knowledge

From a review of vocabulary knowledge and different vocabulary tests devised for research and assessment purposes, one gets the impression that three aspects of lexical knowledge, namely size, depth and vocabulary use in context are currently getting the most of attention.

Some tests are more concerned with measuring the breadth/size of the learners’ vocabulary knowledge, that is, the number of words a person knows. These vocabulary tests associate word knowledge with the ability to link form to meaning (word recognition). In this binary approach to lexical knowledge, if a student recognized a word, he or she is said to ‘know’ it. Clearly, there is much more to knowing a word than just recognizing it. Most of the traditional vocabulary tests measure only partial knowledge, mainly recognition (Schmitt, 1998).

Currently, an ‘all-or-nothing’ view of lexical knowledge has been replaced with an assertion that vocabulary knowledge consists of several levels and dimensions of knowledge. A multifaceted view of word knowledge has led some researchers to develop instruments to measure learners’ “depth” of vocabulary knowledge. Learners’ depth of word knowledge refers to the quality of their vocabulary knowledge or how well they know particular words (Wesche & Paribakht, 1996; Vermeer, 2001). Some researchers have devised tests to capture as many aspects of word knowledge as possible, such as basic understanding, full
understanding, correct use, sensitivity to collocations and associations (Read, 1993; Wesche & Paribakht, 1996; Paribakht & Wesche, 1993, 1997).


Despite disagreements over the description of ‘the ability to use a word’ as knowledge (Faerch et al., 1984; Palmberg, 1987) or control (Bialystok & Sharwood-Smith, 1985), researchers generally agree that word comprehension does not automatically predict correct use of the word and that productive use of word knowledge in spontaneous speech and written expression constitutes an important part of vocabulary knowledge (Cameron, 2002). Recently, lexical richness also known as ‘vocabulary use in context’ (Read, 2007) or ‘vocabulary size reflected in use’ (Laufer & Nation, 1995) has stimulated some interest as an aspect of vocabulary knowledge.

Read and Chapelle (2001) noted that most of the existing vocabulary tests had a trait view of vocabulary knowledge. In such tests, the target words are presented in isolation with no reference to context. These measures implicitly advocate the notion that as a mental attribute of the learner, word knowledge could be described and measured without any reference to the contexts in which the words are used. In an effort to augment this failure, Read and Chapelle called for the development of tests which would assess the learners’ ability to deploy their vocabulary knowledge in particular contexts of use.

A particular context of use is often designated in terms of the language variety associated with it. A language variety is, in turn, defined in terms of its lexical and grammatical features (Read, 2007). This sounds much akin to the concept of register which has a long history in applied linguistics (Davies, 2001). Vocabulary studies, in particular, focus on the lexical features of various contexts of use.

One language variety is academic language at tertiary level. Research in corpus linguistics has yielded new analytical tools and insights that could be used to describe the lexical features of academic and other registers in more detail. One of these contributions has been the advent of word frequency lists. In the case of ESL/EFL learners, two lists have figured prominently i.e. West’s (1953) GSL of 2000 most frequent words and Xue and Natinon’s (1984) UWL of 800 academic word families. GSL contains 2147 word families and gives 82.3% text coverage (Nation & Hwang, 1995). Nation and Hwang devised a general service vocabulary list from the overlaps of the LOB, Brown, and GSL corpora which contained
1945 word families and gave 83.4% text coverage in non-fiction texts. In their study UWL provided 8.5% text coverage in academic texts. Combined coverage of Nation and Hwang’s GSL and UWL for academic texts amounted to 91.9% which is close to the minimum of 95% coverage required for adequate comprehension (1995). As this instrument could be used to assess learners’ ability to use vocabulary knowledge appropriately in academic speaking and writing tasks, Cobb (2007) incorporated it into a computer software called VocabProfile and adapted it to online access. VocabProfile analyzes compositions in terms of richness of vocabulary. Its output tells us what percentage of the words in a composition belongs to the 1st and 2nd thousand most frequent words list (K1 and K2 respectively), academic words list (AWL) and ‘off lists’ words (OL) (Cobb, 2007). “Since the 1st thousand most frequent words include almost all the function words and the most basic lexical words, they are not an indication of developed lexicon, but a sin qua non for written expression. Therefore, the true lexical quality of a piece of writing is determined by the proportion of the 2nd thousand most frequent words, the UWL and ‘not-in-the-lists’ words” (Laufer & Nation, 1995, pp. 317-18).

2.2. Vocabulary Knowledge and Academic Achievement

Research in the field of second language vocabulary acquisition has indicated that there is a strong relationship between receptive vocabulary size and academic achievement (Stanovich, 1980; Savil-Troike, 1984; Laufer, 1992; Qian, 1999, 2002; Zareva et al., 2005; Nation, 2006; Golkar & Yamini, 2007). Depth of receptive vocabulary knowledge is similarly seen as a strong predictor of academic success (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1993; Nurweni & Read, 1999; Qian, 1999, 2002; Nassaji, 2004; Qian & Schedl, 2004; Zareva et al., 2005). However, when it comes to the relationship between controlled/free productive vocabulary knowledge and academic achievement, the results are not that straightforward. While some claim that the relationship between productive word knowledge and academic success is as good as or even stronger than the relationship between academic performance and receptive vocabulary (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1993; Golkar & Yamini, 2007), others maintain that there is weak or no correlation between productive word knowledge and academic success (Anderson, 2003; Laufer & Goldstein, 2004; Morris & Cobb, 2004). This runs counter to intuitive expectations. Production of words especially in free expression as in Morris and Cobb's (2004) study constitutes deeper vocabulary knowledge and reflects a higher level of lexical development and is logically expected to correlate strongly with measures of academic achievement even more so than measures of receptive vocabulary knowledge. Therefore this study attempts to work on a less explored terrain which has yielded conflicting results in the hope of furthering
our understanding of the relationship and clarifying the contention over existence or lack of any relationship.

Laufer (1992) investigated how L2 reading was affected by L2 proficiency as reflected in the learners' lexical level on the one hand and by their general academic ability (including the reading ability in L1) on the other hand. Sixty four EFL learners took part in the study. For each subject, three scores were compared: receptive vocabulary size in L2, general academic ability, and L2 reading. The results show that, with vocabulary size of fewer than 3000 word families (5000 lexical items), no amount of general ability will make the learner read well; with vocabulary size of 5000 word families (8000 lexical items), reading in L2 will be satisfactory whatever the general ability; with vocabulary size of 3000–4000 word families (about 5000–6500 lexical items), L2 reading may or may not be influenced by general ability.

To determine the reliability and validity of the receptive and productive versions of Nation’s (1983) Vocabulary Levels Tests (VLT), Golkar and Yamini (2007) investigated the students' receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge as a whole and at different word frequency levels. The relationships between these two types of vocabulary knowledge and the learners' proficiency level and reading comprehension ability were studied as well. They administered the productive and receptive VLT tests and a TOEFL test to a group of 76 Iranian undergraduate students majoring in engineering and English language and literature. VLT tests proved to be reliable and valid tests of vocabulary size. There was a close relationship between the learners' receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge and their proficiency level (0.91 and 0.88, respectively) and also between their receptive and productive vocabularies and reading comprehension ability (0.75 and 0.80, respectively). Productive vocabulary turned out to be more strongly correlated with reading comprehension.

Qian (1999) measured depth and breadth of receptive vocabulary knowledge to predict the performance of a group of ESL learners on academic reading comprehension tasks using multivariate analyses. The Young adult ESL learners with a minimum vocabulary size of 3,000 word families comprised the sample. Scores on vocabulary size, depth of vocabulary knowledge, and reading comprehension were highly, and positively, correlated. Scores on depth of vocabulary knowledge made a unique contribution to the prediction of reading comprehension levels, in addition to the prediction afforded by vocabulary size scores.

Qian (2002) conducted a study to conceptually validate the roles of breadth and depth of receptive vocabulary knowledge in reading comprehension in academic settings. Further he wanted to empirically evaluate a test measuring three elements of the depth dimension of vocabulary knowledge, namely, synonymy, polysemy, and collocation. A vocabulary size
measure and a TOEFL vocabulary measure were also tested. The participants were 217 students attending an intensive ESL program at the University of Toronto. They were from intermediate level and beyond. They were from 19 L1 backgrounds and 85 different academic fields. The dimension of vocabulary depth (0.77) was found to be as important as that of vocabulary size (0.74) in predicting performance on academic reading. Scores on the three vocabulary measures tested were similarly useful in predicting performance on the reading comprehension. It was concluded that depth of vocabulary knowledge and vocabulary size were reliable predictors of basic comprehension.

Nassaji (2004) examined the relationship between ESL learners' depth of receptive vocabulary knowledge, their lexical inferencing strategy use, and their success in deriving word meaning from context. 21 intermediate level adult immigrants to Canada read a passage containing 10 unknown words and attempted to derive the meanings of the unknown words from context. Introspective think-aloud protocols were used to discover the degree and types of inferencing strategies learners used. Read’s (1993) Word Associates Test was used to measure the learner's depth of vocabulary knowledge. A significant relationship between depth of vocabulary knowledge and the degree and type of strategy use and success was observed. Depth of vocabulary knowledge made a significant contribution of 33% to inferential success over and above the contribution made by the learner's degree of strategy use.

Qian and Schedl (2004) empirically evaluated an in-depth receptive vocabulary knowledge measure in the context of developing the new TOEFL test. They were also interested in determining the applicability of this measure for developing appropriate and useful item types for assessing test-takers’ reading comprehension. The study sample comprised of 207 international students attending an intensive ESL program in a major Canadian university. The results indicated that, compared with existing TOEFL vocabulary measures, the new measure has a similar difficulty level and provides a similar amount of prediction of test-takers’ reading performance.

Verhallen and Schoonen (1993) wanted to gain insight into the productive lexico-semantic knowledge of bilingual children in a second-language immersion environment. The research focus was on aspects of lexical knowledge that are relevant for school success. In a highly structured interview session, 40 monolingual Dutch and 40 bilingual Turkish children (9 and 11 year olds) were stimulated to explain the meanings of common Dutch nouns. The number of meaning aspects and the nature of meaning relations involved in students’ responses were significantly related to their academic success. Compared to the monolingual Dutch children,
the bilingual Turkish children tended to allot less extensive and less varied meanings to
Dutch words which had important implications for their school success.

The purpose of Morris and Cobb’s (2004) study was to examine the potential offered by
vocabulary profiles (VocabProfile indexes) as predictors of academic performance in
undergraduate Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) programs. Vocabulary
profiles were established for 122 TESL students by means of an analysis of 300-word
samples of their writing. The students’ scores on each profile component were then correlated
with the grades they were awarded in two of the grammar courses in their program of study.
The findings of the study revealed that the students’ free productive word knowledge,
especially at AWL and 1st thousand most frequent words levels, correlated significantly with
grades in the more procedurally oriented of the two courses (0.37 and -0.34 respectively).

Anderson (2003) examined nine EFL students’ receptive/productive knowledge of 21
academic words, selected from AWL list, and correlated the results with their GPA as a
measure of academic achievement. While a positive significant correlation of 0.81 between
receptive vocabulary knowledge and academic achievement was observed, no significant
correlation was obtained between productive vocabulary knowledge and academic
achievement.

Laufer and Goldstein (2004) developed a bilingual computerized test to measure the size
and strength of vocabulary knowledge in a sample of 435 ESL learners. They defined
strength as a combination of four aspects of knowledge of meaning i.e. passive recognition,
active recognition, passive recall, and active recall. They also investigated which strength
modality correlated best with classroom language performance. Results indicated that each
modality was significantly correlated with the class grade. However, stepwise regression
analysis revealed that passive recall explained 40 percent of the variance in class grade.
Passive recognition added a 2.6 percent to explained variance. Active recall which reflected
productive vocabulary knowledge did not contribute to variance.

From the studies reviewed, some themes can be induced. First, there is agreement that
vocabulary knowledge assessed in contexts of use is more representative of communicative
language competence than other context-reduced forms of word knowledge measurement.
One context of use is the academic written expression for students at the tertiary education.
Vocabulary profiles established through VocabProfile software, which is sensitive to lexical
features of academic register, produces reliable and valid estimates of learners' ability to use
vocabulary knowledge in academic writing.
Second, the review of literature suggests that superior vocabulary knowledge for EFL/ESL learners is reflected in their differential knowledge of less frequent words beyond GSL list and academic words from UWL list. And that, deepest and highest level of word knowledge is the vocabulary size reflected in written or oral expression. From these assertions and the fact that there is a close relationship between size and depth of vocabulary knowledge and academic achievement, one can hypothesize that vocabulary profiles as measures of vocabulary use in context will strongly correlate with measures of academic achievement.

3. Method

3.1. Participants
The study involved 108 English Literature and English Translation students registered in 4-year undergraduate programs at an Iranian university. 38 of them were majoring in English Literature and 70 were studying in English Translation major. Their age ranged from 18 to 24. As for gender, 73 were female and 35 were male, roughly representing the general ratio of Iranian students being accepted at universities to pursue higher education. They were the students of four intact classes available to the researcher. So the study used availability sampling. Their first language was Persian. Though some of the participants came from different parts of Iran with different dialects and languages such as Lori, Kurdish, and Turkish, they were reasonably proficient in spoken Persian language. In addition, all participants were literate in Persian since all literacy related activities at schools are carried out in Persian all through 12 years of education prior to university. They were at intermediate level in terms of proficiency. Of these participants, 31 were freshmen, 33 were sophomores, and 44 were seniors.

3.2. Instrumentation
Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (MTELP) (1982) was used to assess the proficiency level of the participants. Upshur (1966; cited in Simner, 1999) observed a correlation of 0.89 between TOEFL and the MTELP. Also, Baldauf and Dawson (1980) found that MTELP is a reliable and valid measure.

Vocabulary profiles established through the use of VocabProfile software were used to measure the participants’ vocabulary knowledge in use. Vocabulary profiles have been shown to be a valid and reliable measure of vocabulary use in writing and to discriminate between learners at different proficiency levels (Laufer & Nation, 1995). Laufer and Nation’s results indicated that correlations between vocabulary profiles and VLT test were above 0.60. A
within-subject analysis on the two sets of compositions that each student wrote exhibited stable profiles in the two compositions. In the current study, VocabProfile as a measure of students’ vocabulary knowledge was validated against receptive and productive versions of VLT which is an already established measure of vocabulary knowledge. Correlations between K1, AWL, and OL indexes of VocabProfile and VLT Receptive were -0.27, 0.32, and 0.44 respectively. Correlations between K1, AWL, and OL indexes of VocabProfile and VLT Productive were -0.33, 0.34, and 0.31 respectively. As for reliability, compositions written at the start of the semester were compared to compositions written at the end of the semester; i.e. writing quality compositions, in terms of vocabulary profiles. Correlations between vocabulary profiles of ‘start of the semester’ and ‘end of the semester’ compositions proved beyond 0.70.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

MTELP (1982) was administered in a class session of 60 minutes. A correct answer on each of the 100 items counted as one point. The scores ranged from 29 to 96. And the mean of scores on this measure was 70.32 and SD was 12.00. The distribution of scores was normal.

Two days later, the students were allotted 60 minutes to write an argumentative opinion essay of about 300 word tokens on a topic of general nature which dealt with a controversial issue. The topic did not require expert knowledge of a particular subject matter. No aids were allowed. Statements required the candidates to think carefully in order to construct a coherent argument.

For the test of vocabulary knowledge, learners’ compositions were prepared for entry into computer as follows. All incorrect uses of lexical items were deleted, taking care to distinguish between grammatical and lexical errors. Items were marked as correct when the lexical item elicited was semantically correct. When a word was clearly used incorrectly, it was omitted, as it could not be considered as part of the subject's productive lexicon. If, on the other hand, it was used correctly but misspelled, the error was corrected in order to make the words recognizable by the computer program and the word was considered as familiar to the subject. Spelling mistakes were corrected so that the proportion of low frequency words would not be skewed upwards.

If the learner used words in a wrong grammatical form, for example the wrong tense, it was marked as correct. A wrong derivative of a word was not considered an error since all the derivatives forming one word family have the same frequency. For example, wrong verb tense, singular instead of plural form, or wrong prepositions were considered as grammatical errors and were not deleted. Furthermore, proper nouns were deleted because they were not
considered part of the learners’ vocabulary knowledge. Foreign language words were also deleted, except for those that have come into common use in English.

Once the cleaning up operation was complete, the first 200 words of all essays were entered into VocabProfile program. For each text the profiler calculates the percentage of words of the text that fall into the first thousand most common words list (K1), the second thousand most common words list (K2), the Academic Words List (AWL), and 'off lists' words (OL).

Students’ GPA, writing quality, and reading comprehension course scores were used as measures of academic success in this study. GPA scores were reported by the students. For writing quality scores, compositions written by students on a general topic at the end of the semester were scored by two experienced raters against Jacobs et al.’s (1981) writing assessment criteria. Inter-rater reliability was checked to be 0.91. The same raters and a three member panel of university professors judged the writing assessment criteria as valid measures of writing quality. To have a single writing quality score for each individual, the average of the two scores awarded by two raters was used as a measure of achievement. The reading comprehension course scores were obtained from the education deputy of the university.

To examine the predictive potential of vocabulary profiles, first we explored the correlations between VocabProfile indexes on the one hand and GPA, writing quality, and reading comprehension scores on the other. As significant correlations were observed, we regressed GPA, writing quality, and reading comprehension scores against VocabProfile indexes as a whole. Stepwise multiple regression analysis was conducted to detect the unique contribution of individual indexes to variance in measures of academic achievement.

4. Results

GPA scores did not correlate significantly with any of the four VocabProfile indexes (Table 1). Since significant correlations are a prerequisite to conducting regression analysis, there was no need to regress GPA scores against VocabProfile indexes. This means that VocabProfile indexes cannot predict GPA scores.

Writing scores, however, correlated with K2 and AWL indexes. Correlation indexes were -0.26 and 0.26, respectively (Table 1). Correlation between writing scores and ‘off lists’ index was approaching significance (0.18, p=0.06). Regression analysis revealed that VocabProfile indexes as a whole explained 14.5 percent of the variance in writing quality
scores. Only K2 index individually made a unique contribution of 7.1 percent to variance. Beta values for the individual indexes were not significant. Beta indicates the effect that one SD unit change in the independent variable has on the dependent variable.

Reading comprehension scores, also, correlated with K2, AWL and 'off lists' indexes. Correlation indexes of -0.19, 0.22, and 0.23 were attained respectively (Table 1). VocabProfile indexes as a whole explained 13.3 percent of the variance in reading comprehension scores. Of the individual indexes, only 'off lists' made a unique contribution of 5.6 percent to the variance. Beta values for individual indexes were not significant.

Table 1 Correlations between VocabProfile Indexes and GPA, Writing, and Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>-.058</td>
<td>-.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.485</td>
<td>.551</td>
<td>.271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>-.165</td>
<td>-.266(**)</td>
<td>-.197(*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.029</td>
<td>.260(**)</td>
<td>.222(*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.765</td>
<td>.007</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off lists</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.060</td>
<td>.180</td>
<td>.237(*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.538</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

5. Discussion

There were no significant correlations between GPA and VocabProfile indexes. However, K2, AWL, and 'off lists' elements of VocabProfile correlated significantly with writing and reading scores. For K2 index correlation was negative, but for AWL and ‘off lists’ indexes correlations were positive. These results indicate that less reliance on the 2nd thousand most frequent words and more use of academic and less frequent words are associated with better academic performance. Some explanations might justify these results.

Lack of correlations between VocabProfile indexes and GPA scores may be due to the fact that many of the course grades awarded by instructors to the students did not rely on end-of-term objective exam results alone and included other credit systems besides exams which were dependent on the subjective judgment of instructors. Rojstaczer believes that this situation leads to an abnormal distribution of scores where all students end up with similarly
high and inflated scores (2003). A look at the mean and SD of GPA scores corroborates this claim. For a mean score of 15.72, an SD of 1.34 was observed. Small magnitude of SD in comparison to the mean indicates little variance in GPA scores. Weak dispersion stalls GPA scores from correlating with other measures. In addition, it must be noted that some of the courses, whose scores were considered in calculating GPA, are not content courses relevant to the majors. Of these courses one can mention Persian Literature, Religious Studies, Physical Education and Islamic History. Inclusion of these scores in GPA calculation might have influenced the results. Caulkins et al. (1996, p. 1) state that: GPA is an extremely flawed measure of student performance. Like any scalar measure of a complex phenomenon …. inevitably omits a lot of important information. …. GPA assumes incorrectly that all course grades mean essentially the same thing …. There is, however, substantial variation among majors, courses, and instructors in the rigor with which grades are assigned. Some courses give grades to students that are systematically lower or higher, than the grades obtained by those same students in other courses. … The same GPA for different students can represent different levels of achievement and performance. 

K1 index did not correlate with writing and reading scores significantly. K1 words, being very frequent, are inevitable and even unavoidable because of the quick and easy accessibility in timed composition-writing situations. Non-correlation of K1 and measures of academic achievement may be due to the fact that, as most frequent words, K1 items are known well and used equally extensively by all members of the sample, thus reducing the dispersion of K1 scores and excluding the possibility of significant correlation (Laufer & Nation, 1995). Compared to a mean of 89.22, an SD of 3.35 is very small and reflects very little variance in K1 index.

Negative correlations between K2 and writing and reading scores indicates that heavy reliance on K2 words is associated with low performance on measures of academic achievement. Heavy reliance on K2 words in written expression indicates that one’s vocabulary knowledge is deficient and limited to the most frequent words (Laufer & Nation, 1995). Restricted vocabulary knowledge hampers one’s ability to understand content presented in the second language and to achieve academic success, hence the negative correlations.

Positive relationships between AWL and ‘off lists’ indexes on the one hand and writing and reading scores on the other signifies that the higher one’s score on AWL or ‘off lists’ indexes, the higher his/her score on measures of academic achievement. AWL represents words which are frequent in academic texts. ‘Off lists’ index consists of words which are less
frequent than K1/K2 words and thus reflect a broader lexicon (Laufer & Nation, 1995). A broad lexicon and familiarity with academic words facilitates one’s access to and comprehension of academic content and enhances his/her chance of performing well on measures of academic achievement, hence the positive correlations.

Laufer and Nation claim that 1st thousand most frequent words comprise of almost all the function words and the most basic lexical words and are an inevitable feature of written expression, and that EFL learners are no exception. Thus, they cannot be taken as an indication of a developed lexicon. Therefore, EFL writers are not expected to vary considerably in their use of the 1st thousand most frequent words. They believe that the proportion of the 2nd thousand most frequent words, the academic words and ‘off lists’ words determines the true lexical quality of a piece of writing (1995). Pattern of correlations observed in this study conforms to these assertions and seems to abide by what literature suggests.

As significant relationships between vocabulary profiles and measures of academic achievement are observed, the null hypothesis of the study is rejected and it could be argued that vocabulary profiles can be used to predict performance on measures of academic achievement. Nevertheless, as correlations are not strong, this predictive potential will be very limited. Thus, it is safe to say that vocabulary profiles can predict academic achievement to some extent but not so strongly as to be used as stand-alone measures for assessment and admission purposes.

Morris and Cobb’s (2004) study examined the correlations between VocabProfile indexes and scores of two grammar courses. One of these courses dealt with declarative knowledge of grammar and the other involved procedural knowledge of grammar. They found a significant 0.37 correlation between AWL and procedural grammar scores. In addition, a significant correlation of -0.34 was observed between K1 and procedural grammar scores. They concluded that vocabulary profiles cannot be used as a stand-alone predictive tool since the highest observed correlation explained only six percent of the variance in academic achievement measure. While in our study, K1 index did not correlate with measures of academic achievement, in Morris and Cobb’s study there was a significant relationship between these variables. On the other hand, in contrast to Morris and Cobb’s study, we observed significant correlations between K2 and OL indexes and measures of academic achievement. These differences could be attributed to participant characteristics. Different proficiency levels lead to dissimilar vocabulary profiles and versatile correlation patterns. Our sample consisted of intermediate level EFL students while Morris and Cobb’s
participants were advanced ESL teacher trainees whose proficiency matched that of native speakers. Despite apparent differences, overall our study confirmed the findings of Morris and Cobb’s research. Thus, it can be argued that vocabulary profiles cannot act as independent predictors of academic achievement.

6. Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that there were no significant relationships between vocabulary profiles and GPA scores. This was explained by the fact that GPA scores were highly inflated and lacked dispersion. However, moderate significant correlations were observed between vocabulary profiles on the one hand and writing and reading scores on the other. This indicated that vocabulary profiles as measures of vocabulary knowledge are related to and can to some extent predict performance on measures of academic achievement. However, these relationships were not strong enough to justify the use of vocabulary profiles as stand-alone predictors of academic achievement.

References


Title

Designing and Developing a Native Checklist to Evaluate General English Course Books in Iran and Comparing It with Other Existing Checklists in the World

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Abstract

Textbook evaluation and design has turned into a very important area in English Language Teaching, ELT (Shatery, 2012). In this regard, a plethora of checklists each comprising a set of categories has been developed to evaluate the appropriateness of textbooks for a particular teaching-learning situation. However, none of these checklists has taken into account the cultural, social and even political particularity and peculiarity of the educational milieu in which teaching and learning occurs. As such, the present study intends to design and develop a nativized checklist to evaluate General English course books in Iran and compare it with other existing checklists in the world. The participants of the present study were 100 Pre- university as well as General English teachers in Islamic Azad University (IAU)- Region Seven. Joshua Mikeley's checklist, which has been specifically designed to evaluate General English course books, was given to the teachers in questions and they were asked to rate different categories of the checklist as perfectly applicable, fairly applicable, and non-applicable for the
Iranian context. At the end, they were interviewed for their suggestions on inclusion of new categories in the checklist. The findings of the survey revealed that the new checklist was meaningfully different from Joshua Mikeley's one and a perfect fit for the cultural, social and even political particularity and peculiarity of the teaching learning in an Iranian context.

**Keywords:** Social and political factors, Nativized checklist, General English course books

1. **Introduction**

Textbook evaluation and design has turned into a very important area in English Language Teaching. Evaluation is basically is 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”. 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).

Nearly all of the studies on the issue of EFL/ESL text book as well as material evaluation have been conducted using predetermined checklists developed by the researcher to evaluate the suitability of a specific text book or material for a specific situation. In spite of this, almost all other researchers have been, are, and will continue to apply these specific checklists to situations and contexts for which they have not originally developed rendering results which are neither valid nor reliable. While there are a plethora of checklists in the literature in order to evaluate EFL/ESL textbooks, not all these checklists are equally applicable to all sorts of contexts and situations; As such, the present study is an attempt to design and develop a native checklist in order to evaluate the university-level General English course books in Iran. Afterwards, the newly developed checklist is compared and contrasted with the existing checklists in the world to see how similar they are to and different from each other.

2. **Review of Related Literature**
Considering the position of English language teaching in Iran, educational policies are decided primarily by the central government. All of the decisions made by the central government are passed down through provincial organizations for implementation at lower levels which have less authority in decision-making. All major educational policies concerning the school systems, the curriculum standards, the compilation of textbooks, the examination system and so on, are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education (ME).

The English language is one of the compulsory subjects in the Iranian curriculum. Before the Iranian Revolution, in order to make the situation ideal, English native speakers were being employed to teach English to the students. After the Revolution (1979) due to circumstances, the system has changed thoroughly. In the Ministry of Education, an organization has been established to design the textbooks for schools. With respect to the textbooks, it needs to be explained that in Iran all the textbooks for the schools are produced by the Ministry of Education and no alternatives are available. These course books are taught in both private and public schools and all the teachers follow the same syllabus. A secondary school in Iran includes 4 years of studying and in each level there is one book for Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). English language teachers are supposed to cover one book during each educational year. As mentioned earlier, the main concern of this research is the 3 English course books which are used in 3 levels of the Iranian Secondary Schools. Every academic year is composed of two terms (each term includes nearly 12 weeks) and the English language is taught in both terms. In other words, every course book is divided into two equal portions and every section would be taught within a term. Moreover, book 1 includes nine lessons, book 2 has seven lessons and book 3 consists of six lessons and they all follow the same structure. Moreover, each lesson is composed of 8 main parts (New Words, Reading, Write It Down, Speak Out, Language Functions, Pronunciation Practice, Vocabulary Review, and Vocabulary List).

Iranian students have to study English for nearly seven years (3 years in Guidance school, 3 years in Secondary school and 1 year in Pre-University level), yet the education they receive neither enables the students to attain full competence in using the English language, nor helps them to interact with confidence. Having considered the students' lack of success in communicating in English with colleagues in different parts of Iran and according to the questionnaire survey, the Iranian curriculum and the textbooks, bearing in mind current literature (i. e. Nunan 1999; McGrath 2002; Gower et al. 2005 etc.), it is concluded that some of the problems teachers and learners encounter can be traced to the textbooks. The present
study, then aims to create a triangulation to evaluate the above mentioned textbooks from the point of view of teachers, students, authors of the textbooks, also the researcher himself using different methods of evaluation such as interviews, questionnaires, open-ended questions as well as detailed statistical procedures in order to provide all those involved with as thorough a picture as possible of the quality of ELT textbooks in Iranian senior high schools.

In Iran several projects have been carried out to evaluate textbooks, among which Amerian (1987), Kheibari (1999), Shahedi (2002), Ansary and Babaii (2002), Yarmohammadi (2002), Amalsaleh (2004), Jahangard (2007) Riazi and Aryasholouh (2007) are typical examples. Amerian (1987) conducted a comparative study of the first two books of Right Path to English and Books One and Two of the Graded English series based on Tucker's model. The results of the study indicated that there are no significant differences between the two series. This is because the two series represent the structural syllabus and design. Kheibari (1999) modified Tucker's model and applied it to the five volumes of Teaching Persian to Speakers of Other Languages (TPSOL) textbooks. She claimed that the philosophy behind the changes is due to the recent developments in language teaching. Results revealed that the books follow the Grammar Translation Method which attaches the least attention to role-playing, different kinds of tasks, or language skills such as speaking. Shahedi (2001) analyzed one of the leading texts in TPSOL and stated that in these series, not enough attention has been attached to the four skills of the language. Moreover, the manner and amount of the presentation of vocabulary and pronunciation are not in harmony with language learners' proficiency levels.

Ansary and Babaii (2002) analyzed a corpus of 10 EFL/ESL textbook reviews plus 10 EFL/ESL textbook evaluation checklists and outlined what they perceived to be the common core features of standard EFL/ESL textbooks. The major categories comprise approach, content presentation, physical make-up and administration concerns. Each set of major features of EFL/ESL textbooks consists of a number of subcategories. They concluded the article mentioning that not all of these characteristics would be present in each and every textbook. Yarmohammadi (2002) evaluated the senior high school textbooks based on a revised version of Tucker's model. He came to the conclusion that these textbooks suffer from a lot of shortcomings: 1. they are not authentic; 2. English and Persian names are used interchangeably; and 3. oral skills are ignored. At the end, some suggestions were proposed to remedy the shortcomings. Finally, Amalsaleh (2004) examined the representation of social factors in three types of textbooks, including junior and senior high school textbooks, based on Van Leeuwen's model (1996). According to the results, generally, the textbooks
demonstrated a deferential representation of social factors that tended to portray female as performers belonging to a home context and having limited job opportunities in society. In particular, junior and senior high school textbooks tended to shape normative views of gender and class relations in which a middle-class urban male was considered to be the norm. Riazi and Aryasholouh (2007) also studied the four high school and pre-university English textbooks focusing on the consciousness-raising aspect of vocabulary exercises. They found that of all exercises in the four books, only one percent of them could be categorized as consciousness-raising. They also found that the exercises mainly concentrated on individual words (approximately 26%) with no emphasis on fixed expressions, lexical collocations (approximately 15%) and grammatical collocations (approximately 2%). They concluded that students are mainly dealing with meanings of individual words and not with how words are used with other words or in what combinations. Jahangard (2007) evaluated four EFL textbooks that have been used in the Iranian high schools by the Ministry of Education. He discussed the merits and demerits of the textbooks with reference to 13 common criteria extracted from different materials evaluation checklists. He believed that the evaluation of the EFL materials currently taught at public high schools requires a deeper and more exhaustive analysis and scrutiny by a group of experienced teachers and that the viewpoints and the ideas of a single researcher might not be adequately reliable because however hard one tries, it is almost impossible to be unbiased and impartial in ones judgments.

Nearly all of the above-mentioned studies have been conducted using predetermined checklists disregarding the need to take the context of the study into consideration. While there are a plethora of checklists in the literature in order to evaluate efl/esl textbooks, not all these checklists are equally applicable to all sorts of contexts and situations; As such, the present study is an attempt to design and develop a native checklist in order to evaluate the university-level General English course books in Iran. Afterwards, the newly developed checklist is compared and contrasted with the existing checklists in the world to see how similar they are to and different from each other.

3. Methodology
As it was mentioned before, the present research sought to find answers to the following questions: 1. what are the criteria most applicable to the Iranian ELT context? 2. What are the criteria least applicable to the Iranian ELT context? 3. What are the criteria considered fairly
applicable for an Iranian ELT context? 4. What criteria have been added to the newly-developed checklist?

3.2. Participants
The participants of the present study were one-hundred full-time as well as part-time professors teaching General English at the seventh region of Islamic Azad University. All of the participants had a minimum of three years experience in teaching General English so that the results obtained could be more valid. The participants were chosen from all universities in seventh region so that the collected data and the findings of the study render more generalizeable results.

3.3. Materials and instrumentation
Joshua Mickley’s checklist (see appendix 1) which has been specifically developed for evaluating General English course books was given to all of the participants of the study. They were supposed to check the items appropriate for the Iranian context as well as the items inappropriate for the same context. At the end they came up with suggestions for inclusion of additional categories as well as criteria which an ideal checklist to evaluate General English course books in Iran ought to have. Information obtained through professors checking the checklist constituted the materials for the present study.

3.4. Data analysis
In order to analyze the collected data; that is, the frequency of categories in Joshua Mickley’s checklist in which English professors at seventh region of Islamic Azad university reached the highest consensus, Mini Tab software was used. Separate chi squares were run for each of the twenty-one criteria to see whether or not the differences in observed frequencies in each of the twenty-one criteria were meaningful or not. In doing so, criteria which were perfectly applicable, fairly applicable and inapplicable to the Iranian context became known to the researchers. Finally, criteria which were inapplicable to the Iranian context were dropped out from the Joshua Mickley’s checklist and were replaced with those suggested by professors teaching General English at the seventh region of Islamic Azad University.

4. Results and Discussion
Four research questions were posed in the present study. The first research question posed in the present study was: What are the criteria most applicable to the Iranian ELT context? To answer this question, Joshua Mickley’s checklist (see appendix 1) for evaluating reading passages was distributed among the subjects for the present study which were one hundred
General English teachers at Islamic Azad University- Region seven. They were asked to check different categories they thought were most applicable to the Iranian context. Then separate chi squares were run for each of the twenty-one criteria to see whether or not the differences in observed frequencies in each of the twenty-one criteria were meaningful or not (see appendix 3). The obtained results showed that p-value for all of the criteria but not criteria 10, 16, 20, was less than %5 hence showing the differences in observed frequencies in each of these criteria were meaningful. From these criteria, categories 1,3,6,7,8,9,12,13, 14,15,21, were most applicable to an Iranian ELT context. As can be seen, in General English professors’ opinion, not all of the criteria in Joshua Mickley’s checklist are more applicable to an Iranian context in comparison to the other criteria which shows that any checklist to evaluate General English textbooks in an Iranian context, if it ever wants to succeed, must give special attention to these criteria.

The second research question investigated in the present study was: What are the criteria least applicable to the Iranian ELT context? In order to answer this question, Joshua Mickley’s checklist (see appendix 1) for evaluating reading passages was distributed among the subjects for the present study which were one hundred General English teachers at Islamic Azad University- Region seven. They were asked to check different categories they thought were least applicable to the Iranian context. Then separate chi squares were run for each of the twenty-one criteria to see whether or not the differences in observed frequencies in each of the twenty-one criteria were meaningful or not (see appendix 3). The obtained results showed that p-value for all of the criteria but not criteria 16, 20, was less than %5 hence showing the differences in observed frequencies in each of these criteria were meaningful. From these criteria, categories 2, 4, 5, and 10 were considered least applicable to an Iranian ELT context. As can be seen, some of the categories actually do not fit an Iranian context and when designing a checklist to evaluate General English textbooks in Iran, special care must be taken not to or better to say exclude these criteria from the to be developed checklist.

The third research question posed in the present study was: What are the criteria considered fairly applicable for an Iranian ELT context? In order to answer this research question, again the same procedure was followed. Joshua Mickley’s checklist (see appendix 1) for evaluating reading passages was distributed among the subjects for the present study which were one hundred General English teachers at Islamic Azad University- Region seven. They were asked to check different categories they thought were rather applicable to the Iranian context. Then separate chi squares were run for each of the twenty-one criteria to see
whether or not the differences in observed frequencies in each of the twenty-one criteria were meaningful or not (see appendix 3). The obtained results showed that p-value for criteria 11, 16, 17, 18, and 19 was above 5% and they were considered fairly applicable to an Iranian ELT context. It was revealed that some categories are placed somewhere in between in applicability and non-applicability continuum. This shows that some of the categories in Jashua Mickley’s checklist for evaluation of General English textbooks are good but not good enough if the checklist designer is purporting to design an ideal checklist which can be considered apposite for an ELT context as Iran. However, if the researcher is going to choose between fairly applicable and non-applicable categories, certainly thumbs would be given to the latter as they can portrait a better picture of the textbooks in question.

The fourth research question posed in the present study was: What criteria have been added to the newly-developed checklist? In order to answer this research question, again the same procedure was followed. Joshua Mickley’s checklist (see appendix 1) for evaluating reading passages was distributed among the subjects for the present study which were one hundred General English teachers at Islamic Azad University- Region seven. They were asked to answer the open-ended question following the Joshua Mickley’s checklists. The question was: What other criteria do you think should be added to the above checklist? This question was asked to make sure that factors and criteria specific to an Iranian ELT context which may have not included in the Joshua Mickley’s checklist are included in the newly-developed checklist. These newly-added criteria will most probably stem from General English professors’ grip with the textbooks, teaching learning situation in Iran and their professionalism. The following criteria were the ones most recommended by General English professors to be included in the newly developed checklist suitable for an Iranian ELT context:

1. Does the textbook aim to alienate students from their own culture?
2. Is the textbook a vehicle to advertise the Anglo-American culture?
3. Are the illustration culturally appropriate to the students?
4. Is it possible to involve the local culture and language in the textbook?
5. Is the textbook in line with promoting the concept of World Englishes (WE)?
6. Is it in line with syllabus specification?
7. Is it in line with the needs of the learners?
8. Have cultural sensitivities been considered?
9. Are the text graded?
10. Are the examples for grammatical points are interesting?
11. Does it take religious considerations into account?
12. Is it free from ideological tendencies?
13. Does it raise awareness by avoiding or realizing cultural stereotypes?
14. Does it prepare students to interact with people from other cultures?
15. Does it aim at international culture?
16. Are the social and cultural contexts in the textbook comprehensible to the learners?

Cases 6, 7, and 9 are all related to the content section in Jashua Mikeley’s checklist for evaluating general English textbooks. General English professors believe that these categories must be included in the newly developed checklist which is supposed to fit the Iranian ELT context. Case 10 is related to vocabulary and grammar section in Jashua Mikeley’s checklist for evaluating general English textbooks. Again, this criterion should be included in any checklist which purports to evaluate General English textbooks in an Iranian context.

The rest of the criteria, that is, criteria 1 through 5 and 11 through 16 as well as criterion 8 do not fit any of the categories in Jashua Mikeley’s checklist for evaluating general English textbooks. Interestingly enough they all can be grouped under the superordinate term culture. Accordingly, the category of culture can be added to the already made checklist to account for the criteria related to the category of culture. The nativised checklist has been given in appendix 2.

4.1 Limitations of the study

The present study suffered from a number of limitations, which will pose inevitable restrictions upon the generalization of its results. They are as follows:

1) It was not possible to include all general English professors in the present study. Only the General English professors from the seventh region of Islamic Azad University were included in the present study.

2) The number of checklists for the same of comparison and contrast was limited. Only Jashua Mikley’s checklist was included.

3) The data for the present study was collected from professors. Other sources of data such as students and textbook developers were excluded from the present study.

5. Conclusion
The findings of the survey revealed that the new checklist was meaningfully different from Joshua Mikeley's one and a perfect fit for the cultural, social and even political particularity and peculiarity of the teaching learning in an Iranian context.

References


Appendix 1: Joshua Mickley’s Reading Textbook Checklist

A. Complete the following information about yourself.
B. Go through the following textbook evaluation checklist and check the criteria as applicable, fairly applicable, or non-applicable for an Iranian context. Afterwards, answer the follow-up questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Joshua Mickley’s Reading Textbook Checklist</th>
<th>P. Applicable</th>
<th>F. Fairly Applicable</th>
<th>N. Non-Applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Content</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Is the subject matter presented either topically or functionally in a logical, organized manner?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Does the content serve as a window into learning about the target language culture (American, British, etc.)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Are the reading selections authentic pieces of language?</td>
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<td>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?</td>
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<td>5. Are the text selections representative of the variety of literary genres, and do they contain multiple sentence structures?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B. Vocabulary and Grammar</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Are the grammar rules presented in a logical manner and in increasing order of difficulty?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Are the new vocabulary words presented in a variety of ways (e.g. glosses, multi-glosses, appositives)?</td>
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<td>8. Are the new vocabulary words presented at an appropriate rate so that the text is understandable and so that students are able to retain new vocabulary?</td>
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<td>9. Are the new vocabulary words repeated in subsequent lessons to reinforce their meaning and use?</td>
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<td>10. Are students taught top-down techniques for learning new vocabulary words?</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>C. Exercises and Activities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Are there interactive and task-based activities that require students to use new vocabulary to communicate?</td>
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<td>14. Are students given sufficient examples to learn top-down techniques for reading comprehension?</td>
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<td>15. Do the activities facilitate students’ use of grammar rules by creating situations in which these rules are needed?</td>
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<td>16. Does the text make comprehension easier by addressing one new concept at a time instead of multiple new concepts?</td>
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<td>17. Do the exercises promote critical thinking of the text?</td>
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<td><strong>D. Physical make-up</strong></td>
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<td>18. Is the cover of the book appealing?</td>
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<td>19. Is the visual imagery of high aesthetic quality?</td>
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<td>20. Are the illustrations simple enough and close enough to the text that they add to its meaning rather than detracting from it?</td>
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<td>21. Is the text interesting enough that students will enjoy reading it?</td>
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Q1: What other criteria do you think should be added to the above checklist?

**Appendix 2:** Nativized Checklist for an Iranian ELT context.

**Note:** Categories in the original checklist have been deleted and the modifications are in bold type.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Nativised Checklist For an Iranian ELT Context</strong></th>
<th><strong>P. Applicable</strong></th>
<th><strong>F. Partial</strong></th>
<th><strong>N. Non-Applicable</strong></th>
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<td>5. Is content in line with the needs of the learners?</td>
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<td>6. Are the text graded?</td>
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<td><strong>Culture</strong></td>
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<td>23. Does the textbook aim to alienate students from their own culture?</td>
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<td>24. Is the textbook a vehicle to advertise the Anglo-American culture?</td>
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<td>27. Is the textbook in line with promoting the concept of World Englishes (WE)?</td>
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28. Have cultural sensitivities been considered?

29. Does it take religious considerations into account?

30. Is it free from ideological tendencies?

31. Does it raise awareness by avoiding or realizing cultural stereotypes?

32. Does it prepare students to interact with people from other cultures?

33. Does it aim at international culture?

34. Are the social and cultural contexts in the textbook comprehensible to the learners?

### Appendix 3: P-value for criteria 1 through 21

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<td>Criteria</td>
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<tr>
<td>P-value</td>
<td>0.842</td>
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<td>0.756</td>
<td>0.781</td>
<td>0.568</td>
<td>0.756</td>
<td>0.965</td>
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</table>
Construct Validity of IELTS Reading Comprehension Module in Iranian Context

Authors

Omid Tabatabaei (Ph.D)
Islamic Azad University, Najafabad Branch

Somaye Tajmir Riahi

Biodata

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Somaye Tajmir Riahi is a university lecturer in the higher Education Institute of Amin, Fooladshahr, Isfahan. Her research interests include reading skills and strategies, testing and assessment.

Abstract

Validity studies on language proficiency tests have attracted the attention of many researchers in the last decades. Most of such studies try to investigate skills assessed by the items in the tests, which refers to the construct validity of the test. The present study took the same approach and aimed to investigate the construct validity of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) reading comprehension module in the Iranian EFL context. In doing so, a standard language proficiency test (OPT) was run on 100 EFL learners, and 65 intermediate or upper-intermediate EFL learners were selected. The participants passed 60 hours learning IELTS techniques and the strategies needed to be adopted in the IELTS test sessions. One third of these hours were completely allocated to reading module. Afterwards, IELTS test was administered to the learners. During the test session a questionnaire on operation of reading was distrusted among them and they were asked to check the skills they have applied answering IELTS reading comprehension module. On the other hand, this approach was done to 25 EFL experts. The present study applied both qualitative (i.e. experts’ and test takers’ judgment) and quantitative (i.e. Factor Analysis) approaches to collect and analyze the data. The findings revealed that there was a
substantial agreement among expert judges on the skills claimed to be assessed by the items in the IELTS reading comprehension tests and a significant agreement was found amongst the test takers on the skills being measured by IELTS reading module. Finally, exploratory factor analysis did not reveal similar findings as those in the judgmental phase of the study. Based on FA the items in the IELTS reading comprehension tests did not confirm that IELTS reading module assess the reading skills in the Iranian context.

**Keywords:** IELTS, Construct validity, Reading comprehension, Reading module, Factor analysis

1. **Introduction**

Historically the notion of construct validity emerged out of efforts made in the early 1950s by the American Psychological Association to address the adequacy of psychological tests (Cronbach, 1988). In the thirty years since, construct validity has come to be recognized by the measurement profession as central to the appropriate interpretation of test scores, and provide the basis for the view of validity as a unitary concept (Bachman 1995). Construct validity, as Bachman (1995, p. 255) defines, "concerns the extent to which performance on tests is consistent with predictions that we make on the basis of a theory of abilities, or constructs". Messick (1992) argues that construct validity is indeed the unifying concept that integrates criterion and content consideration into a common framework for testing rational hypotheses about theoretically relevant relationships. Messick (1992), further, states that construct validity measures how much of something an individual displays or possesses. More specifically, Alderson (2000, p. 1) maintains “construct validity in reading as the ability we wish to test”. It has also been strongly recommended by language testing researchers (e.g. Alderson, 1990a, Weir et al., 2005) that if reading skills are to be empirically operationalized, standardized tests of reading skills should be used. This seems to be more evident when it comes to administering universal tests such as TOEFL and IELTS in a foreign language context. Although these tests claim to be standardized and widely used in many countries around the world, there has not yet emerged any reported evidence as to whether they assess the same skills claimed by their developers in their context of administration and whether score interpretations in various EFL contexts indicate similar results. Iran is one of the places where one of these universally administered tests (IELTS) is frequently used. These days many Iranian candidates participate in IELTS test in order to obtain a score to study or live in
other countries. No study has been reported so far in the literature on the validity evidence of the IELTS test in the Iranian EFL context. The present study, therefore, aims to investigate how such a test is viewed by Iranian candidates and experts and whether the items in the reading module of the IELTS measure the same skills claimed by its developing board (i.e. UCLES).

IELTS is acronym of 'International English Language Testing System'. It is an international standardized test of English language proficiency. This international proficiency test is handled by University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations, the British Council and IDP Education Pty Ltd, and was established in 1989. As a matter of fact the story of IELTS goes back to 1980. The first version of an exam called "ELTS" was introduced as a way of testing applicants to British colleges and universities. IELTS has different modules. All candidates must complete four Modules - Listening, Reading, Writing and, Speaking - to obtain a band score, which is shown on the IELTS Test Report Form (TRF). As it was mentioned, one of the modules is reading. The reading test of academic module has three sections, with 3 texts usually followed by 13 or 14 questions for a total of 40 questions overall in 60 minutes. The primary concern for the test reading paper is to focus on various reading following instructions, finding main ideas, identifying the underlying concept, identifying relationships between the main ideas, and drawing logical inferences (Alderson, 2000, p. 206, UCLES, 2004).

These tasks or techniques are characterized by IELTS (1999) as follows: multiple choice items, short answer questions, sentence completion, and notes/summary/diagram/flow chart/table completion, choosing from a heading bank for identified paragraphs/sections of text, identification of writer's view/attitudes/claims, classification, matching lists, and matching phrases. Alderson (2000, p.206) notes that "an interesting feature of the IELTS reading test is its use of multiple methods to test understanding of any one passage." The Official IELTS Practice Materials (2007) include the following range of tasks used with each reading passage:
- Passage 1: section-summary match; gapped summary; true/false/not given
- Passage 2: true/false/not given; information-category match; multiple choice
- Passage 3: section-summary match; sentence completion

Since this study deals with reading comprehension of IELTS section, it needs to be clarified.

Carrell(1998) has defined reading comprehension as the level of understanding of a text. This understanding comes from the interaction among the written words and how they trigger knowledge outside the text. "Proficient reading depends on the ability to recognize
words quickly and effortlessly. If word recognition is difficult, students use too much of their processing capacity to read individual words, interfering with their ability to comprehend what is read."

Reading has always been a key element of academic and university studying. There was a time in fact when the preferred terminology for studying in a subject area at university was 'reading the subject'. Taylor (2009) sees most students endeavor in the academy- whether the writing of essays, or engaging with the content of lectures, or the discussing idea in tutorials and seminars- as emerging from a conversation with one's reading in discipline. In the domain of language testing, the manifest importance of reading in the university study is reflected in the prominence given to this skill area in the various language tests used by universities for the selection of the students. Thus, in all the varieties of format found in the more widely used language tests over 30 years (ELTS, TOEFL, IELTS), one single common element has been the use of a dedicated reading component.

2. Review of the Related Literature

Weir, Hawky, Green, & Devi (2005, p.133) did a research on the relationship between the academic reading construct as measured by IELTS and the reading experiences of students in their first year of study at a British university. The most important finding in terms of their research questions was the apparent preponderance of careful reading over expeditious reading strategies applied by both test-taker analysts, 77% of the claimed cognitive skills and strategies (883 out of the total of 1154) apparently belonging to the former category. What was more, 634 of the reading strategies applied by the two readers were apparently at the sentence level, compared with 242 strategies applied to items seen as requiring attention beyond the sentence. This indicated imbalance was a matter of potential concern given the findings of Studies 2 and 3, that the students at the University of Bedfordshire, when asked about their actual academic reading purposes and problems, saw reading activities of the expeditious kind as more appropriate to their needs than careful reading skills. The data suggested that the reading skills and strategies tapped by the IELTS Reading Module test might need further investigation and possible modification to more closely represent the academic reading constructs of university students through texts and tasks that test more extensively students’ expeditious reading skills.

Tavakoli and Barati (2011) investigated construct validity of FCE reading paper in Iranian EFL context and their findings revealed that there was not a substantial agreement
among expert judges on the skills claimed to be assessed by the items in the FCE reading paper nor could any significant agreement be observed amongst the test takers on the skills being measured by such items in the FCE reading paper. Finally, exploratory factor analysis revealed similar findings as those in the judgmental phase of the study. The individual items in the FCE reading paper did not confirm the claims by the test developers.

Zahedi and Shamsae (2012) examined the viability of the construct validity of the speaking modules of two internationally recognized language proficiency examinations, namely IELTS and TOEFL iBT. Their research seeks to scrutinize how IELTS and TOEFL iBT tap on the speaking proficiency of their candidates. Moreover, their study investigated whether obtained speaking scores of candidates in these two international high-stake tests show an acceptable degree of consistency in measuring the skill being examined. The results of the statistical analysis showed that there was a meaningful discrepancy between the two exams in assessing the speaking abilities of the exam-takers and therefore challenge the construct validity of the exams in question. The coefficient which was calculated for the correlation between the speaking and reading scores in each exam was taken as an indicator of the strength of the relationship between candidates’ speaking and reading scores in that exam. The correlation coefficient for the relationship between the candidates’ speaking and reading scores on IELTS is 0.53 while this coefficient for the scores obtained by the same candidates on TOEFL iBT is 0.90. The strength of the relationship between the candidates’ speaking and reading scores on TOEFL iBT is 0.37 units more than that of IELTS. This is a wild difference for correlation coefficients. One can obviously see that the strength of the relationship between the candidates’ speaking and listening scores on TOEFL iBT differ quite significantly from that of IELTS.

Having reviewed the relevant research projects and mentioned their results and findings now we turn to the present study its purpose and research questions.

The purpose of this study is therefore to scrutinize the construct validity of the IELTS reading comprehension module within the context of Iranian test takers. The study focuses on the skills claimed by the IELTS developing board as assessed by the test items and the EFL expert judges and what the individual test takers believed to be assessed by the IELTS reading module items. Due to a number of reasons, only reading skill has been selected. First, reading is often the chief goal of learners in countries like Iran where English is taught as a foreign language. Then, attention to academic reading or reading for the purpose of learning has become one of the most important methodological issues in the field of Teaching English...
to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL). Finally, reading comprehension tests are widely used and more objectively scored than the other tests.

The study, therefore, addresses the following research questions:
1) Do Iranian EFL testing experts believe that different items on IELTS reading section would actually measure the reading ability of the applicants?
2) Do Iranian EFL learners believe that different items on IELTS reading section would actually measure their reading ability?
3) Does exploratory factor analysis confirm that IELTS reading module would assess the L2 reading skill in the Iranian context?

3. Method
3.1 Participants
Participants of this study were of two groups: ELF Learners and EFL experts. To collect the required data beneficial to drawing meaningful conclusions, a total of a hundred Iranian participants, male and female, were randomly selected out of some English institutes in Isfahan. All participants were getting prepared to take the IELTS test, either general or academic modules, to pursue their education or to immigrate to other countries. As regards their educational background, they all had university degree, BA or BS or in some cases master degree, from state or Azad universities all around Iran. Their age range was from 25 to 44. In doing so, Oxford Placement Test (OPT, Allan, 2005) was run since all willing to take the test needed high level of proficiency in English. Based on the scoring system of OPT, Sixty five participants who had intermediate or upper intermediate levels in English were chosen to take the IELTS course aimed at helping them improve their general proficiency.
On the other hand, twenty five assistant professors and university lecturers, male and female, were also asked to participate in the study. These highly educated participants, all having at least five years of teaching experience mostly with masters and a few with Ph.D. degrees, were selected from the state and Azad universities as well as different language institutes.

3.2 Instrumentation
This study had three main instruments. They include Oxford Placement Test (OPT, Allan, 2005), IELTS Academic and General Training, approved by British Council, CambridgeESOL and IDP, and Questionnaire of Operations in Reading.

3.2.1 Oxford Placement Test (OPT, Allan, 2005)
The OPT (Allan, 2005) consists of 200 items including 100 grammar items. For the purpose of this study, only the grammar part was used, and so through a pilot study, its reliability was estimated. The Kr-21 reliability formula showed a reliability of 0.78 which is a rather acceptable reliability for using the test. It took about 55 minutes for students to complete the test. After administering the test, the obtained results were estimated based on the OPT associated rating levels chart and those who received 70 or more in this test were considered as intermediate and upper-intermediate learners.

3.2.2 IELTS Tests (Academic and General Training)

Different versions of the UCLES (University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate) IELTS tests were used to elicit the participants' scores. The scoring procedure follows the guidelines provided by the IELTS handbook (UCLES, 2004). Since this study has focused on the IELTS reading module, merely IELTS reading scores were considered.

3.2.3 Questionnaire of Operations in Reading

The third material deployed was a questionnaire based on Weir's checklist (1997) which was adopted by Barati (2005) was used to elicit both participants' and university lecturers' ideas (Appendix A). The present study used this taxonomy since it is thorough and has been validated qualitatively against the experts' judgments.

3.3. Procedure

The procedure of the study comprised two phases. First of all OPT was administrated to a group of learners (N=100) in order to select 65 intermediate and upper intermediate level learners in three different English Institutes in Isfahan. They all had at least B.A, B.S and M.A or M.S. Based on the OPT associated rating levels chart, those whose scores were 70 or more were considered as the sample of the study.

The selected participants passed sixty hours learning IELTS techniques and the strategies needed to be adopted in the IELTS test sessions. One third of the mentioned hours were completely allocated to improving reading comprehension skills required for the test. After passing all these hours learning IELTS strategies, IELTS test was administrated to the participants in the institutes. After answering IELTS reading module items, the questionnaires were distributed among the participants. They were requested to check the questionnaire (YES, No, No Idea, Appendix A) based on the procedures they answered the IELTS reading module questions. The participants did not know they were under the study but the researcher was present in the IELTS exam session to help the participants with probable difficulties with the questions in the questionnaire.
On the other hand, twenty-five university lecturers were asked to contribute to the study as the expert judges. They were especially asked to take the IELTS reading section as EFL learners and decide on the correspondence between individual test items in the IELTS reading section and the skills in the EFL taxonomy of reading skills. The expert judges were allowed to take the test home and complete the tasks required. Thus, there was no cooperation among the judges.

3.4. Data Analysis

To answer the first and the second research questions, the average of the experts' and learners' judgments over skill/item correspondence were investigated. To quantitatively analyze the data, exploratory factor analysis was run on the scores obtained through large-scale test administration. In doing so, first descriptive data analysis was conducted to examine the normal distribution of the variables (participants) across the IELTS reading parts. Then the reliability estimates of IELTS reading was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha. Finally, the reading skills were identified by running exploratory factor analysis. The assumption was that items which loaded on the same components or factors were testing the same skill(s) (Alderson, 2000).

Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality were used. Based on the results, it can be seen that the amount of P value for all four variables studied, both for volunteers and for the experts, was more than 0.05 therefore it was significant and the H0 hypothesis in this test based on the assumption of normal observations, was accepted. Thus the parametric inferential statistical tests can be used to test the research hypotheses.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Investigating the Experts' Agreement on the Factors

The present study also adopted average measures to analyze the agreement of the EFL expert judges on the IELTS reading module comprehension items. The frequency of the experts’ decisions on the skill assessed by each item also indicated that the majority of the judges came to an agreement on the skills to be assessed by the majority of IELTS reading comprehension module. Their agreement was on Level; A: Reading Expeditiously for Global Comprehension, Level C: Reading Carefully for Global Comprehension, and Level D: Reading carefully for Local Comprehension. Only they did not agree in level B; Level B: Reading Expeditiously for Local Comprehension.

Table1 Investigating Experts' Agreement on Using Total Factor
4.2. Investigating the Students' Agreement on the Factors

In order to obtain EFL learners’ opinions on the skills being tested by the IELTS reading module, the same procedures as those used for the expert judges were applied. This phase of data analysis revealed that Iranian EFL students believe that different items on IELTS reading module actually measure their reading ability. As it is shown in the table below, all the students agreed on using the skills of the four levels with the mean above 2. The most important level was A; Reading Expeditiously for Global Comprehension.

The frequency of test-takers’ decisions on the IELTS reading module revealed significant similarities with the findings of the expert judges, except in level B. Both groups: the EFL experts and the EFL test-takers agreed on the skill to be assessed in level A, C, and D. The majority of expert believed this level did not play a lead role in answering IELTS reading comprehension module but students came to agreement in using this level with the mean of 2.292.

Table 2 Investigating students' Agreement on Using Total Factor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SE Mean</th>
<th>Bound</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level A</td>
<td>2.568</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>2.441</td>
<td>7.62</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>rejectH0</td>
<td>agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level B</td>
<td>2.080</td>
<td>0.081</td>
<td>1.942</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>0.166</td>
<td>acceptH0</td>
<td>disagreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level C</td>
<td>2.343</td>
<td>0.041</td>
<td>2.274</td>
<td>8.44</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>rejectH0</td>
<td>agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level D</td>
<td>2.342</td>
<td>0.066</td>
<td>2.230</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>rejectH0</td>
<td>agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.333</td>
<td>0.043</td>
<td>2.259</td>
<td>7.68</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>rejectH0</td>
<td>agreement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3. Quantitative Factor Analysis

It is commonplace in research on reading skills that identifiability of skills is addressed by applying factor analysis (FA) on the data (e.g. Rost, 1993, Alderson, 2000). The idea is that items loaded on the same factor assess the same skills. Before conducting FA; however, the test items were inspected for the correlation matrix and the correlation coefficients of 0.3 or above. The results revealed that there were some correlation coefficients of 0.3 or above. Furthermore, the test of factorability of data (i.e., The Kaiser Meyer Oklin) exceeded the
recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1974) and the Bartlett's test of sphericity (Barlett, 1954) reached statistical significance (Table 3), therefore the factorability of the correlation matrix is supported.

Table 3 Test of factorability of data, IELTS (KMO and BARTLETT):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity</td>
<td>Approx. Chi-Square</td>
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<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>595</td>
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<td>Sig.</td>
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The application of factor analysis at this stage resulted in 12 components with eigenvalues of 1 or above, explaining 84.479% of the total variance (Table 4). As it is indicated in Table 4, 12 factors of the IELTS reading comprehension module were loaded on the first factor. It means that some questions which are relevant to similar factor had.

Table 4 Rotated Component Matrix\(^a\) for Experts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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\(\text{Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.}\)
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The Screeplot, based on Table 4 similarly, revealed that there was a break after the twelve components. These factors/components were responsible for 12.0492% of the total variance. Thus no further rotation was conducted on the data.

**Figure 1** Eigenvalue of Experts
The results of the Factor Analysis did not show that the items in IELTS reading comprehension tests were loaded on different components. Therefore, the third hypothesis was supported. The third null hypothesis stated that the exploratory factor analysis does not confirm that IELTS reading parts assess the reading skills in the Iranian context. In the nutshell, the qualitative and quantitative approaches discussed in this study rejected the first and second hypotheses but confirmed the third one.

5. Discussions

This study was meant to investigate the construct validity of IELTS reading comprehension module in Iranian context which has not been studied before to provide the field with more comprehensive findings. The main findings of the study and the plausibility of the suggested hypotheses will be discussed in the following section.

1. The findings of this study showed a significant agreement among the majority of the Iranian expert judges and the EFL test takers on the skills to be assessed by the items in the IELTS reading comprehension module. The qualitative judgmental findings of this study were, therefore, against with what many other researchers have concluded (e.g. Alderson and Lukmani 1989, Alderson 1990a and 1990b). The first two studies had applied the same two-phased methodology, judgmental and empirical, to address identifiability of skills. However, despite Alderson and Lukmani (1989), Alderson (1990a) conducted his research on two standardized tests, TEEP and ELTS). Alderson (1990b), recognizing the inadequacy of traditional methodologies, attempted to use think aloud and retrospection and identify what really happened inside the test-takers’ head as they responded the reading comprehension items. His conclusion resembled those of his previous two studies and the present study. They could not prove the existence of separate skills.

The findings of the first research question were in line with Lumley (1993), Barati (2005), and Moore, Morton and Price (2007). Like the present study which focused on a standardized high-stake reading test, having been developed by a specialized examination board, Barati’s (2005) test was partly adopted from Alderson (2000) and Weir (1993) and partly developed by him. Lumley (1993), however, initiated his project with the test items and then developed the reading skill to describe them. Both studies clearly supported the judges’ agreement on the skills to be measured by their reading items through judgmental approach.
The qualitative judgmental findings of this study were also in line with Moore, Morton and Price (2007) found that a majority of tasks in the IELTS corpus were of a distinctly local configuration, requiring mainly a basic comprehension of relatively small textual units (sentences, inter-sentences, paragraphs). The only items in their corpus that clearly traversed the local domain were certain multiple choice items that required an appraisal of the reading passage as a whole (e.g., items requiring the selection of a title for a reading passage). The analysis of the reading tasks showed a wide variety of reading requirements across the disciplines investigated. It was shown that, instances of tasks fitting all four configurations in their matrix were identified as local-literal and global-interpretative.

The findings of this study showed a significant agreement among the majority of the Iranian experts' judgment on the skills being assessed by the items in IELTS reading module. The answer to the first question which stated that: do Iranian EFL testing experts believe that different items on IELTS reading section would actually measure the reading ability of the applicants, was yes. Based on their agreement on applying those variables in IELTS reading comprehension tests, the researcher came to the conclusion that different items on IELTS reading section would measure the reading ability of the applicants.

2. The second question of this study stated that: do Iranian EFL learners believe that different items on IELTS reading section would actually measure their reading ability? The answer is yes. According to these factors Iranian learners believed that IELTS reading comprehension test would actually measure their reading skills. The skills would be seen as identifiable and hence the reading comprehension could be identified as a valid test for Iranian EFL students. The idea is that what EFL learners cannot come to agreement on is the skills being assessed at the times of the test. There may be a problem in determining what the items are really testing. Their agreement here could be assumed as a piece of evidence for the validity of IELTS. They agreed on using the 4 variables when answering the tests, level A with the mean of 2.665, level B with the mean of 2.292, level C with the mean of 2.195, level D with the mean of 2.408, and the total mean of 2.390 which illustrated that the majority of learners agreed on the skills assessed by IELTS reading comprehension test. Comparing with experts' idea with the total mean of 2.333 and their mean 2.390 it seemed that there was a considerable agreement.

3. The application of Factor Analysis on the data from this study indicated that the standardization of IELTS reading comprehension module does not guarantee "universal" interpretation of its scores in Iran. A test may be standard in relation to a certain group of test
takers with a specific language background and system of education but not in relation to another group of test takers with different language background and system of education. The results of the Factor Analysis in this study did not show the items in the IELTS reading module to be loaded on different components.

6. Conclusions

This study, adopting qualitative and quantitative approaches, has examined the validity of IELTS reading module in IELTS tests. The quantitative phase of the study involved the analysis of 65 EFL students' responses on the IELTS reading comprehension test and the application of FA. The qualitative phase of the study involved EFL expert judges' and the EFL test takers' decisions on the correspondence between the reading skills in the EFL questionnaire and the items in the IELTS reading comprehension test.

The key findings of the present study, as discussed above, indicated that the IELTS reading skills assess Iranian EFL learners' ability qualitatively by EFL experts' and learners' ideas but not via FA. Hence the quantitative findings are in line with UCLES' claims, that the IELTS reading module assesses reading ability of test-takers. In other words, the findings of the present study dignify the construct validity of the IELTS reading module in the Iranian context and rejected the first and second null research hypotheses.

The judgmental phase of the present study could not support the findings of the quantitative phase (FA). In the qualitative phase of the study, the majority of the EFL expert judges and the test-takers agreed on the skills to be assessed by the IELTS reading module. In other words, the IELTS reading skills were similarly identified by the expert judges and the test-takers to be assessing heterogeneous list of skills. However the skills were not confirmed when Factor Analysis was run. The results of the Factor Analysis did not show the items in the IELTS reading module to be loaded on different components. Since the qualitative phase of the study confirm that IELTS reading module assess EFL learners' reading ability in Iranian context, but the quantitative phase of this study could not confirm different skills for the construct of the IELTS reading comprehension module, hence, the construct of the IELTS reading module was not known to be unitary in the context of Iranian EFL learners.

6.1 Implications

The findings of this study regarding the validity of IELTS reading module as a measure of EFL learners' reading ability have pedagogical implication for researcher, teachers, and those who are interested in the use of IELTS. This study highlighted the importance of designing and using more reliable and valid tests for researchers and designers.
Test designers, course book developers, and IELTS book writers can also benefit from the findings of the present study. Test designers can design more reliable and valid tests, as they can become aware of the factors which affect the reliability and validity of IELTS and the strategies that learners apply in answering the questions. In the same way, course book developers and IELTS book writers can also include more reliable and valid tests in course materials.

Findings of this study can also be beneficial for the IELTS teachers who use these tests in their classes. Teachers use these tests to measure students' mastery level of content taught in class, as well as effectiveness of the instructions and prepare them for IELTS exams. The findings of the present study, by making teachers aware of their ideas and candidates ideas in answering IELTS reading comprehension tests, let teachers know that the learners' performance in these kinds of tests cannot reflect their pure proficiency knowledge, therefore do not provide them with accurate measurements of learning regarding learners performance and effectiveness of the instruction.

Tests always provide the learners with feedback and also are incentives for studying and learning. Findings of this study emphasized the importance of designing and using tests which are representative of learners' actual ability. Therefore, the learners can reap the benefits of the findings too.

The findings of this study have also theoretical implications. It is about two decades that IELTS tests have been used in L2 to measure the proficiency level and the performance of the learners in the test. As a result, the use of IELTS has come under scrutiny especially in second or foreign language. An attempt has been made in the present research, by providing some data on the validity of IELTS in EFL context to answer some of these questions. Therefore, it has enriched the relevant literature in Iranian EFL context.

6.2 Suggestion for Further research
As a suggestion for further studies, first it can be mentioned that, other researchers can replicate this study by larger sample size and in other context to ensure the generalizability of the findings.

Second, the present study was undertaken with only one skill, reading. Therefore similar studies focusing on the other three skills, listening, writing, and speaking and even their relationships can be conducted

References


ELT examination practice tests.


Weir, C.J., Hawkey, R., Green, A., & Devi, S. (2005). The relationship between the academic readings construct as measured by IELTS and the reading experiences of students in their first year of study at a British university. IELTS Research Reports, 9, 133.


Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Age:</th>
<th>Sex: male/female</th>
<th>Major:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level A: Reading Expeditiously for Global Comprehension</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Did you look at the topic?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Did look at the title and the first sentence of the paragraph?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Did you skim the text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Did you read the last sentences of the paragraph?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Did you get the main idea of the paragraph?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level B: Reading Expeditiously for Local Comprehension</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Did you scan the paragraphs?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Did you look for specific information?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Did you pay attention to punctuations (comma, , !, ?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Did you look for comparisons and contrasts in the paragraphs?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Did you look for examples?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level C: Reading Carefully for Global Comprehension</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. Did you read everything carefully?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Did you pay attention to components of a paragraph: such as topic sentence, supporting sentences and concluding sentences?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Did you read details?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Did you evaluate the text in order to find its implications?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Did you understand implications?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Did you try to find the relationships between ideas in the passage?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Were you able to answer the questions which related to key information of the text (without which the comprehension of the text would be difficult?)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Did you understand facts and major points?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Did you use inferential analysis of text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Were you able to make an outline of the main points?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Were you able to answer detailed questions which were indirectly asked?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level D: Reading carefully for Local Comprehension</th>
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<th>No</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Iranian EFL Journal 311
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Did you guess the meaning of unfamiliar words?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Did you pay attention to sentence structure to guess the meaning of unknown words?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Did you pay attention to context to guess the meaning of unknown words?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Did you identify the syntactic relationship between the items in a text to comprehend it better? (The pronoun and its referents, conjunctions and other elements)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Did you understand the key words, key structures?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Did you use structural analysis of text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Did you identify words synonyms and antonyms?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Did you know the vocabulary and the connection with the sentence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Did you know grammatical terms, verbs, adjectives,…to understand the text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Did you realize what the words do in the text?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Did you know the grammatical structure of the text to assist understanding?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Were you able to answer detailed questions containing new words and phrases?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Were you able to use the structure of the word to get its meaning?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Did you decompose the words?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IELTS Reading Score:
Title

A Contrastive Study on the Complaint Behavior among Canadian Native Speakers and Iranian EFL Learners

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Biodata

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Abstract

The purpose of the present article is to make a contrastive cross-cultural pragmatic analysis between Canadian native speakers and Iranian EFL learners with regard to the speech act of complaint. To do so, in the first stage, a Nelson Proficiency Test was administered among 20 Canadian university students majoring in different fields and 20 among Iranian EFL learners, respectively. Based on the results of this test, those who scored highly on the test were selected as the main participants of the study. In the second stage, an open-ended questionnaire in the form of a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) comprising of 30 authentic complaint situations was administered among the three groups. In the end, the data was analyzed using a non-parametric statistical hypothesis test called Mann-Whitney U Test for assessing whether or not one of the two samples of independent observation tends to have larger values than the other and the findings revealed that all respondents showed significantly different behaviors to express complaints in the different situations. Moreover, sex and social power were found to cause differential use of complaint utterances.
Keywords: Speech act of complaint, Pragmatic, EFL learners, Native speakers, DCT

1. Introduction

In recent years, the relevance of pragmatics has become increasingly clear to applied linguists (Belza, 2008). Though the scope of pragmatics is far from easy to define, the variety of research interests and developments in the field share one basic concern: the need to account for the rules that govern the use of language in context (Levinson, 1987). One of the basic challenges for research in pragmatics is the issue of universality: to what extent is it possible to determine the degree to which the rules that govern the use of language in context vary from culture to culture and from language to language? Answers to this question have to be sought through cross-cultural research in pragmatics. For applied linguists, especially for those concerned with communicative language learning and teaching, cross-cultural research in pragmatics is essential in coping with the applied aspect of the issue of universality: to what extent is it possible to specify the particular pragmatic rules of use for a given language, rules which second language learners will have to acquire in order to attain successful communication in the target language?

The issue of universality is, especially relevant in the context of speech act studies. A number of studies have established empirically (Cohen and Olshtain 1981; Kasper 1981; House 1982; Wolfson 1981; Blum-Kulka 1982; Thomas 1983) that second language speakers might fail to communicate effectively (commit pragmatic failures), even when they have an excellent grammatical and lexical command of the target language. In part, second language speakers’ pragmatic failures have been shown to be traceable to cross-linguistic differences in speech act realization rules.

Many people face with communication conflict or even communication breakdown in their cross-linguistic and cross-cultural interactions with people from different language backgrounds. Chick (1996), as cited in Yousefvand, (2010) detects such intercultural miscommunication in various value systems evoked by speakers L1cultural background. Different value systems might be revealed in speech act patterns; some scholars state (e.g. Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969) speech acts are organized by universal principles, whereas some others (Green, 1975; Wierzbicka, 1985) emphasize on the variations in speech act verbalization and conceptualization across different cultures. Therefore, a great deal of studies have been conducted across different languages to hypothesize the universalities and
variations in regard to different speech acts such as request (Belza, 2008), Apology (Fahey, 2005), complaint (Salmani-Nodoushan, 2007), compliment (Wolfson, 1981), refusal (Felix-Brasdefer, 2008), among which suggestion speech act has received scant attention.

Therefore, this study makes a contrastive analysis to investigate the differences between English and Persian, and find patterns of complaint act between the two cultures. Finally, some guidelines are proposed to improve the present situation of teaching speech acts.

2. Review of the Related Literature
Performance in second language is both affected by one's grammatical and linguistic competence as well as his/her communicative competence. As Hymes (1972) claims, second language learners with high-level of linguistic repertoire may fail to have successful communication if they do not understand the cultural norms of the foreign language speech community. To avoid such miscommunications, second language researchers and applied linguists have addressed the question of appropriate norms of performing speech acts in various studies. The cross-cultural pragmatic literature has devoted special attention to complaint speech act and various strategies used to meet the acceptable norm of the society. This is because of the face-threatening nature of the complaint speech act which has been seen to be subject to cross-gender (Boxer, 1996) and cross-cultural variation (Eslami-Rasekh, 2004; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993) in terms of use and interpretation.

Eslami-Rasekh (2004) compared Persian speakers' use of face-keeping strategies in reaction to complaints with American English speakers' performance. She found that Persian speakers are more sensitive to contextual factors and vary their face-keeping strategies accordingly whereas English speakers mostly use one apology strategy and intensify it based on contextual factors.

In another study, Murphy and Neu (1996) examined the complaining strategies of American natives and Korean non-natives of English when expressing disapproval of their grade to a professor. They found that Korean ESL speakers produced the speech act set of criticism while American native speakers of English produced the complaint speech act set. In addition, American English native speakers perceived the criticism made by Koreans as aggressive, inappropriate and lacking respectfulness.

In a quite recent study, Chen et al. (2011) studied complaining strategies of 40 American and Taiwanese university students where they were asked them to fill out a discourse completion test (DCT) containing eight complaint-provoking scenarios. They found six
complaint strategies (opting out, interrogation, accusation, request for repair, and threat). Their quantitative results pointed to similarities in both overall and combined strategy use of the American and Chinese participants. In other words, when faced with an offensive act, most competent adult members of both groups made complaints rather than opted out of the situation and both groups preferred less-direct strategies when complaining. The qualitative findings, however, showed differences in their choice of linguistic forms and expressions of semantic content. Compared to American complaints, the Chinese complaints were found to be more sensitive to social power and they varied their complaints based on the interlocutor status.

In addition to the urge to find cross-cultural differences between the speech act performance of native speakers, there is also a need to shed more light on the type of strategies used by non-native speakers in another language. In this respect, a number of studies have been conducted to find the effect of first language on EFL learners' strategies in making complaints. Park (2001) investigated the speech act set of complaint produced by Korean EFL learners and found that participants' performance of this speech act reflects their interlanguage pragmatics, which is independent of their L1. In another attempt, Moon (2001) studied the speech act of complaint as produced by native speakers (NS) and nonnative speakers (NNS) of English using DCT. The results revealed that NNS do not always make complaints following the appropriate ways of NSs'; their utterances were more direct than NSs'.

In another study, Tanck (2002) compared the pragmatic competence of ESL speakers to that of adult native English speakers when performing the speech act of complaints and refusals using DCT within familiar, equal and superior/inferior relationships. The results showed that while native and nonnative speakers often produce almost identical speech act set components, the quality of the components produced by nonnative speakers differ markedly from those made by the native speakers' sample in that they produced fewer components of the semantic formulae of complaint. It was also found that the nonnative speakers' responses, though generally linguistically correct, lack the pragmatic elements that allow these face-threatening acts to be well received by the hearer. For instance, nonnative speakers tended to produce request components or add personal details that could be considered less appropriate than complaints produced by native speakers.

From the above studies it can be concluded that nonnative speakers may fail to propose their complaints in an appropriate manner due to the lack of familiarity with the norms and conventions of the second language and consequently their complaints might sound rather
impolite. So, there is a need for a more careful investigation of EFL learners' judgments of native speakers' speech act production to find the areas of difficulty and avoid future communication breakdowns.

2.1 Gender differences in complaint speech act

As Mills (2003) puts it, we cannot have a general rule about the general behavior of men and women for all cultures rather “decisions about what is appropriate or not are decided upon strategically within the parameters of the community of practice” (p.235). However, considering gender as an influential factor in determining language production or perception for all women and men makes research and experimental work simpler; thus, different attempts have been made to find the effect of gender on the performance of different speech acts and most have found that female speakers do use more positive politeness strategies than males in the context under investigation (e.g. Baxter, 2000; Mikako, 2005).

Liu (2003) states that the gender of the speaker plays an important role in the use of the speech act of complaint. He claims that females tend to use indirect strategies more than males do. Many research studies in this field of study have shown than women are more sensitive to being polite than men are, so women are expected to apply more soft styles than men. Further, he emphasized on the result by stating females are more interested in personal matters, such as physical appearances, clothing, fashion, food and diet than males. The researcher of the present study is in favor of the finding of Liu's (2003) study. On the other hand, the researcher hypothesizes that indirect complaint are applied where appropriate regardless of being a male or a female.

Herbert (1990) in his study on sex-based differences in the form of English compliments and in the frequencies of various compliment response types found several differences in the form of compliments used by women and men. In another study on complaint speech act, Boxer (1996) found that men and women behave very differently with respect to both complaining and responding to complaints. Her results showed that (a) more women participated in troubles-talk than men and (b) women were recipients of more indirect complaints because they were seen as more supportive in general than men. The gender differences emerged when dealing with responses to indirect complaints showed that men tend to offer advice while women tend to commiserate. In general she showed that women participated more in indirect complaining than men. In this study, Iranian males' perceptions of Canadian complaints will be compared to those of females' to see whether their perceptions differ significantly or not.
3. Purpose of the Study

A great deal of research has been done on different speech acts and has shown that there are cross-cultural differences with regard to either speech act production or the realization of various speech acts (Abdolrezapour & Eslami-Rasekh, 2010; Ahmadian & Vahid Dastjerdi, 2010; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Hiba Qusay Abdul Sattar, Salasiah Che Lah & Raja Rozina Raja Suleiman, 2011; Wierzbicka, 1991). Different perceptions of speakers from heterogeneous backgrounds concerning the contextual appropriateness of various politeness strategies might cause communication breakdowns. This research adopts a fundamentally discursive perspective. In discursive trend, which is in contrast to Brown and Levinson (1987) assumptions regarding the predictable effect of an utterance on the hearer, the focus is on the contextual variation of interpretation and it considers hearer's evaluation of various utterances in various cultures.

The emphasis of this research is on complaints, which have appeared in cross-cultural pragmatic studies (Eslami-Rasekh, 2004; Murphy & Neu, 1996; Olshtain & Weinbach, 1993). Complaints are face-threatening acts (Brown & Levinson, 1987), which endanger both the complainee's-negative face and the complainer's positive face as his/her complaint might be rejected (Tamanaha, 2003). This research is the first attempt at investigating the realization of English complaints by Iranian EFL learners compared with native English speakers. Moreover, the effect of social variables of power and distance and subjects’ gender is scrutinized.

To realize the purpose of this article, the following questions were raised:
1. Is there any significant relationship between the preferred complaint strategies used by the Iranian EFL learners and native speakers of English?
2. Is there any significant difference between male and female Iranian EFL learners in terms of using preferred complaint strategies in English?
3. Is there any significant difference between male and female native speakers of English in terms of using their preferred complaint strategies?

Based on the literature review, three null hypotheses were adopted:
1. There is no significant relationship between the preferred complaint strategies used by Iranian EFL learners and native speakers of English.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female Iranian EFL learners in terms of using their preferred complaint strategies in English.
3. There is no significant difference between male and female native speakers of English in terms of using their preferred complaint strategies.

4. Method

4.1 Participants

Iranian EFL learners
A total number of 20 Iranian EFL learners (10 males and 10 females) at Payam-e-Nour University (PNU) in Bandar Abbas, Iran between the ages of 20 and 25 who scored at least 90% of the questions correctly on Nelson Proficiency Test based on the stratified random sampling constituted the sample of study.

Native Speakers of English
As EFL learners, totally 20 native English speakers (10 males and 10 females) ranging from 23 to 29 in Toronto, Canada who were all university students or graduates took part in this research. They were all accessed through the researcher’s contact in Toronto. It should be noted that, the criteria for selecting them as native speakers of English were the bio information section at top of the first page of the DCT which were filled by all the subjects. They were evenly distributed in terms of gender.

4.2 Instrumentation

DCT
The main instrument utilized in this study was an open-ended questionnaire in the form of a DCT (Discourse Completion Task). An appropriately prepared DCT can inform us of how respondents’ pragmatic knowledge is activated (Martinez-Flor, 2006). Therefore, research data were collected through a DCT in which 30 authentic complaining situations were defined elaborately and participants were required to imagine themselves in the situations and respond as they would say in their daily conversations or talk. Each situation consisted of a short dialogue in order to include the necessary interaction in real-life communication. Furthermore, since participants involved both males and females, the situations were gender neutral and regarding the status, the situations involved inferior, equal and superior relationship to allocate a representative sample of natural discourse. It should be noted that the DCTs were e-mailed to native participants and were handed in person to nonnative ones.

Nelson Test
Secondly, to check the homogeneity of the participants, Nelson Proficiency Test (1993) was applied in this research. This test was composed of 50 items, including vocabulary, grammar,
and reading sections. Due to the subjective nature of the research, only the advanced level participants were selected.

4.3 Data Analysis Procedure

In this study, four main procedures were carried out: Initially, a copy of Nelson Test was administered among Persian learners. Following that, the students (EFL learners) who were qualified as advanced learners took the DCT. Next, the DCTs were e-mailed to the native speakers of English. Finally, the data was collected and analyzed.

4.4 Data analysis

This study comprised of two main phases. In the first phase- qualitative stage- the subjects’ responses on DCTs were analyzed and classified in terms of the components of complaints. Due to the subjective nature of this process, three raters independently performed the analyses. In the second stage, i.e., the quantitative part, frequencies of different components were tabulated. Next, the nonparametric test of Mann-Whitney U Test was applied so as to assess whether or not the two samples of independent observations tended to have different values. Mann-Whitney U Test is a well-known non-parametric test which was selected to increase the reliability of the test. Table 1 shows the results of this test comparing native English speakers with EFL learners in their use of preferred complaint strategies.

5. Results

The first question addressed by the study was "Is there any significant relationship among the preferred complaint strategies used by the native speakers of English and Iranian EFL learners?". To answer this question, the data were analyzed by means of Mann-Whitney U Test (which is the nonparametric alternative to t-test). Table 1 manifests the results of this analysis:

```
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Statistics</th>
<th>COMPLAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>176.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td>386.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-.638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]</td>
<td>.529a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

a. Not corrected for ties.
b. Grouping Variable: GROUP

Table 1  Mann-Whitney U Test for strategy use as the Grouping Variable
The results in Table 1 represent exact significant values (2-tailed) is equal to .529 which is an indication of the point that there is not a significant difference between EFLs and native speakers of English in their use of preferred complaint strategies. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the preferred complaint strategies used by Iranian EFL and native speakers of English is not rejected.

Table 2 Comparison of mean ranks for strategy use by ENSs and EFLs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>native_eng</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19.33</td>
<td>386.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>efls</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21.67</td>
<td>433.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from table 2, the two groups are not equally similar in their use of complaint strategies. EFLs expressed their gripes more openly than NESs, while English speakers dealt with the complaint situation and provided rhetoric for argument more easily than EFLS.

5.1 Gender and complaint strategies
5.1.1 Gender in EFL learners
Regarding the second research question, whether there is any significant difference between Iranian EFL male and female learners in terms of using preferred complaint strategies in English, the results are presented in the following tables.

Table 3 Mann-Whitney U Test for strategy use as the Grouping Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Statistics</th>
<th>COMPLAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>14.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td>42.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-2.477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]</td>
<td>.011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Not corrected for ties.
b. Grouping Variable: SEX

The result of Mann Whitney Test confirms that males and females are considerably different as p-value is equal to .02 (rounded) which is accepted in sig. level of .05. Therefore, we can claim that sex is a noticeable factor in expressing complaint strategies and the null
hypothesis that states there is no significant difference between Iranian male and female EFL learners in using preferred complaint strategies is rejected.

**Table 4** *Comparison of mean ranks for strategy use by male and female EFLs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMPLAIN</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6.07</td>
<td>42.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.88</td>
<td>167.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the analyses in table 4, it is obvious that females applied complaint strategies twice than males. In fact, male EFL learners did not use *Requests for repair* in dealing with the situations although the females in most of cases used this type of complaint.

**5.1.2 Gender in native speakers**

The third hypothesis which was analyzed in this article was the difference between male and female native speakers of English in terms of using preferred complaint strategies, the results are as follows.

**Table 5** *Mann-Whitney U Test for strategy use as the grouping variable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Statistics</th>
<th>COMPLAIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mann-Whitney U</td>
<td>30.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon W</td>
<td>75.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>-1.448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]</td>
<td>.152a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| a. | Not corrected for ties. |
| b. | Grouping Variable: SEX |

Here, as it is demonstrated in table 5, male and female native speakers do not perform differently in using complaint strategies since the probability value of .148 is not corrected for ties between the two variables. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that sex is a determining factor in using preferred complaint strategies among native speakers of English and the final hypothesis is not rejected.
According to the data in Table 6, males utilized far less strategies than their females counterparts did. In other words, females tended to utilize softer strategies (*please, if it is possible, I wanted to see*) more than males.

### 6. Discussion

The results of this study revealed that males and females have different performance in complaint strategies with frequencies which is in line with the findings of Mikako (2005) and Baxter (2000) who believed that gender is an effective factor in the application of speech act in which females use more positive politeness strategies. According to Mills (2003), the comparison between males and females must be carried out by considering the parameter of community of practice. The results of this study represented that in two different communities of practice (EFL context and NL context), the participants performed differently based on the gender. In EFL context, females were different significantly with males in using complaint strategies, while gender was not found an influential parameter in NL context. The findings of this research; therefore, confirm that community of practice is an effective factor in using complaint strategies.

### 7. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that there does not exist a relationship between native speakers of English and the foreign language users of English who are learning the language in intermediate to advanced levels. It reveals that either the foreign language users are receiving a native like language or the first language interference is too low to affect the second language learning process. It can also be concluded that gender can be an influential factor in using complaint strategies. Therefore, the findings must be considered by the authors as well as educators and testers in the field of English Language Teaching.

### 7.1 Suggestions for Further Research
This research concentrates on the speech act of complaint which demands more social interaction skills as well as many face-saving strategies. Considerably, more work will need to be done to determine that the other variables may affect the production of this speech act. Suggestions are made to investigate the linguistic realization and social strategies of participants of different ages, educational levels, and socio-economic backgrounds. Moreover, qualitative examination of complaining strategies could be more insightful and introspective methods can be applied in future research. In addition, studies should engage larger samples and more situations to yield more valid results. Further studies should be launched to tackle the different variables that may affect the production of this challenging speech act. Finally, sex and age differences together with the level of offence should all be carefully studied in future research.

References


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Title

A Comparative Analysis of Grammatical Cohesive Ties in Low and High Intermediate EFL Students' Compositions

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Abstract

This study was an account of a functional analysis of grammatical cohesive ties in EFL students' compositions. It attempted to find out whether the proficiency level plays any role in students' correct use of grammatical cohesive ties (i.e. reference, substitution, ellipsis). To this purpose, a picture story was given to two groups of EFL students (N= 50) at high and low intermediate levels of English knowledge. Results show that students at this level perform quite similarly in using grammatical cohesive ties. Also, it was found that although the proficiency levels of the groups did not make a difference in the use of grammatical cohesive ties, both groups used reference markers more than ellipsis and substitution from among the three types of cohesive ties. The study concludes that reference cohesive ties are the most frequent markers used in their products.

Keywords: Grammatical cohesive ties, reference, substitution, ellipsis

I. Introduction

Problem with cohesion is a matter that plagues many EFL students (Liu, 2000). How to help students overcome the problem has long been a challenge for EFL teachers and researchers.
In dealing with this complex task two main types of cohesion, i.e. grammatical and lexical forms should be considered. Grammatical cohesion includes reference, substitution and ellipsis, while lexical cohesion deals with reiteration and collocation. These two types of cohesion help create texture or the property of being a text. Many studies have shown that these ties are essential devices in native and nonnative speakers' speech and writing (Koshik, 1999; Halliday & Hasan, 1976, 2001). When a comprehension problem arises as a result of limited background knowledge, readers will naturally rely more on text coherency with explicit signals to compensate for lack of prior knowledge. Grammatical cohesive ties are one type that give cohesion to a text. They are divided into three groups of: reference, substitution and ellipsis. Reference cohesive ties are the largest class of grammatical cohesive ties. They involve pronominals (subjective and objective pronouns), possessives (possessive pronouns and possessive adjectives), demonstratives, and comparatives. Substitution is the other class that consists of noun, verb and clause substitution. And finally there is ellipsis, which is a group with three subgroups; namely, noun, verb and clause ellipsis. Of the three types of grammatical cohesive ties, substitution and ellipsis are considered very similar as Halliday and Hasan (1976) put it.

Cohesive ties run separate clauses, sentences, and paragraphs into connected prose, and signal the interrelatedness between ideas. They make the thread of meaning the writer is trying to communicate obvious. Therefore, it is an essential task for teachers to help language learners understand the roles that cohesion plays in their writings in order to produce a native like product.

As such, the present study aims at investigating the degree of use of grammatical cohesive ties in the intermediate EFL students' compositions. This study in fact performs a comparative analysis on the writings of high and low intermediate EFL learners. It, therefore, seeks to answer the following questions:

1- Given learners’ compositions, is there any difference in the use of grammatical cohesive ties between the high and low intermediate groups?

2- What are the most frequently-used grammatical cohesive ties in the high and low intermediate groups’ writings?

2. Review of Literature

Halliday and Hasan (1976) take the view that the primary determinant of whether a set of sentences do or do not constitute a text depends on cohesive relations within and between
sentences. They insist that it is the presence of the cohesive markers, which constitute 'textness'. These forms direct the hearer/reader to look elsewhere for their interpretation. They direct the sentence from mere agglomerate, a text from a non-text. Liu and Braine (2005) proved a significant relationship between the frequency of cohesive devices and the overall quality of writing. As a result researchers have treated cohesion as an all but exclusively semantic relation. As was said grammatical cohesive ties as one type that give cohesion to a text have been found to play many roles in comprehension and production processes (Koshik, 1999; Al-Jarf, 2001; Bae, 2001).

In several studies, reference markers have been found to occur more frequently in texts than other types of grammatical cohesive ties. In a survey, Bae (2001) gave a picture story to his subjects to find the frequency of cohesive ties they used. The average number of words used in the essays was 67, and the average number of occurrences of reference markers was 14. The dominant pattern in the students' narrative after lexical cohesion with 55.6 percent was reference with 31.8 percent of the total occurrence. He classified reference items into five main groups of: pronominals, proper nouns, definite article, demonstratives and comparatives. Pronominals received the highest degree of occurrence. He found the majority of errors involved problems with reference: unclear reference, and misuse of 'a' or 'the' and omission of determiners needed for reference. Al-Jarf (2001) performed an investigation on 59 EFL college students on the cohesive ties. The subjects were supposed to indentify four types of cohesive ties in a reading text. Incorrect responses were analyzed and it was found that substitution was the most difficult to process, followed by reference and ellipsis, whereas conjunction was the easiest. In resolving the cohesion relationships, the students used the following strategies: an anaphor was associated with the closest noun whether intersentential or intrasentential. When preceded by two potential antecedents an anaphor was associated with the farthest antecedent if it was salient or more familiar. It was found that poor linguistic competence especially poor syntactic and semantic awareness, and poor or inaccurate knowledge of the cohesion rules caused cohesion anomalies.

Studies on cohesion in students' writings show that cohesion ties are used frequently by EFL students, and there are many mistakes associated with their use. Reference items have been found to be of much concern in writing because of the importance they have in creating cohesion associated with their needs to the environment to determine their full meaning (Salkie, 1995:64).

Concerning the use of cohesive ties by more and less proficient readers, Chiang (1999:229) found that learners at lower proficiency levels tend to be bound to the
transcription of meaning at the sentence level, and that they spare little attention for lexical transition and connection between sentences. He found cohesion features to be the best predictors of writing quality, but he did not specify the type mostly correlated with writing quality. He concluded that as students' proficiency level increased they tend to use more ties.

As has been already stated, substitution and ellipsis are very much similar to each other. Halliday and Hasan (1976:142) declare: "Ellipsis is simply substitution by zero." Both substitution and ellipsis involve referring back to something earlier in the text. Whereas in substitution a particular word refers back, in ellipsis there is a 'gap' in the text, which refers back. Like substitution, ellipsis is also a speaker/writer choice and not a compulsory feature. So it seldom occurs in the students' writings. Both substitution and ellipsis show weak relationships with overall writing quality. In the study done by Bae (2001) it was found that ellipsis is not easily processed by EFL learners and like substitution, it is problematic for them.

In sum, research has shown that different types of cohesion play crucial roles in making a coherent piece of written discourse and create the relatedness that might seem a part and parcel of all texts. However, the research on the type(s) which are more frequent in students' products is limited and some studies have failed to find the more or less prominent cohesive ties used in students' writings. Because of the importance that should be paid to these points, a study examining the differences that proficiency level can make in the students' performance and the more or less prominent markers used in students' writings is needed.

Since the objective of this study was to examine the difference in the use of grammatical cohesive ties between high and low intermediate groups and the most frequently-used ties in their writings, the following research questions and hypotheses were formulated:

RQ#1 Is there any difference in the use of grammatical cohesive ties between the high and low intermediate groups?
RQ#2 What are the most frequently-used grammatical cohesive ties in high and low intermediate groups' writings?

H1: High intermediate group uses more grammatical cohesive ties compared with its low intermediate counterpart.
H2: There should be some preferences in the students' use of cohesive ties.
3. Methodology

3.1. Participants
In order to provide the required empirical data that was pieces of narrative, a proficiency test was administered to a group of 128 students majoring in English at Shahid Chamran University of Ahwaz. These students were studying Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), English translation and English literature. They were among different academic semesters 3, 5 and 8. So the test included elementary, intermediate and advanced university levels. Variables such as sex, and age were not controlled in the selection of these subjects; thus, both male and female students were allowed to take part in the research project. Then 50 subjects, who had the highest grades among others, were chosen and prepared for the second test. These fifty students were divided into two groups of high and low intermediate based on their obtained scores. They were asked to write a narrative on a picture story. This was to find out whether they were familiar with the functional uses of grammatical cohesive ties.

3.2. Instrument
The main instrument of the study was a test on a picture story. Picture stories aim at motivating children to produce connected discourse through pictures. The picture stories for this study were selected from a picture story book for children learning their mother language. To choose an appropriate testing instrument, the researcher consulted two other teachers regarding the suitability of the selected pictures for the sample of the study.

Also, to select homogeneous participants, a proficiency test adapted from an MCHE test (Proficiency Test prepared by Ministry of Higher Culture and Higher Education) was administered to the students. It consisted of 50 items divided into three parts:
Part A: Grammar (20 items)
Part B: Vocabulary (20 items)
Part C: Reading Comprehension (2 passages with 10 items both)

The test was administered to a group of 128 participants with half an hour time to answer it. The range of the grades resulted from this test was 18-43 out of 50; namely, 36-68 out of 100. The grades of 60-69 formed the low intermediate group and 70 to 86, the upper intermediate group. Two groups of students each consisting of 25 members were selected for the main test. The scores below 60, however, were excluded.

3.3. Procedure
This research project was carried out in two different phases. In the first phase, a proficiency test was administered to 128 English students in order to select two groups of 25 subjects. In
the second phase of the experiment, the selected groups were given a picture description story task. They did not have any description written on their exam papers. The participants were asked to write a narrative on a visual story containing 7 connected pictures. They were asked to write according to what they inferred from the pictures. They were allowed to use names for the characters in the story if they preferred. They had enough time to write about the events. They had access to the pictures throughout the exam, and they could change or correct their writings. The students were not allowed to ask questions regarding the pictures or ask for a word equivalent.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

The total number of grammatical cohesive ties for both groups is given below:

Total number of grammatical cohesive ties used by high intermediate group: 1306
Total number of grammatical cohesive ties used by low intermediate group: 982

The number of occurrence of each group has been calculated based on the following chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Pronominals: I, you, he, she, it, we, they, me, you, him, her, it, us, them</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Possessives: my, your, his, her, its, our, their, mine, yours, his, hers, its, ours, theirs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstratives: this, that, these, those, it, here, there, the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparatives: identity, similarity, comparison, difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellipsis</td>
<td>Noun Ellipsis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verb Ellipsis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clause Ellipsis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitution</td>
<td>Noun Substitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verb Substitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clause Substitution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number used by every individual has been counted. In both groups, the number of occurrence declares that students use grammatical cohesive ties very often in their products and most of their usages were correct. Regarding the first hypothesis i.e. H1: High intermediate group uses more grammatical cohesive ties compared with its low intermediate counterpart, the mean of the three variables: reference, substitution and ellipsis in high and low intermediate groups was compared through a two-sampled T-test with the following results:
Table 4.2 Two-sampled T-test for high and low intermediate group on the use of reference markers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Index Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig. level</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>45.29</td>
<td>17.28</td>
<td>3.078</td>
<td>0.003</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>33.96</td>
<td>8.88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 T-test for high and low intermediate group on the use of ellipsis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Index Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig. level</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.244</td>
<td>0.220</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 T-test for high and low intermediate group on the use of substitution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Index Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig. level</th>
<th>df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>high</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>low</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the above mentioned results a significant difference between high and low intermediates could be observed. High intermediate group used grammatical markers more than their low intermediate counterpart.

For the second research hypothesis i.e. H2: there should be some preferences in the students’ use of cohesive ties, the average number of reference, substitution and ellipsis markers used in each group was compared and one-way ANOVA with the following results proved the significance:

Table 4.5 One-way ANOVA-test to compare the means of variables in high intermediate group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Index Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig. level</th>
<th>Df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>reference</td>
<td>45.92</td>
<td>17.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ellipsis</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>149.018</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substitution</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 One-way ANOVA-test to compare the means of variables in low intermediate group
Reference with 1148 number of occurrence in high intermediate group and 849 number of occurrence in low intermediate group constitutes the highest group of grammatical cohesive ties used by these students. As the average number of reference markers used by both groups is more than the other two variables, investigation of its subcomponents seems necessary:

Table 4.7 One-way ANOVA-test to compare the means of reference markers in high intermediate group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Index Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig. level</th>
<th>Df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>reference</td>
<td>33.96</td>
<td>8.88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ellipsis</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>297.58</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>substitution</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 One-way ANOVA-test to compare the means of reference markers in low intermediate group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Index Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig. level</th>
<th>Df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pronominals</td>
<td>18.20</td>
<td>9.8022</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possessives</td>
<td>7.32</td>
<td>4.5066</td>
<td>35.42</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstratives</td>
<td>19.72</td>
<td>6.127</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparatives</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.4106</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 One-way ANOVA-test to compare the means of demonstratives in high intermediate group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistical Index Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig. level</th>
<th>Df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pronominals</td>
<td>12.52</td>
<td>5.8532</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possessives</td>
<td>7.08</td>
<td>3.1746</td>
<td>29.78</td>
<td>0.000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstratives</td>
<td>14.36</td>
<td>5.9011</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comparatives</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.5777</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The highest mean score belongs to demonstratives in both groups. High intermediate group used more demonstratives compared with the low group, investigating the mean score of demonstratives in high intermediate group revealed the following results:
Table 4.10 One-way ANOVA-test to compare the means of demonstratives in low intermediate group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig. level</th>
<th>Df</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.869</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>1.423</td>
<td>15.08</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.276</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.577</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Here</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.714</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The</td>
<td>11.96</td>
<td>5.917</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the subjects in high and low intermediate groups used grammatical cohesive ties in proper places and appropriately. They had little problem using reference, substitution and ellipsis markers. The only noticeable matter was the frequent occurrence of the definite article ‘the’ in most papers.

4.2. Discussion

The results revealed that reference items occur in the students' texts more than other types of grammatical cohesive ties. In high intermediate group, references are 87.90 percent of the total and in low intermediate group it formed 86.46 percent of the total. Bae (2001) reached rather similar results in his study. The prominent types of cohesion observed in the narratives across the children in his study were reference ties. Ellipsis and substitution occurred less
frequently in the written narratives. However, dominant reference types were pronominal forms, while in this study the dominant reference markers were demonstratives.

4.2.1. Reference

Reference group consists of many subgroups—prouns, comparatives, and demonstratives—that occur frequently in texts. Pronominals as the group which appear in sentences as head nouns, and primary information and the definite article 'the' as the word with highest degree of occurrence in sentences (Jervis, 2002; R-Abusaeedi, 2009) are among the reference subgroups that occur frequently in writings.

4.2.1.1 Demonstratives

Of the four types of references in high and low intermediate groups, the students used demonstratives, with the following figures and percentages, more than other types:

High intermediate group: 493 number of occurrences and 42.32 percent of the total
Low intermediate group: 359 number of occurrences and 41.79 percent of the total

This high degree of frequency of demonstratives belongs to the degree of occurrence of definite article 'the'. Other types of demonstratives were used much less frequently than 'the' in the students' texts. The definite article 'the' has occurred 381 times in high intermediate group and 299 times in low intermediates. The use of 'the' in the students' sentences is not always done correctly. It was sometimes overused; in other words, the students overgeneralized the rule. As a result, some of its usage was not done properly. It was obvious that they know the rule and the general functions that 'the' plays in their sentences.

Definite article 'the' is used in situations when the reference is specific and the hearer has knowledge about it. Jarvis (2002) studied the acquisition of English articles by Japanese students and discovered that students' problems with articles decreases with language proficiency. He had an interview with the subjects and asked them about their reasons for the use of specific articles, and concluded that learners at higher proficiency levels more frequently expressed reasons for choice of articles than did learners at lower proficiency levels. In fact, his test proved that the higher the students' proficiency level, the more target-like their usage would be.

Demonstrative article 'the' as a specifying agent indicates that the item referred to is identifiable although it does not identify exactly the referent within the text. As a cohesive device 'the' can also link previous information to new information in the text suggesting that the information has already been mentioned thus building anaphoric relations. 'The' may also be exophoric suggesting that the succeeding item is specific and the reader knows exactly the specific item being referred to.
There might be another possibility for the frequent occurrence of the definite article 'the' in the students' products, i.e. the students' intention to specify information that can establish common ground with the reader. They know that the person who is going to read their stories has access to the picture and may unconsciously be inclined to create shared knowledge with him (Alarcon & Morales, 2011).

Persian speakers writing in English carry the burden of making the meaning clear to the reader. Using 'the' (they know it is used to activate previous familiarity with the noun), they try to provide familiarity and shared knowledge with the listener/reader. To create coherency in texts they compose, EFL learners use linguistic markers, to make sure that their sentences make sense, are related and coherent. In every language, the listener or the reader wants to be informed and share the knowledge of the speaker or writer. So to be explicit is what we as readers or writers want. EFL students try to provide this explicitness by using many linguistic markers (cohesive ties) because they are not well familiar with language complexities to use implicit markers of connectedness.

4.2.1.2 Pronominals

After demonstratives, pronominals consisting of personal and objective pronouns are the group used more by the subjects. Among pronominals the subject pronoun 'he' with 124 numbers of occurrences (27.25 percent) in high intermediate group and 84 number of occurrences (26.83 percent) in low intermediate group constitute the highest use of pronominals. The reason for its frequent occurrence might be obvious; first, because of its role as head noun; second, because the hero was a boy. The prominent use of pronouns appears to be due to their roles. Pronouns are primary information. They are continuous all over the text. Alarcon and Morales (2011) proved that in argumentative texts, students use the singular personal pronoun 'I' to indicate personal opinions. As is evident in narratives, students use the personal pronoun indicating the 'hero'.

4.2.1.3 Possessives

Possessive pronouns did not occur very frequently in the students' texts. The students in high intermediate group used possessives 183 times (15.71 percent within their group) and those in low intermediate group 177 times (20.61 percent within their group). Just one of the students in low intermediate group used possessive adjectives. Possessive pronouns and adjectives can be used interchangeably; however, as the structure of possessive adjectives is a little complex and can easily confuse the students and it sometimes needs some changes in the structure, students do not show much inclination to use them.
4.2.1.4 Comparatives
The fourth group is the comparative group, the 25 students in high intermediate group used the comparatives 34 times, and the low intermediate group 10 times. They were not used frequently may be because of the pictures. The pictures did not require the students to use many comparison and reference items. The series of pictures given to the students was in fact a simple narrative, including a series of events happening in a sequential order. It did not require the students to use 'comparatives' in the sentences, except for the few cases used by the subjects.

4.2.2. Ellipsis
Compared with reference, ellipsis has been used very much less. Ellipsis is known to occur in response to spontaneous conversations but is seldom used in formal writing. As such it has far fewer occurrences than reference. Assessing the students' results, it was found that after reference, subjects used more ellipsis in their narratives. Ellipsis is an arbitrary feature. It is a speaker/writer choice. It means the writer can use it to omit some repetition or he can prevent using it altogether.

Ellipsis is also a mark of cohesiveness. If the writer uses it, he can make the text shorter, less monotonous, and more coherent. If not, the text keeps its cohesiveness, but when one read it, he may find some changes that can make the text easier to process and understand for the readers. Halliday (1985) explains that clause and verb ellipses are mostly related to question-answer processes in dialogs, in either yes/no or wh-questions.

One further point is that the use of ellipsis is difficult for EFL students who are not well prepared for the complexities of a foreign language. Therefore, using an ellipsis wrongly in a sentence is worse than not using it at all. It is one of the common communication strategies mentioned in Brown (1994:118), called avoidance, i.e. avoid using what (syntactic or lexical) you are not well familiar with. You use other forms instead to convey the point.

4.2.3. Substitution
The low intermediate group used substitution 0.81 percent of the total and high intermediate group 0.61 percent of the total grammatical cohesive ties. Like ellipsis, substitution has been used very much less, compared with reference. It is again a speaker/writer choice and not a compulsory feature. It occurs seldom in writing (Bae, 2001:72; Azzouz, 2009). However, a small number of students used it.

Besides being an optional feature, the reason for its less frequent occurrence can be the complexity of the structure. When they are examined, the students try to use forms they are sure to be correct. Instead of one sentence using a substitution, they make two sentences
using a reference type, for example. This might refer to the learners' avoidance. Students usually avoid using ellipsis and substitution because they might fear about their appropriateness. Moreover, substitution has the same limitations that ellipsis does. According to Halliday (1985), substitution, like ellipsis is used typically in dialog sequences and in responses to questions. In fact, Halliday categorizes ellipsis and substitution under the same heading.

Another reason for the less frequent use of ellipsis and substitution can be the source of information elicitation; i.e. the picture in this case. Pictures may not call for producing sentences with many ellipsis or substitution markers. Finding a picture which requires the students to use all types of grammatical cohesive ties is a hard rather impossible task unless we make-up a picture which directs the students to use the things we are looking for which is then an unnatural recount of the students' performance.

5. Conclusion
In this study it was evident that Persian speakers learning English used grammatical cohesive ties very frequently in their sentences. They used many reference markers, but fewer substitution and ellipsis markers of cohesion in their narrative compositions. The use of grammatical cohesive ties in the students' compositions was mostly correct. The only noticeable matter was the overuse of the definite article 'the' in the students' sentences.

Also, it was found that two groups of high and low intermediate learners used grammatical cohesive ties almost the same. High and low intermediate learners both used grammatical cohesive ties very frequently in their texts.

In addition, as was mentioned before, students used reference markers of grammatical cohesive ties more than the other two (ellipsis and substitution). Reference as a large group consisting of pronouns, demonstratives and comparatives occurred very often in the students' compositions. This was found to be due to the role(s) that reference markers play in sentences. Among the reference group, demonstrative 'the' was used more than other types of reference in texts. It was also revealed that the use of ellipsis and substitution is less than other types which requires more concentration on teachers' parts.

The study suggests that students at intermediate levels of learning English are rather familiar with the correct use of grammatical cohesive ties. They know when and where to use them. However, they use some forms more than others. When students produce written discourse, they demonstrate an ability to use a particular feature in their product which might
be the reason why some grammatical cohesive devices are embedded. Moreover, learners' writing experience could be a source of their use of devices. They rarely misuse them and are approximately familiar with the cohesive roles they play in sentences.

5.1 Pedagogical Implications

Adult native language speakers use many cohesive markers to make their points clear which has implications for teaching as it shows that expressing information tasks would be good teaching tools to encourage the practice of cohesion. Students should be made aware of the correct use of cohesive markers. Various activities including sentences that require students to complete them with different cohesive markers or selected cohesive markers, for example, just grammatical cohesive markers, can be provided. This is a good test to check which type(s) of cohesive ties the students use more, and which types they do not use very often in their sentences.

Besides, Bae (2001) found that students in elementary levels of learning English are more inclined to acquire cohesive ties. It is more efficient if grammars are taught in context and presented as part of other information. Using texts, which are connected to 'real life', would be beneficial, because they set the students in realistic contexts.

5.2 Suggestions for Further Research

Non-native speakers' familiarity with other cohesive ties is not considered in this study. A comparative study can be done with the native speakers' use of cohesive ties and non-native speakers. In this study only intermediate-level learners were tested. Similar research can be administered with other students at different levels, too. A comparative study can be done with comparison groups to check the impact of explicit and implicit teaching of cohesive ties in the students' performance especially in elementary levels of language learning.

References


Title

Analyzing Interactions in Iranian EFL Classes from Classroom Discourse Perspective

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Abstract

The current study aims to examine the interaction patterns of Iranian EFL classrooms from the perspective of classroom discourse analysis. Five EFL classes with female students ranging in age from 15 to 29 were observed for 900 minutes through non-participant observation. The most recurring patterns of interaction were IRF, role plays, discussions and choral response with teacher-initiated IRF being the prevailing pattern. Also, teacher speech outnumbered the linguistic quantity of learners' contribution making the classroom discourse a teacher-centered discourse. This study argues that the teachers and educators should focus on the co-constructed nature of classroom discourse and shift away from teacher-centered discourse providing a more equitable situation to promote student interaction.

Keywords: Classroom discourse, IRF (initiation, response, feedback), Role plays, Discussions, Choral response

1. Introduction

Learning a language in the classroom is a consequence of the exposure of the learner to the linguistic environment manifested in the interaction between the participants in that context. This interaction differs in form and function from casual conversation and other institutional varieties of talk which occur in different institutions. Studying classroom interaction helps in finding effective ways of preparing L2 teachers, evaluating teaching, studying the relationship between teaching and learning, and promoting teachers' awareness of their
teaching and consequently improving it. For these purposes and many others, several approaches including Discourse analysis are used to measure, analyse and describe the behaviour of participants and the patterns of language use in classrooms. Realizing the effect of classroom discourse patterns on the material to be learned and the learning process itself is crucial to making appropriate adjustments conducive to achieving the maximum benefits of education in a classroom environment.

The aim of the current study is to promote the ability of the teachers to develop a self-reflective and self-criticizing approach to their teaching; to analyze and evaluate the events, activities and interactions that occur in the classroom. It provides a ground for the teachers to keep their eyes, ears and minds open in the classroom to see what works and what does not and what changes are required to make instruction effective.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Discourse analysis
Gee (1999) argues that the word discourse refers to more than just talk; it encompasses any meaningful use of language as well as communicative gestures. By looking closely at discourse, we can gain information regarding two of the primary functions of language: "to support the performance of social activities and social identities and to support human affiliation within cultures, social groups, and institutions" (p. 1). In other words, discourse is inextricably linked to the enactment of social activities (e.g., classroom lessons), the formation and maintenance of social identities (e.g., students as capable learners), the interactions of social groups (e.g., classroom communities), and the establishment of social institutions (e.g., schools). Discourse analysis, therefore, is able to meet two calls in the field of education research: first, the call for sociocultural and contextual considerations, and second, the call for a more scientific basis for claims. Discourse analysis, by definition, gives a lot of attention to the contexts of learning, and it rests upon observable behavior such as speech, written text, and gestures, requiring less appeal to invisible structures and states.

Discourse analysis as a research method also has the possibility of bridging the division between theory and practice, or basic and applied research. This possibility arises from the "magical property" of language as described by Gee (1999): language reflects the situations in which we are communicating, as we modify our speech and use appropriate language for the circumstances, and simultaneously constructs that very situation (p. 10). Correspondingly, discourse analysis can provide insight about the way things are in a given situation, a sort of
basic research, and can also provide insight into the way in which that situation came to be, opening the door to applied research.

2.2. Classroom discourse analysis

Classroom discourse analysis has been a major theme in much research on linguistics, applied, linguistics and education for some years. Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) suggested that an interest in classroom language studies dated form the 1940s. Since 1960s and early 1970s on, a great deal of research into many areas of discourse including classroom discourse has been undertaken in the English-speaking world. This development paralleled the upsurge of scholarly interest in linguistics and applied linguistics in the same period, while the invention of the tape recorder, later augmented by the emergence of cheap video recording facilities rendered much more accessible than hitherto the whole enterprise of recording talk and analyzing it.

Nunan (1993) views classroom discourse as the distinctive type of discourse that occurs in classrooms. Discourse in the language classroom is a matter of the oral use of language in the classrooms. One influential approach to the study of spoken discourse, as acknowledged by (McCarthy, 1991), was carried out by Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) at the University of Birmingham. They suggested a three tier approach, beginning-middle-end, to focus on the distinct "moves" that take place in discourse, which can be considered as question-answer-comment in the classroom environment, or command-acknowledgement-polite formality, as occurs in a shop between the client and the shopkeeper.

Special features of classroom discourse include: unequal power relationships, turn-taking at speaking, patterns of interaction, etc. Classroom discourse is often different in form and function from language used in other situations because of particular social roles which learners and teachers have in classrooms and the kind of activities they usually carry out there. Researchers and language teachers focus on classroom discourse in order to know what actually happens in the classroom that really matters, that makes a difference to the learners' progress in language acquisition. The focus is on organization of language beyond the level of sentence and the individual speaking turn, whereby meaning is negotiated in the process of interaction (Carter and Nunan, 2001).

Classroom discourse studies can produce considerable information about what actually goes on in L2 classrooms, refining greatly what the teachers might otherwise think goes on. It provides useful information about how language classrooms resemble one another and also differ in terms of the variety of learning activities and communication modalities they use, the proportions of teacher talk to student talk, the ways teachers correct (or do not correct)
errors, the kinds of language that learners produce in group tasks and in pairs, the types of verbal interactions that take place within different activities or tasks, as well as the kinds of questions teachers and students ask one another. The information obtained from classroom discourse studies is effective in programs for the education of L2 teachers. It provides a systematic and objective record of observed classroom lessons and can play a useful role in sensitizing novice language teachers to particular aspects of their classroom performance or to encourage more experienced teachers to reflect systematically on their classroom behaviors.

2.3. Interaction in EFL Classrooms

The main aim of learning a language is to use it in communication in its spoken or written forms. Classroom interaction is a key to reach that goal. It is the collaborative exchange of thoughts, feelings or ideas between two or more people, leading to a mutual effect on each other. Rivers (1987) argues that through interaction, students can increase their language store as they listen to or read authentic linguistic material, or even output of their fellow students in discussions, joint problem-solving tasks, or dialogue journals. In interaction, students can use all they possess of the language, all they have learned or casually absorbed in real life exchanges.

There is a substantial body of research evidence highlighting the interdependence of interaction, input and output. Long's Interaction Hypothesis takes account of the importance of negotiation of meaning in the feedback learners receive on their contributions from the teacher. Swain (1985) also in her Output Hypothesis highlights the importance of the learner-teacher dialogues in promoting acquisition. Artigal (1992) proposes that the "language acquisition device" is located in the interaction that takes place between speakers rather than inside speakers' heads. That is, acquisition occurs "in" rather than "as a result of" interaction. From this perspective L2 acquisition is not a purely individual-based process, but shared between the individual and other persons.

In addition, the importance of interaction was emphasized in theories of communicative competence. These theories assert that human beings use language in various contexts to "negotiate" meaning, or simply stated, to get one idea out of your head and into the head of another person and vice versa (Brown, 1994).

According to Ellis (1990), interaction is meaning-focused and carried out to facilitate the exchange of information and prevent communication breakdowns. However, classroom interaction is of a particular nature and a range of functions including formal instruction, whole class and task management and development of group cohesion. Therefore, it involves
everything communicative happening in the classroom. Ellis defined classroom interaction as
"not only those exchanges involving authentic communication but to every oral exchange that
occurs in the classroom, including those that arise in the course of formal drilling" (Ellis,
1990, p.12).

Van Lier (1988) describes classroom discourse in terms of two dimensions. He classifies
the discourse of classroom interaction according to whether the teacher controls the topic (i.e.,
what is being talked about) and activity (i.e., the way the topic is talked about). Based on this
classification, four basic types of classroom interaction are identified by Ellis (1990). The first
type of classroom interaction takes place when neither the topic nor the activity is controlled
by the teacher. The second type of interaction occurs when the teacher controls the topic but
not the activity. This type of interaction requires the teacher transmitting some information or
explaining the issue. Type three interaction involves the teacher control of both the topic and
the activity. Type four occurs when the teacher controls activity but not the topic. This type
of interaction involves teacher setting up small group work prescribing the rules but giving
freedom of the choice of topic.

Successful teaching stems from successful management of the interaction, "the sine qua
non of classroom pedagogy" (Alright, 1988). Walsh (2006) believes that interaction does not
simply happen, nor is it the function of teaching methodology. Interaction in an "acquisition
rich" classroom is both instigated and sustained by the teacher. Class-based L2 learning is
often enhanced when teachers have a detailed understanding of the relationship between
teacher talk, interaction and learning opportunity.

Classroom interaction can occur between the teacher and learners, and/or between learners
themselves, either collectively or individually. According to Angelo (1993) classroom
interaction comprises teacher-learner and learner-learner interaction which is one of ten
principles of effective teaching: "create an active learning environment; focus attention;
connect knowledge; help students organize their knowledge; provide timely feedback;
demand quality; balance high expectations with student support; enhance motivation to learn;
encourage faculty-student and student-student interaction and communication; and help
students to productively manage their time". Learners will get more knowledge from the
lessons when they actively participate in their learning.

2.4. Initiation, Response, Feedback (IRF)
One of the first discourse modalities observed in classrooms, since tape recordings have been
available, is the IRF or IRE exchange. In two independent works, Sinclair and Coulthard
(1975), and Mehan (1979) observed that the teacher usually initiates (I) an exchange through
questioning the whole class or one single student who responds (R) the question, which is evaluated (E) or followed-up (F) by the teacher. In the classrooms investigated by Sinclair and Coulthard, the teacher rarely asked a question because he or she genuinely wanted to know the answer. Instead of that, the teacher wanted to know whether the student knew the answer (1975, p. 36-37).

Through understanding the I-R-E structures of classrooms, researchers have come to important insights about teachers' and students' social roles and relationships inside classrooms. In particular, the teacher by evaluating what students say assumes the right to control the talk. The role of the teacher in controlling the classroom agenda and the discourse has been recognized to be sustained by a set of implicit rules of classroom talk (Edwards and Mercer, 1987), whose function in guiding and structuring the activities was found to be performed by IRF exchanges. Also, as initiator of the sequence, the teacher maintains the right to call on students and allocate turns, in essence organizing and orchestrating the discussions. Within this teacher-controlled turn-taking, participation structure, students must have certain discourse strategies and skills to perform well (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975).

Regarding IRF discourse model, different concerns and challenges were proposed. It is argued that the shaping of an Initiate-Respond-Feedback exchange has been, to a great extent, built upon behavioristic language learning theory. The teacher supplies the stimulus with learner providing the response. Thus, providing positive or negative feedback is essential to improving learners' language knowledge, but the limited amount of information in the feedback move in the IRF discourse model is apparently inadequate for learners to achieve maximum language development. Even if positive feedback is given, it can also keep back interaction since students often perceive it as a terminal message, believing that the correct answer has been indicated and there is no need for further interaction. No matter which form the feedback move takes, the immediate feedback following the learners' response has a negative effect on problem-solving and hinders the learner’s high-level thinking (Frazee & Rudnitski, 1995).

The IRE structure of discourse sets up an imbalance of power in a number of ways. Most obviously, all interactions are teacher initiated. Teachers are expected to take responsibility for opening and closing interactive exchanges, determining who talks to whom on what topic, and for how long; while students are responsible for replying only. There are almost no chances for them to practice what they have learned before in performing successive communication. They are viewed as passive medium with lack of opportunity to interact with the teacher and the other students. What is expected from the learners is to sit and listen to
teacher talk passively. As soon as they have responded to a question, they are passive again to receive the teacher's evaluation. During each of the two turn-taking steps, students remain in the passive state listening to either the teacher’s questions or feedback.

Regarding checking for understanding, IRF pattern of questioning does little to verify if any real learning has taken place. The answers to most of the questions are predetermined by the teacher as opposed to a true investigation or discussion of some open ended issue. The type of questions reinforces the idea that every question has a correct answer in the context of classroom discourse and it is the teacher who is given the power to evaluate the responses as "right" or "wrong".

IRF discourse is concerned with poor communicative competence. The process of solving the unexpected communication problems leads to improving language abilities. But, IRF model will never create many interactive chances for listeners to stimulate their cognitive process and find a final solution in order to make communication flow smoothly. Moreover, the three-move model cannot demonstrate a complete meaning about a topic. Real communication is far from only a question-answer-feedback exchange. It can be said that the subjects trained by IRF pattern may not be powerful in competence of further communication. According to Barnes (1976), IRF exchanges are associated with the pedagogy of transmission, affording learners few opportunity for extended utterances, limiting the range of language functions to be performed and due to lack of communication breakdown, they provide few occasions for negotiation of meaning. Van Lier (1996) asserted that in the IRF exchange "the students' response is hemmed in, squeezed between a demand to display knowledge and a judgment on its competence" (p. 151).

Lukinsky and Schachter (1990) pointed out that instruction in IRF model is limited to lower cognitive processes and does little to promote any real thinking. It does not encourage the learner to put forward new ideas, connect relative experiences and express critical viewpoints. The type of questions are of minimal value and should be complemented with higher cognitive processes, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

It should also be said that to date, the IRF has probably received more of a bad press than it deserves. Classroom observation studies suggest that it is not always testing but rather has different pedagogic functions. These may include checking and monitoring individual students' existing knowledge, using the correct responses of some students as "models" of correct answers for the whole class, and providing "opportunities to extend the students' answer" (Wells, 1993, p. 30). Van Lier (1996) pointed out that IRF exchanges can facilitate students' contribution by "scaffolding" their attempts to use the L2. How the exchange is
enacted is of great importance. So, if the initiation move involves teacher questions introducing negotiation, richer contributions may arise on the part of the learners. Also, when the follow-up move, rather than evaluating the students' response, serves to extend the response and make connections with what has gone before and what will follow, the discourse can become less pedagogic and more controversial.

3. Methodology

The current study took a non-participant observation to answer the following question: What are the recurring interaction patterns in Iranian EFL classrooms?

3.1. Participants

Two groups of subjects partook in this study, namely teachers and EFL learners.

Teachers

The proficiency level and the willingness to participate served as two leading and prime criteria for the researcher in choosing the teacher. The teachers were approached and asked about their inclination for participation in the study. In order to meet the requirement that the data be authentic, a general and rough picture of the objectives was explained to the teachers. The objective was explained as being a mere investigation of the interaction between teachers and EFL learners. The five teachers participated were all female, native speakers of Azeri with a BA or an MA degree in TEFL, with six years of EFL teaching experience at different proficiency levels.

Learners

Five intact EFL classes were observed. There were around fifty female EFL learners with a variety of motives for learning English including preparation for academic study, professional development or immigration. The age range was between 15-29 years. The classes ranged in size from 10-17 students. The English proficiency level of the learners as measured by the placement test was either elementary or advanced.

3.2. Context of the study

The private language institute, Shayestegan in which the study was carried out is located in Bonab, East Azerbaijan, Iran. The five classes under observation were held three times a week, with every session lasting 90 minutes. The arrangement of the chairs in all classes were shape opening toward the whiteboard and teacher desk which was deemed as standard setting for it allowed for a smooth interaction between the teacher and the learners and among the learners. It also eased the teacher's access to all learners.
3.3. Materials
Based on the multi-skills syllabus, the course books covered in elementary and advanced levels were Interchange 1 and Passage 2 (Richards et al., 2005; Richards and Sandy, 2000) respectively. At various unobtrusive locations around the classroom audio recorder systems were used in order to record the interactions for later analysis.

4. Results and Discussion
Each of the five classes under experiment (hereafter Class1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) was observed twice, namely 180 minutes. The aim was to find out the patterns of interaction used in these classes among students and between students and teachers. The data of transcribed talk was gone under analysis to measure relative frequency of occurrence of different interactional patterns. To enhance the validity and reliability of the information, data were triangulated from three sources, namely in-depth non-participant observation by researcher in the classroom, field notes taken by the researcher and audio recording of classroom interaction.

Transcripts were independently coded by two coders (the researcher and her colleague, a Ph.D. candidate of Isfahan University) and the level of agreement measured to ensure reliability.

The results of frequency analysis revealed that the most important interaction patterns observed in the classes under observation were the role play, discussion, choral response and IRF.

Role play
Role play is really a worthwhile learning experience for both the students and the teacher. Not only can students have more opportunities to "act" and "interact" with their peers trying to use the English language, but also students' English speaking, listening, and understanding will improve. Role play lightens up the atmosphere and brings liveliness in the class. Students learn to use the language in a more realistic, more practical way. Thus they can become more aware of the usefulness and practicality of English. Role play is indeed a useful teaching technique which should be experimented and applied by ESL/EFL teachers more often in the ESL/EFL classrooms.

From among five classes under observation, three classes namely, Class 1, 3 and 5 made use of role plays as a technique for developing fluency and promoting interaction. Before performing role plays, the students were divided into groups. In all three classes, adequate preparation time was provided before role playing.
In Class 1, the situation for role playing was the one provided in the "conversation" section of the textbook. The learners were required to listen to the dialogue and then practice it. After practicing, the groups volunteered to act out the role plays in front of the class. While doing the role plays, they could look at the books when needed.

Again, the situation provided in the textbook was the one used for role playing in Class 3. It was a dialogue read aloud by the teacher as a sample and learners were required to practice role plays using their own words and ideas.

The situations selected for role playing were not the same for all the groups. The groups were given role cards and enough practice time. The teacher walked among the groups and gave them feedback on the content or linguistic appropriateness whenever necessary. When the groups felt that they were ready, they could act out the role plays in front of the class.

Discussion

Wilen (2004) stated that discussion is an instructional conversation composed of teacher and student interaction including higher order questions asked by the teacher, statements, and responses where students are to apply their knowledge and think critically in order to enhance their understanding about an issue, problem, or other content. Classroom discussion is not a teacher asking questions and students answering them, but rather it is a means for students to explore ideas, develop critical thinking skills, interact about societal issues and problems, and engage in group decision making and problem solving.

From among five classes under observation in this study, two classes made use of discussion skills in order to develop interaction between teachers and students and among students. In both of the classes, the teacher allowed students free choice of topics. This is in accordance with Slimani's idea who suggested that free choice of topic may be of particular importance in monolingual classrooms in which the common cultural background of the learners might limit the range of topics of potential interest; it may help strengthen the cultural solidarity of the class and lower the affective barriers (1992).

In the current study, the students were divided into groups of four in the Class 4. The teacher tried to make the groups homogeneous in terms of linguistic ability and personality type. The groups were required to select the topic of interest for the discussion. If the topics selected were too broad, the teacher broke them down into manageable areas of inquiry to suit the time constraints. While discussing, the teacher passed unobtrusively from group to group to resolve possible breakdowns caused by the students due to insufficient language to realize intended meanings.
The discussion topic was the same for whole class in Class 5. It was selected in previous sessions. The teacher started the discussion by asking some questions and made use of brainstorming and mind-mapping techniques to increase confidence and fluency in the use of language. In the course of doing the discussion, she gave feedback to the students in the content and linguistic appropriateness to learners. By asking questions from the introverted students, she tried to make all the students participate in the discussion. At the end of the discussion, the learners were required to select a topic for the next session discussion.

**Choral responding**

Choral responding is a technique that allows all students to verbally respond to a question directed from the teacher (Heward, Courson, & Narayan, 1989). This form of responding allows for the teacher to hear accurate or inaccurate responses from a class or large group of students in a quick and efficient manner. Choral responding allows all students of all abilities to participate in active responding without fear of being on the spot. Teachers also get immediate feedback on which students understand the material. Choral responding has been shown to improve student confidence in learning (Heward, Courson, & Narayan, 1989). Choral responding was a feature evident in all the classes under observation in this study. To increase the effectiveness of choral responding, some teachers provided a thinking pause. Others used a clear signal of what to respond. Most of the teachers from time to time called on individual students. With these strategies they were able to monitor attentiveness and participation of all the students and ensured that all the students understood the material presented.

**Initiation, Response, Feedback (IRF)**

The mostly seen pattern of classroom interaction in the classes under observation was IRF. The teacher initiated the conversation with a question, and asked a student to answer the question, and then provided feedback to the student’s answer.

T: What's the picture on page 32?
SS: billboard
T: Ok…..good. It's a billboard

In the above example, the teacher asked a question in the first turn and the students provided the answer in the second turn. The feedback by the teacher was given in the third turn which can be used as an evaluative comment limiting the interaction or can provide opportunities for further interaction by asking students to extend their thinking justify, clarify their ideas or make links with their own experience. Here is an example of the pattern for further interaction.
T: What do you do when you’re under stress?
S: Go shopping
T: Good. Any other ones?

In IRF exchanges, most of the turns are teacher-initiated and the role of the teacher in initiating, sustaining and controlling the topic is dominant. But this pattern is not all that happens. Sometimes, students also make comments and ask as well as answer the questions. This is mostly observed in the classes where students perform dialogues and role plays and do pair work or group work. In the current study, although teacher-initiated exchanges were dominant, student-initiated exchanges were also observed.

T: For example I wish I were rich.
S: Why I were? Why don’t we use "was". I was…
T: Good question. Remember, after wish "were" is used with all pronouns.

Another remarkable pattern observed in this study was the predominance of "display questions" over "referential questions". "Display" questions are those questions for which the teacher knows the answers beforehand and requires students to display knowledge. "Referential" questions are the questions whose answers are not already known by the teacher. Compared with referential questions, teachers tended to use more display questions in this study. These questions are asked for comprehension check, confirmation check or clarification request.

T: Last week we talked about requests. Would you give an example of request Mehrzad?
S: hm….please turn down the TV.
T: Ok…Good

5. Conclusion

Classroom processes are extremely complex; it would be simplistic to think that an observer can fully understand what is going on in the classroom by observing and analyzing a number of lessons. Through observation of five EFL classes for 900 minutes, it was found that the most common interaction patterns used in the classes were role playing, discussion, choral responding and IRF. All of these patterns were used occasionally except teacher-initiated IRF which was the dominant pattern and accounted for more than half of the interactions in the classes. The amount of teacher speech outnumbered the linguistic quantity of learners’ contribution making the classroom discourse a teacher-centered discourse. It seems that this type of discourse needs to be replaced by more effective patterns of discourse. There is a need
to move the focus away from teacher-centered discourse, and provide a more equitable situation to promote student initiation and value student knowledge. Students need to feel that the classroom is a safe environment which welcomes their inquiry and supports the entire process of learning. They need to know that their own knowledge is as valuable as the knowledge possessed by the teacher. This is not to say that students should be encouraged to perpetuate uneducated misconceptions or should be rewarded for inaccurate information; however, students must be allowed to express their ideas by initiating comments and clarify confusion by initiating questions. There needs to be a shift away from teacher-led interaction which forces students to listen to the teacher toward a more genuine model of inquiry and discussion in which students are active participants in their own learning and co-constructing the discourse of the classroom.

Researchers and language teachers should bear in mind that classroom discourse is dynamic and cooperative where the teacher and the learners cooperate and negotiate with each other in achieving certain instructional goals in the classroom. Therefore, we can encourage natural discourse in the language classroom by making the roles much more smooth through interaction and equal participation in the negotiation of meaning using various tasks and thus shifting the focus on to the interactional process itself and on to fluency rather than accuracy.

The present study collected the data from five classes using an audio-taping system. It is obvious that if more classes with longer observation time and advanced data collection tools were included a much clearer image of interaction patterns in our intended context would have been revealed.

References


Title

Psycholinguistic Processes in Bilingual Speech Production

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Abstract

To produce a sentence, a speaker should embark on two sets of processes: retrieving words from the mental lexicon and arranging them in a sentence structure. Theories differ in their assumptions about how these sets of processes interact. The coordination between these two processes is more complex in bilingualism because the speaker has to select words and grammatical rules between two language systems. This article investigates the models of speech production in bilingual and multilingual speakers. Since most studies of bilingual language production have focused on lexical processing, models of lexical processing are elaborated in detail. Then, considering that there is noticeably less work on syntactic processing in bilingualism, models of sentence processing are evaluated from research perspectives.

Keywords: Bilingualism, Speech production, Lexical processing, Syntactic processing
1. Introduction

Psycholinguistic processes of second language (L2) acquisition cannot be studied as easily as those of first language (L1) learning. The main reason is attributed to the fact that bilingualism is not a matter of all or none; it is a matter of degree. Several classifications have been proposed to distinguish among different types of bilingualism (Butler & Hakuta, 2004; Edwards, 2004). Balanced versus dominant bilinguals (Peal & Lambert, 1962), additive versus subtractive bilingualism (Lambert, 1974), and early versus late bilingualism are some of these classifications. The second reason is the effect of L1 mental processes on L2 processes. The last reason, but not necessarily the least important one, is an avalanche of influential variables modifying the given processes. These are some reasons which make the investigation of psycholinguistic mental L2 processes a daunting challenge.

The first systematic investigation of bilinguals' mental processes dates back to approximately a century ago when researchers investigated the linguistic development of their own children. Their studies and subsequent attempts resulted in formulating a model of lexical representation in bilinguals, the compound-coordinate model, proposed by Weinreich (1953) and then revised by Ervin and Osgood (1954). This model assumes that in bilinguals, the phonological and semantic aspects of the words are represented in three possible configurations: coordinate, compound and subordinate. In a coordinate system, a bilingual has two separate conceptual representations. In a compound system, the two phonological forms are identified with a common meaning representation. Finally, in a subordinate system, the meaning representation of an L2 word is accessed through the meaning representation of the word of the mother tongue. In the revised model, Ervin and Osgood (1954) suggested that developing a coordinate or compound system depends on whether L2 is learnt as a second or a foreign language.

2. The Major Dilemma in Psycholinguistics

As evident in these early models, the problem of whether lexical knowledge of bilinguals is merged into one large lexical system or is kept separate as two distinct lexicons is a debatable point in investigating mental processes of second language learning. To get rid of such a dilemma, Weinreich's model was reformulated into hierarchical models in which a word’s conceptual representation was separated from its lexical representation and words of the two languages of a bilingual were stored in two separate lexicons. Word Association Model and Concept Mediation Model (Potter, Eckardt & Feldman, 1984) are two models of this category. According to the Word Association Model, L2 words do not have a direct access to the
concepts but are translated in the corresponding L1 lexical representations that have direct access to the conceptual system. In the concept mediation model, the lexical items of both lexicons have direct access to the conceptual system by means of direct conceptual-lexical links. Kroll and Stewart (1994) proposed a Revised Hierarchical Model where both the word association and the concept association model were incorporated. This model supports the idea of independent lexical representations for the two languages and a shared conceptual system for both languages.

3. Bilingual Models of Lexical Processing

Some hypotheses have been proposed for the bilingual lexical processing of speech production system. In most cases, they are the reformulation of models originally proposed for monolingual speakers (Vaid, 2002). Levelt’s monolingual model of language production is the most influential model which has had a major impact on the bilingual models such as the Green’s inhibitory control model and de Bot’s bilingual production model. In this section, this early monolingual model will be elaborated on briefly to set the scene for the influential bilingual models of lexical and sentential speech production.

As shown in Figure (1), Levelt divides speech production into four steps: 1) message generation, 2) grammatical encoding, 3) phonological encoding, and 4) articulation. According to Levelt (1989), the process of speech production is mediated by the mental lexicon and involves three subsystems: a pre-linguistic conceptual system (conceptualizer), a linguistic system (formulator), and an output system (articulator). It goes from the
conceptual/syntactic level to the phonological/articulatory level, at the beginning of articulation. First, a syntactic word, or lemma, is selected from the mental lexicon. This involves selecting one appropriate word with reference to the context in which the word is being used. Activation then spreads through the network in a forward fashion, and nodes are selected based on simple rules. This is finally executed by the articulatory system.

When it is time to give an account of what happens in bilingual speech production, many similarities can be seen between models of monolingual and bilingual speech production. For example, if we consider Levelt’s conceptualizer, it can be hypothesized that the situational/contextual information can proceed similarly in bilinguals. But an adjustment should be made to the bilingual models because the conceptual system in bilingual minds shared by both languages activates both lexicons (Kroll & Stewart, 1994; Kroll & de Groot, 1997). In the monolingual models, a picture of an object will activate certain semantic features to activate the appropriate words which they are describing. In bilingual minds, both words in L1 and L2 are activated to be selected as the appropriate candidate. Two basic questions are raised here: 1) at what point of lexical selection is the target language selected?, and 2) what underlying processes are controlling the non-target words in the bilingual mind that allow for proper selection?

These questions have been answered by competition models. It is assumed that there is a competition between the elements in the target language and those in the non-target language. Therefore, two possible solutions are conceivable: 1) selection at the conceptual level where decision about language is made initially, or 2) selection at the lexical level in which competition among candidates of both languages is resolved by mechanisms of inhibition. The former possibility is called the concept selection hypothesis proposed by La Heij (2005), and the latter is called the inhibitory control (IC) model proposed by Green (1986).
The basic assumption of the concept selection hypothesis is that the intended language is determined sometime before lexical retrieval. As can be seen in Figure 2, when a picture of a chair is shown to an English-Spanish bilingual who is told to name the picture in English, the language cue is responsible for eliminating competition at the lexical level (La Heij, 2005). Consequently, the target lexical nodes (darker lines) receive more activation than the non-target lexical nodes. La Heij (2005) refers to this procedure as complex access, easy selection suggesting that the selection of the appropriate word occurs easily because of its higher activation level.

The basic assumption of inhibitory control (IC) model is that lexical selection is mediated by mechanisms of inhibitory control at the lexical level. In this model, each lexical item includes a language tag that shows that which language they belong (see Figure 3). In the IC model, the semantic system sends equal amounts of activation to both the lexical nodes of the target and non-target language. Basically, lexical selection is done as follows: 1) the semantic system sends activation to the lexical nodes of both languages; 2) based on language tags, the non-target words are suppressed; and 3) the amount of suppression is adjusted to be proportional to the level of activation.

Green (2000) made an effort to find support for his model in experimental studies. Based on aphasic bilingual speakers, Green concluded that, in the human brain, “different functional systems underlie different languages” (p. 375). He also proposed that there are different levels of activation: a selected language system, an active language system, or dormant language system. It implies that although just one language will be selected for production, more than one language can be active at the same time and section between or among systems is up to the speaker’s intention.

In addition to these major models, there are some other models with a minute deviation.
from these two. Williams and Hammarberg’s role-function model is one of these complementary models which describes the different roles that the L1 and the L2 occupy in the activation process of L3. It is based on the data collected from conversation between Bjorn Hammarberg and her interlocutor Sarah Williams, a native speaker of English who had learned French, Italian and German before starting to learn Swedish. This case study revealed that Williams tended to activate her L1 and L2 knowledge for different functions. In her case, L1 had an instrumental role, functioning as an external instrument language in the conversations in Sweden, While L2 occupied a supplier role in the learner’s construction of new words in L3 (Hammarberg, 2001).

Interactive activation model (Stemberger, 1985) is another bilingual model of lexical processing which suggests that in the production of speech, the current is initiated in the semantic level. Before a choice for a certain concept is made, the current flows from the semantic level to the phonological level and triggers a group of sound patterns. Those activated will feed back into the semantic processing level which activates more words there and so on. In the next step, the activated links are tested, and the relevant links become stronger while the irrelevant ones fade away. Since the current is flowing back and forth, any item that is particularly strongly activated at the semantic level will cause additional activation at the phonology level. So, in the example presented in Figure 4, beaver and badger will both become highly activated. In a bilingual brain, it is likely that a similar sounding word not only from the intended language of production might be chosen, but also a similar or identical sounding word from the other language. The more similar the phonetic codes of the other language items are, the more likely they are to become highly activated. Now, exactly the same thing can happen as it does when choosing a wrong lemma in a monolingual setting: the similar-sounding other language item can be picked. This model is able to explain why the words that sound similar or the same in two languages are often merged.
Fernandes-Boechat’s (2000) multilingual role is another model based on the empirical findings of research carried out in France and Brazil since 1997. The model describes the role that the preceding foreign language occupies in the activation process of the target language in multilingual learners. According to this model, each new foreign language learning experience is linked unconsciously to one's preceding foreign language learning experience in a chain-like domino effect fashion. Referring to the principles of cognitive chain reaction theory in foreign language learning, the author proposed that it is the immediately preceding foreign language which will exert the highest influence on the initial L3 production.

4. Bilingual Models of Sentence Production

Bilingual sentence production will be discussed from the perspective of three different models: the bilingual adaptation of Levelt’s (1989) blueprint of the speaker (De Bot, 1992), the bilingual adaptation of Pickering and Branigan’s model of monolingual sentence production (Hartsuiker, Pickering, and Veltkamp, 2004), and a connectionist model (Riehl, 2005).

4.1. De Bot’s (1992) Model

De Bot’s (1992) model is a bilingual language production model based on Levelt’s (1989) model for monolinguals. He followed Green (1986) in the assumption that language systems in bilingual minds can be activated in different proportions, being either selected, active, or dormant. Employing Levelt’s model, De Bot hypothesized that a part of the conceptualizer, the formulator, and the lexicon are differentiated for the speaker’s various languages. Another language that is accessible to him may be activated simultaneously, the language the speaker has chosen to speak in. This implies that the choice of lemmas, the production of surface...
structures, and the forming of phonetic plans may happen simultaneously in parallel in the active language as well as in the selected language, but these planned utterances will not be passed on to the articulator.

In this model, the conceptualizer constructs a preverbal message and has access to world knowledge and the previous discourse (Figure 5). The formulator consists of two main processing levels. The level of grammatical encoding constructs a sentence representation; this includes retrieving words from the mental lexicon, assigning grammatical functions to concepts, and building a hierarchical structure in which the words are inserted. The level of phonological encoding spells out the phonological content and structure of the words. The articulator makes up and executes speech motor plans. Importantly, De Bot proposed that the lexicon is shared between a bilingual’s languages, but that there are separate formulators for each language. However, the possibility of interaction between two formulators was left untouched. He suggested that the degree of interaction may depend on linguistic distance and learners’ proficiency.


Hartsuiker, Pickering, and Veltkamp's (2004) model is specifically concerned with the interface between the mental lexicon and syntactic encoding in bilingualism (see Figure 6). It assumes that lexical entries consist of conceptual, lemma, and word-form strata. Syntactic information is represented at the lemma stratum.
This model assumes that the lexicon is shared between the two language systems in a bilingual's mind. The lemma stratum contains lemma nodes (corresponding to the base forms of words), which are connected to language nodes. These lemma nodes are also connected to nodes capturing syntactic information. For example, the lemma for the verb “hit” is connected to a node which indicates that it is a verb and another node which indicates that it can combine with a subject and an object noun phrase to form a sentence in the active voice. Importantly, such combinatorial nodes are connected to all words with the relevant properties, irrespective of language1.

4.3. A Connectionist Model for Bilingual Speech Production

Following Grosjean (1988, 1995), it is assumed that bilinguals have two language networks (syntactic, morphological, and phonetic features) which are independent, but interconnected.

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1. Figure 6 shows a partial representation of the lexical entries for the verbs hit, golpear (hit), chase, and perseguir (chase) at the lemma stratum of a Spanish–English bilingual in Hartsuiker et al's model. In this integrated network, each lemma node (hit, golpear, chase, and perseguir) is linked to one conceptual node (HIT (X, Y) or CHASE (X, Y)) at the conceptual stratum, to one category node (Verb), to combinatorial nodes (such as active or passive), and to one language node (represented by a British or Spanish flag). Dotted lines indicate relatively weak links between conceptual and L2 lemma nodes.
According to this model, the speaker activates the image of an object and the lemma that is connected with that image. The lemma activates the corresponding sound pattern which activates the neighboring sound pattern from the L2 equivalent. The neighboring sound pattern feeds back to its lemma thereby activating its semantic component and morphosyntactic information that is attached to the lemma\(^2\) (see Figure 7). If the speaker uses a speech mode where the activation of other language items is relatively high, this lemma is most strongly activated and finally uttered. In this model, the semantic information is connected with the syntactic and morphological system of the L2. Activation of syntactic and morphosyntactic information of the given lemma has a dual role. First, it facilitates the process of section between or among language systems. This is why the activation of one lemma of the L2 increases the likelihood of the overall activation of that language network. Second, such activation paves the way for uttering larger units of speech.

5. Evaluation of Bilingual Models of Speech Production

Models of bilingual speech production abound in the literature. But the adequacy of none of these models has been proven. This can be attributed to this fact that research studies are lagging behind these abstract models of mental processes. By the time these models will have been investigated empirically, these models should meet some requirements. Cook (2001) suggests some of these requirements.

1. The multi-competence requirement: The first requirement states that multilingualism should be the default case for production, not monolingualism. Therefore, any model of speech production must potentially handle the ordinary human condition of using more than one language. De Bot (1992) suggested that a bilingual model should be able to cope with a potentially unlimited number of languages. It is clear that all bilingual models have met this requirement.

2. The multi-competence cognitive requirement: Most models of language production see the process as starting from the speaker's cognitive knowledge, conceptualization in Levelt's term. This requirement means that speakers of different languages have different cognitions. Green's model and de Bot's model satisfy this requirement. Green (1998) proposes "a conceptualizer that is independent of language" (p. 71). de Bot (1993) assumes

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\(^2\) In figure (7) the speaker activates the image of beaver and the lemma beaver that is connected with that image. The lemma activates the corresponding sound pattern \([\text{bi:və(r)}]\), which activates the neighboring sound pattern \([\text{bi:bə}]\) from the L2-equivalent. The sound pattern \([\text{bi:bə}]\) feeds back to the lemma Biber. This, in turn, activates its semantic component and morpho-syntactic information that is attached to the lemma.
that “the conceptual structure is not language-specific” (p.194) and makes a distinction between two levels of the conceptualizer – macroplanning (elaboration of communicative goals/ intentions) and microplanning (selecting the information whose expression may realize the communicative goals)(see Figure8). Therefore, de Bot's model is also in line with this requirement.

3. The code-switching requirement: L2 users can use one language or another, ranging from long-term decisions about which language to use to moment-to-moment decisions about which language to use for a particular word. Green's model fills this requirement because he hypothesizes that language choice might be a matter of turning one language on or turning one language off (Green, 1986). De Bot's model partially met his requirement because macroplanner and the microplanner in his model account for long-term decision but not for moment-to-moment decision.

4. The developmental requirement: The multilingual production model has to be capable of accommodating all levels and all final states of language, not just the single state of monolingual native competence. Even if production processes change radically during the stages of acquiring, the possibility of different states of knowledge needs to be allowed for. Among the current models of bilingual speech production, none of them gives a direct account of this requirement. The only point that can be inferred in this regard is the strength of activation image, lemma, and morphosyntactic information in connectionist model and interaction activation model.

5. The lexical priority requirement: The underlying assumption behind this requirement is that an adequate notion of linguistic structure has to be incorporated into a model of production. This lexical priority requirement bundles together several issues concerning the integration of grammatical structure with the lexicon within the framework of the Minimalist
The starting point is the lexical entry, which represents all the information about a particular vocabulary item, ranging from argument structure to spelling. The MP in effect extends the syntactic elements in the lexical entry beyond argument structures to include inflectional as well as derivational morphology. The MP is lexically driven in that the lexical entries project their meaning and syntactic features on to the sentence; they prescribe how the lexical entries may or may not be used in sentences. De Bot's model and interactionist model in which grammatical encoding and morpho-syntactic information respectively give an account syntactic processing meet this requirement. It is also evident that most bilingual models which concentrate on lexical processing of speech production imply that sentence processing should be accounted for by theoretical models like that of Chomsky.

6. Conclusion

This account of bilingual models of speech production indicated that lexical and sentential processing models have not been treated equally. Most proposed models have focused on lexical processing or word recognition. Such a paucity of models in sentence processing signifies that psycholinguistics in bilingual production has not improved enough to depict a clear picture of mental processes in bilingual and multilingual minds. This field is suffering from contractions pointed out by conflicting results. Some pieces of this challenging puzzle have been vaguely set. Multileveled processing with conceptualization, formulation, and articulation phases, strength-based activation from concept to lemma to phonological encoding, and projection of morpho-syntactic and syntactic information into lexical information are some of these unanimously agreed issues in this field. Some requirements have not been met and more research studies are needed to account for some discrepancies observed in bilingual learners' performance. In spite of these deficiencies, however, progress in this area of study seems promising especially with the advent of new brands of research equipment.

References


Title

A Semiotic Analysis of Transnational Visual Branding in the Food Industry

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Abstract

In the era of multimodality, semiotic modes other than language are treated as fully capable of serving for representation and for communication (Kress and Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 46). While there has been extensive work on the textual realizations of branding change in the media, there has been little on the way such discourses are realized and promoted visually. As a case study of food product branding, brand names of these product designs highlight the food industry's commercial agenda nowadays, because it should support interior products as flourishing inner capitalism. And also in this context, national symbols and stereotypes are often entrenched within international corporate brands. This study addresses the using multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine a collection of branding, included 25 brands of interior food products and 25 brands of exterior food products, intended for use in promotions, advertisements. In this article we consider the main visual semiotic resources for identifying the stereotype to represent the preference of exterior products over interior products. Analysis of images is Descriptive text analysis, following content analytic
procedures. As well we begin by identifying the basic semiotic repertoire used across all 50 brands designs. As the results reveal that exterior brand names of food product are more illustrious than interior ones as if they are recontextualized as to symbolize images.

**Key words:** Visual Semiotic, Descriptive Text Analysis, Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis, Stereotype, Capitalism

1. **Introduction**

Brands are complex and composite signs based on pictographs (alphabetic or other), on sounds as spelt locally (in each particular linguistic context) and on other visual elements (i.e. logos and iconic content). Signs in branding convey meaning through graphic design. So they employ visual semiotic system.

As semiotic practices, advertising and corporate design are complex in terms of their organization and multimodality; as such a theoretical understanding of any particular text or genre ideally demands a consideration of a range of discursive elements, contexts, intertexts, and other genres altogether (Cook, 1992). Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) also note that meaning is never to be ‘found’ in any image or visual text itself, but rather in the discourses which contextualize and constitute the image or text. In this article, the researcher has chosen to isolate the one key and very noticeable feature of corporate branding in food industry- the design of brand names- working on the assumption that they are commercially important, publicly available, and conveniently isolated for analysis.

People simply trust brands, develop strong loyalties, buy them, and believe in their superiority. Branders and advertisers have successfully observed this emotional connection and pushed the limits of branding and made brands into what was coined by Kevin Roberts (2005) as “lovemarks.” This became a way of marketing and advertising. How can you make a consumer—no matter what age or gender—simply fall in love with a brand, unable to resist its allure? The answer is: by turning it into something to identify with, by making it desirable. Writer Naomi Klein, the author of No Logo (1999) and a leading critic of branding—especially Apples’, argues that companies like Apple are no longer selling products. They are selling brands, which evoke a subtle mix of people’s hopes, dreams, and aspirations. Klein (1999) notes how Apple used great leaders-Cesar Chavez, Gandhi, and the Dalai Lama—to persuade people that a Macintosh might also allow them to ‘Think Different. “Klein told the Guardian newspaper: ‘People are drawn to brands because they are selling their own ideas back to them, they are selling the most powerful ideas that we have in our culture, such as
transcendence and community— even democracy itself, these are all brand meaning now’’’ (Kahney, 2004).

In other words, the visual elements associated with the brand name, although not based on language, depend on the interpretation of signs and symbols and on the relations between written, spoken and visual signs and their referents in the physical world or the world of ideas (semiotics). A brand name is stored in consumers’ minds as a combination of the alphanumeric content of the brand name and its traditional design (type of fonts, funny writing, font colors, etc.). The brand name is often associated with a copyrighted design. The graphic composition of the logo conveys as much meaning as the letters of the brand name. They combine into what is called ‘brand visual imagery’. Brand imagery relates to the mental experience created by the visual part of the brand name, that is how for instance consumers decode the bamboo tree, the Chinese lantern and the red rising sun in the Suzy Wan logo (a Mars brand for Chinese convenience food).

The context of the interpretation is guided by the nature of the sign vehicle as this not only carries the signs and images of food brands but also sets the context, value and direction of the interpretation process (Marshall, 2005).

The brand comes to represent quality (Blois, 2003), trustworthiness and responsible sourcing (Jones et al., 2005), luxury and the significance of its iconic status within the retail sector (Burt and Sparks, 2002), this directs and contextualizes the interpretation and symbolic consumption of the brand (Proctor and Kitchen, 2002).

Consequently, an image is seen as a communicative product (multimodal text) constructed with an ideal model viewer or reader in mind. The situational and cultural context is seen as playing a crucial role in the meaning-making regulating the communicative consequences of the grammatical choices realized by certain structural elements (Baldry and Thibault, 2006; Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004; O’Toole, 2011(1994); Van Leeuwen, 2005). Much has been written discourses of advertising of products and how to promote customers and how these might shape customers’ mental model through images. More recently writers in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) such as Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001, 2007) and Tedema (2003) have emphasized the need to pay much more careful attention to how discourses are realized and disseminated visually. Just as we can describe the way that discourses are signified in texts through lexical and grammatical choices so we can look at the visual semiotic choices that realize these in images. These authors emphasized how, like language, images can be used to promote mental modals or stereotypes through to promote particular interests and ideologies, versions of event and issues through particular semiotic
choices and combinations. In other words, if we wish to understand the discourses presented in the media that might shape public perceptions of the branding, we must also understand how the discourses are realized visually.

Macin and Van Leeuwen (2007) suggested that these images reflect a broader change in the use of photography in the mass media, one heavily influenced by branding culture, from a former time when it was used to document reality and bear witness to more recently where it is increasingly used to symbolize them.

The indication through that television and other media visualize the environment by the use of increasingly ‘symbolic’ and ‘iconic’ images rather than those which are recognizable because of their geographic, historical or socially specific identity. Through their repeated use these images replace other possible representations in actual concrete processes such as global capitalism and consumerism. In this context, national symbols and stereotypes are often entrenched within international corporate brands. That is, in the case of product ethnicity, consumers’ stereotype makes links between countries and products, the connotative cues in the brand visual imagery are more important to link to the country of origin.

Every great brand seems so real, so tangible, and yet when left with the task of defining Coke, Mcdonalds, Domino's pizza, lipton it becomes an impossible task because of that incredible, indescribable quality that leaves us using empty clichés like, ‘wonderful', 'special’, and ‘world-class’.

2. Methodology

This section introduces the material selected to accomplish the study and makes the reader familiar with visual semiotic resources. The framework, within which the multimodal materials are going to be scrutinized, would come next.

More recently in CDA, there has been a visual turn inspired mainly through the work of Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2001). Prior to this discourse analysis had focused on the way that discourses were realized through the linguistic mode. But the writers showed how we could systematically analyze the way that this happens visually through photographs, pictures and visual designs. Kress and Van Leeuwen, out of a concern to include much of the visual meanings that had been missed in linguistic oriented CDA, showed that much communication is ‘multimodal’ rather than ‘monomodal’. Therefore discourses, along with their values, participants, actions setting, etc. can be connoted by both linguistic and visual choices. That is, Multimodal Discourse Analysis allows us to characterize how the food
product designs are recontextualized in the name of the interests of branding. As we can study lexical choices in language to reveal discourses so we can study choices of visual semiotic resources. In the context of our present interest in visual branding of food products, we ask what the main visual semiotic resources are employed in food products designs.

Central to Van Leeuwen and Wodak's (1999) work is an account of the way producers of discourse recontextualize events in order to reflect and promotes their own interest:

*Substitution*: The details and complexities of activities can be substituted by generalizations or abstractions. Also social actors can be represented in terms of who they are, through appearance and feelings, rather than what they actually do.

*Addition*: Recontextualization also involves adding elements. Three important forms of addition that play an important role in representation are legitimization, purpose and reactions.

*Evaluation*: In texts recontextualization always also involves evaluation of the social practice that is written about. Events and people in each recontextualization are represented according to the goals, values and priorities of the presenters. This can result in the delegitimization of certain kinds of actors and actions that are not in harmony with the values of the presenter.

These categories are useful to understand how visual branding enables food industries by making mental modals or stereotypes to represents their brand as superior products over interior ones.

We begin by identifying the basic semiotic repertoire used across all 50 food brand name designs including 25 Exterior food brand name designs are selected randomly from this website: www.Brand name food products.mht (cf. appendix 1), and also 25 Interior food brand name designs are chosen from the website www.Topbrands.ir (cf. appendix 2). In conducting our content analysis, our discussion starts, therefore, by offering a typology of signs with some initial comment about the visual lexicon of food product designs. We decided from the start to focus on the most striking visual imagery and motifs used by the 50 food product designs.

3. **Data analysis and result**

Analyzing data would reveal the extent of food industries' considerations and consciousness in terms of importance of using visual semiotic resources in designing food brand names. Exterior and interior designs of brand names are analyzed in the terms of Descriptive text analysis, following content analytic procedures. The results are shown in two separate table; therefore, For the most part, the semiotic repertoire of brand name design signifies food
product through a mixture of figurative and non-figurative (or at least less figurative) resources, summarized as follows: colors, graphic, directionality, \textbf{Logos} categorized under these groups: \textbf{Wordmark} (text-based), \textbf{Symbolic}, and \textbf{Combined mark}.

Using symbols and icons, the logo designers attempt to establish an association between the brand name and the image. One advantage of symbolic and combined mark logo is that there is more room for creativity than text-based (wordmark) logos which only play around with words. Some logos, however, actually incorporate both text and icons to form a unique logo design.

In this analysis section, the researcher firstly observed brand names one by one regarding with intended visual resources. Then by accounting their frequencies and taking percentage of them, the researcher began to compare the elements.

As it is showed in two tables, in terms of the shape of exterior products brand names, there were more complexity across exterior brand names, for instance, about 68% of 25 brand names were used of wordmark and also 12% circular shape and 36% complex shape. In the case of color, both of the groups are the same in mono/ polychromatic, but the exterior brand names used more warm color such as yellow than interior ones, that is, about 68% warm color. While there are no difference in terms of directionality, there is a significant difference in graphic complexity of the exterior brand names, i.e. 36 % exterior brand names used complex designs and 4% interior ones. Perhaps not surprisingly, the semiotic repertoire of exterior brand names designs is deployed primarily in the visual, metaphoric representation of wordmarks.

\textbf{Table 1: An Analysis of Designs of Exterior Food Product Brand Names}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of brand names</th>
<th>Token</th>
<th>No. of occurrences</th>
<th>% of total brand names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shape</td>
<td>Word mark</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pictural mark/Combined mark</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name as a logo</td>
<td>Acronym(initials)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In full rectangular shape(straight)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>circular shape(curved)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>simple, solid, right shape complex shape</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color</td>
<td>Monochromatic</td>
<td>Polychromatic</td>
<td>Cold color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directionality</td>
<td>Left to right</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Up and toward right</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic simplicity/complexity</td>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: An Analysis of Designs of Interior Food Product Brand Names

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of brand names</th>
<th>Token</th>
<th>No. of occurrences</th>
<th>% of total brand names</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shape</td>
<td>Word mark</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pictural mark/Combined mark</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name as a logo</td>
<td>Acronym(initials)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In full rectangular shape(straight)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>circular shape(curved)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>simple, solid, right shape</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>complex shape</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color</td>
<td>Monochromatic</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Polychromatic</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cold color</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Warm color</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directionality</td>
<td>Left to right</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Up and toward right</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graphic simplicity/complexity</td>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Complex</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Discussion

The visual language is moving us away from one which emphasized the photograph as witness, as record of reality, to one which emphasizes photography as a symbolic system and the photograph as an element of layout design, rather as an image which can stand on its own. Marketing in the era of branding does not rely so much on describing product details but on loading the product with certain values: a beer with friendship. By referring to table 1 and 2,
it is obvious that the intended model has been used in both of brand name designs deployed images symbolically, thereby; they make false mental models or stereotypes in customer's mind as to selecting exterior brand names with regards to original country. Since exterior brand names make an association between foregrounding of the brand name design and previous mental models, consequently, costumer is interested to exterior brand names.

5. Conclusion

What motivated the researcher to start the work was the importance of visual semiotic resources in making mental models or stereotypes as to exterior food products through promoting their brands. The research questions were stated to bestow a defined path to the study.

This work, as a starting point to consider stereotypes in buying of exterior or interior food products, implies the possibility and necessity of such a task. To support of interior product, the first way should be paved in making right mental model in localization interior products by newest visual semiotic resources.

References


**Appendix (1)**
Appendix (2)
Title

A Cross-Disciplinary Analysis of Rhetorical Structure of Dissertation Abstracts

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Abstract

The teaching rhetorical structure of various academic genres has been recognized as a practical, pedagogical tool in both ESL and EFL academic settings. However, assigning a unitary structure for different fields of study might pose problems for novice writers. In this study, the rhetorical structure of 120 abstracts (ninety ‘masters’ theses and thirty ‘doctoral’ dissertations) from six disciplines were investigated. In this exploratory study, four rhetorical structures were found: IMRC/D, CARS, Mixed, and None (which means the texts lack any rhetorical structure). The conclusion is that nonnative speakers require more than grammatical knowledge at the clause level. They need to be familiarized with the
discourse grammar with the functional tokens attached to it in order to be successful in their academic writing.

**Keywords:** rhetorical structure, dissertation abstracts, CARS model, IMRC/D model

1. Introduction

An academic abstract provides a brief digest of the paper’s argument. In Pho’s terms (2008, p. 231), the abstract “sells” the article. Very few journals would not require an abstract to be submitted with the main article (Martín-Martin, 2003, p. 26). Lorés (2004) maintains that many journals published in languages other than English also require the submission of an English version of the abstract (p. 281). One approach to analyzing conventional academic texts, including abstracts of theses and dissertations, is the study of their rhetorical structures.

Rhetorical structure can be defined as the organizational macro-structure of a text that is recognized for a specific genre, and that members of a discourse community are required to follow it. It is believed that understanding the rhetorical structure helps comprehending and producing texts of particular genres (Flowerdew, 2000; Rowley-Jolviet and Carter-Thomas, 2005; Afros and Schryer, 2009). Therefore, analyzing academic texts in terms of rhetorical structure may pave the way to uncover the unknowns to the novice writers. In this regard, interest has been placed on various scientific genres, ranging from schematic structure of research articles (RA) of different fields (Dong, 1998; Posteguillo, 1999; Paltridge, 1997, 2002, Kanoksilapatham, 2005), to the move analysis of RA or dissertation sections such as introduction (Mahzari and Maftoon, 2007; Samraj, 2002, 2008) and review of literature (Kwan, 2006), to the move analysis of grant proposals (Connor and Mauaranen, 1999), etc.

Theses and dissertations are high risk genres at the summit of a student’s academic accomplishment. It is perhaps the most significant piece of writing that any student will ever write, a terrifying task of intimidating length and rigorous expectations which represents what is potentially achievable by individuals writing in a language that is not their own. It appears that if novice writers want to succeed, they need to obtain a good command of the knowledge of the language of theses and dissertations and other related scientific genres.

The present study attempts to signify the need for familiarizing the Iranian university students with the rhetorical structures of one of the most significant genres which they are dealing with in their course of study, and as a consequence, to bring about genre awareness.
More specifically, this study concerns the analysis of the rhetorical structure of dissertation abstracts of the six disciplines.

2. Review of literature

Description of textual organization and linguistic realization of RAs and dissertations is not a new trend in studies on academic setting. There are a number of studies that have examined different sections of RAs; researchers have mainly focused on the genres of titles of RAs (Haggan, 2004; Soler, 2007), the introduction section of RAs (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1997; Samraj, 2002; Mahzari and Maftoon, 2007; Ozturk, 2002), the method section (Martínez, 2003; Lim, 2006), the results (Brett, 1994; Williams, 1999), and the discussion (Holmes, 1997; Peacock, 2002). One of the research article sections that has recently gained an upsurge of interest is the abstract.

In this study, like other precursor studies (Martín-Martín, 2003; Lorés, 2004; Samraj, 2005; Bonn and Swales, 2007), it has been aimed to reveal the rhetorical structure of dissertation abstracts, with the difference that in this study the analysis is based on the revised version of Swales’s (2004) model. Due to its pivotal role in exchange of scholarship in research communities, the genre of the abstract has attracted considerable attention from text analysts, and its rhetorical organization has become the object of extensive research. Abstracts have been studied across disciplines (e.g., Lorés, 2004; Samraj, 2002, 2005), and across cultures (e.g., Martinez, 2002, 2003). The abstract has been seen as a “concise summary” of the accompanying paper (Lorés, 2004, p.281), and its main function as “informing about the exact content of the article” (Martinez, 2002, p. 26). Previous research has suggested that the textual structure of an English abstract follows the generally accepted structural patterns of a research paper, that is, Introduction, Method, Result, and Conclusion/Discussion.

Although a great deal of research has been carried out on the rhetorical structure of abstracts, the outcomes of these investigations have been rather inconclusive. The studies of macro patterns lead to the examination of the rhetorical organization of the abstract through the lens of the framework of rhetorical moves derived from canonical moves present in a research article, such as the Swalesian conception of moves1 (Swales, 1990). A corollary of the considerable variability in the findings reported by different studies has been a lack of comparable data. These difficulties can be attributed to the analytical methods employed as well as to interdisciplinary differences in abstract writing conventions.
Generally, regarding the RAs and dissertation introduction and abstract, IMRC/D (Introduction, Methods, Results, Conclusion/Discussion) and CARS (Create A Research Space) are the two major models (sometimes referred to as structures in this text) that have been largely emulated and employed to analyze the generic structure of the RAs and dissertation abstracts. The former, which represents the four basic structural units underlying RAs, displays the international conventions based on the norms established by the English-speaking international academic community (Martín-Martín, 2003, p. 25).

The second model is the CARS model primarily deals with the global structure (the rhetorical Moves) of RA and dissertation introduction. Swales (1990, p. 141; 2004, p. 226) believes that CARS model tries to present the study as original and, at the same time, considerate of the previous related literature, and as justifying the need for the study at hand. Move in this model has been roughly defined as a delimited communicative act that is designed to contribute to one important communicative objective, that of the whole text. The model takes in three rhetorical Moves. There are a number of mandatory and optional steps in this model that spell out the Moves. Generally, an indication of the context in which the research has been carried out is given in the first Move, Establishing a territory (e.g. previous research or the scope of the present study) of the model. The second Move, Establishing a niche, presents a question or a counter-claim to show a gap in the literature. The final Move of this model, Presenting the research, announces the main findings or the procedures by which the gap found in the literature will be filled.

In a comparative generic study of RA abstracts in experimental social sciences, Martin-Martín (2003) gathered 160 RA abstracts from texts belonging to two representative disciplines of this branch of social sciences: experimental phonetics and psychology to investigate the extent of rhetorical variation between the RA abstracts written in English for international journals and those written in Spanish and published in Spanish journals in this area. Following IMRD model, first the researcher analyzed the macrostructure of the abstracts, and then he carried out a more detailed analysis of the Introduction unit of abstracts based on Swales’ (1990) model.

The results of this study showed that the four basic structural components were generally present in the logical order of the process of experimental research (IMRD) in both the English and Spanish abstracts. However, there was a significant difference in the frequency of occurrence of the result section in the two languages. The results suggested that the members of both communities showed preference for the use of Move 3 of Swales’ model in their abstracts, in which the main objective of the research is stated. There was some degree
of divergence in Move 2 (establishing niche) of the abstract Introduction in the two sets of
abstracts. He concluded that different expectations of the international and Spanish scientific
communities and the relationship between the writer and the audience are the reasons for
these discrepancies found in both groups of abstracts (pp. 41–2).

Samraj (2005) explored the relationships among related genres, the RA introductions and
abstracts from different disciplines, aiming to gain insight into the existing differences in
academic writing across Conservation Biology and Wildlife Behavior fields of study.
Swales’ (1990) model and Bhatia’s (1993) model were applied to analyze RA introductions
and RA abstracts respectively (p. 145). Examining the generic structure of twelve RA
introductions and abstracts randomly selected from these two disciplines, she realized that
disciplinary variation in academic writing is not just ascribable to generic structure, but also
to the relationship among genres. The study of abstracts from these two fields showed that
from texts even related disciplines can vary in overall organization. The abstracts in
Conservation Biology tended to have a problem - solution pattern, while this was not the case
with the Wildlife Behavior abstracts.

It is worth noting that no scholarly publication has been reported to employ Swales’
(2004) revised model to analyze abstracts in recent years. The present study is intended to
use the recent version of Swales’ (2004) model to explore the abstract section of dissertations
written by Iranian post-graduate students to see if the variations found across the previous
studies have been accounted for and considered in this new model.

3. Methods

3.1 Corpus
Considering the aim of this study which is to explore the rhetorical structure of the
dissertation abstracts across six disciplines from Shaid Chamran University of Ahvaz, a total
of 120 English abstracts were collected and analyzed. These included Persian language and
literature (15 M.A. theses +10 Ph.D. dissertations), Teaching English as Foreign Language
(15 M.A. theses), Veterinary Medicine (15 M.A. theses +10 Ph.D. dissertations),
Microbiology (15 M.A. dissertations), Chemistry (15 M.A. theses +10 Ph.D. dissertations),
and Geology (15 M.A. theses) written by Shahid Chamran University students from 2005 to
2009. These disciplines are representative of three major branches of knowledge, namely,
Language and Literature as a major branch of Humanities, Health Sciences, and Hard
Sciences. Due to the restrictions in offering Ph.D., only one of the disciplines of academic
disciplines fields will be chosen for doctoral abstracts. The logic behind the selection of this corpus is that a wide range of disciplines can be claimed to be covered in this study.

3.2 Instruments

Swales’ CARS (2004) and the IMRC/D (1990) models were exploited for the analysis of the rhetorical structure of the abstracts. Swales’ (2004) model was used because it can work as a reliable pedagogical and rhetorical-functional framework for the analysis of RAs, which can serve the purpose of this study. The reason behind using the IMRC/D model was that some of the abstracts could not be analyzed through CARS model due to the nature of the language of the fields of study (for example, see Lorés, 2004; Tahririan and Jalilifar, 2004; Swales, 2004).

3.3 Procedures

Based on Swales’ (2004) revised CARS model and the IMRC/D macro-move model (1990), the rhetorical structure of the abstracts– both in terms of the frequency of the Moves and the detailed analysis of the Steps characterizing those Moves– was analyzed. As a preliminary step, twelve sample abstracts of each discipline were randomly chosen and analyzed through the CARS model. After applying the CARS model, it was found that only a few abstracts were analyzable based on this model. The majority of the sample abstracts were found to have been written based on the IMRC/D model and, still a third model was revealed in a number of these sample abstracts, which preferably was termed as Mixed model because it contained elements of both the CARS and IMRC/D models. Afterwards, the entire abstracts were analyzed and placed under these three categories. In other words, each abstract was rated against the CARS model first. Unless the abstract did not follow the CARS model, it was evaluated based on the other two recognized rhetorical models, i.e. IMRC/D or Mixed, respectively. The results were subjected to cross-disciplinary comparison and tabulation. In the subsequent stage of this phase, the steps of Move 2 of CARS model were identified based on the characterizations put forward by Swales (2004). With regard to those abstracts that matched the IMRC/D model, a number of micro-moves were found in the preliminary step where the sole purpose was to identify these micro-moves according to the definitions provided in Chapter Two. These micro-moves were as follows: (1) presenting background, (2) reference to previous work, (3) outline of purposes or objectives, and (4) the problem to be tackled.

The process of identification of moves involves focusing on the intuitive interpretation of the content of the moves (Bhatia, 1997; Holmes, 1997; Askehave and Swales, 2001; Samraj, 2005). Formal clues, verb forms, discourse conjuncts are also taken into account, but as secondary measures for identifying the steps– in particular.
The significance of the choice of Move 2 and, in other cases, the Introduction section of the dissertation abstracts relies on the fact that by focusing on the inadequacy in previous research, the writers would be able to justify his or her study and find space in current literature.

4. Results and discussion

4.1 Rhetorical structures of the dissertation abstracts

In view of the two rhetorical structures observed in previous studies (IMRC/D, CARS) and the texts under study, it is hypothesized that those dissertation abstracts that belong to the experimental branch observe the IMRC/D model whereas the study areas that fall into the theoretical category would most likely match up to the CARS model better. As regards Language and linguistics which are among those areas that can be seen as lying in between, it is presumed that parts of both models mingle together to form the entire texts. This last group of abstracts represents the so called ‘Mixed model’. The results of the rhetorical analyses of abstracts based on communicative moves are presented in Table 1 to shed light on the hypotheses made in regards to the placement of different areas of inquiry along different positions of the cline of field categorizations.

Taking into account the scope of individual, subjective judgment in the identification of moves in the abstracts, the researcher endeavored to demarcate the rhetorical units through a validating process, where the rhetorical structures of the abstracts were rated and substantiated by two raters who were well-informed of the background and the premises of the study. The analysis of the corpus in terms of rhetorical structure revealed four different possibilities for the representation of abstracts: IMRC/D, CARS, Mixed, and none of the models. This is, to a great degree, in line with Lorés’s (2004) study, surveyed in the literature although Lorés (2004) revealed that the percentage of the abstracts displaying CARS structure (30.5%) was more than the cases observed in this study. Besides, in our corpus, seven abstracts (5.83%) of the total number did not have any rhetorical structures of the types we investigated, and were incoherent and incomprehensible; therefore, this led to the establishment of a category called ‘none’ which represented these abstracts. These abstracts are not considered as having rhetorical structure in this study. Results in Table 1 confirm the hypothesis that experimental science abstracts lend themselves better to the IMRC/D structure. But the point is that the other fields of study that belong to other disciplinary categories were also observed to conform to this rhetorical structure. For example, the
majority of the TEFL abstracts followed the IMRC/D structure. This is not in consonance with the hypothesis that quasi-experimental fields of inquiry, which lie amid the cline, would match up to the Mixed model.

Table 1. Rhetorical structures of the dissertation abstracts of six disciplines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disciplines</th>
<th>Rhetorical structures</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>IMRC/D</th>
<th>CARS</th>
<th>Mixed</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language &amp; Literature</td>
<td>TEFL M. A.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. A. PL Ph. D.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language &amp; Literature</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental Sciences</td>
<td>Geo. M. Sc. Chem. Ph. D.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Experimental Sciences</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Chem. Ph. D.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>Micbi. M. Sc. Vet. Ph. D.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 (5.83%) 92 (76.66%) 8 (6.66%) 13 (10.83%)</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(i) IMRC/D structure

The first and dominating model identified in the corpus, with the highest percentage (76.66%) of representation, was IMRC/D structure. This structure was taken to be the distinguishing rhetorical structure of the abstracts by previous studies on the issue of rhetorical structure of abstracts (see, for example, Swales, 1990; Martín-Martín, 2003; Lorés, 2004; Tahririan and Jalilifar, 2004). As it was expected, with respect to the hypotheses that ascribe different abstracts from different disciplines to specific types of rhetorical structure, Table 1 indicates that 96 percent of Chemistry abstracts for both ‘masters’ and ‘doctoral’, as an experimental science, almost exclusively followed the IMRC/D structure. In these abstracts, the ‘methods’ section was the hub of attention. Accordingly, the writers of the Chemistry abstracts used this model particularly to report on their methods. It is interesting to note that IMRC/D structure was sometimes repeated more than once in eleven of these.

Note: The abbreviations given in Table 1 stand for the following words. TEFL stands for Teaching English as a Foreign Language, PL for Persian Language and Literature, Geo. for Geology, Chem. for Chemistry, Micbi. for Microbiology, and Vet. for Veterinary.
abstracts, ranging from twice up to six times in a single abstract. This is because of the fact that these abstracts comprised stages through which the experiments were carried out, and each stage needed to be reported separately with its specific findings. Owning to the fact that in the study of rhetorical structures the communicative function is the criterion for move identification, the abstracts that contain several occurrences of the same moves are treated as constituting one rhetorical structure, regardless of the number of the existing moves, and the recurred moves are consolidated and counted as one move.

Microbiology and Veterinary abstracts also, which were taken to stand for the medicine in our typology of the scientific disciplines, conformed to the IMRC / D structure for the most part. Thirty six (90%) out of the forty abstracts representing these two fields used this rhetorical structure. Some of the writers of these abstracts showed a tendency to merge different sections into each other, for instance, they merged the Introduction and Methods sections. Others tended to eliminate part of the model, for instance, the Introduction or Discussion sections. This was also witnessed in Chemistry abstracts. These points will be discussed in detail in the discussion of frequency of moves. The humanities fields had the least share in this rhetorical structure. Twenty four (60%) TEFL and Persian Language and Linguistics abstracts were written based on the IMRC/D structure. Despite the characteristic abstraction in the language of the humanities, these results show that the writers of TEFL and PLL followed the typical trend of the experimental sciences in writing their abstracts.

(ii) CARS structure
In spite of our expectation, only a small percentage (6.66%) of abstracts in our corpus was found to follow the CARS structure. Seven out of eight of these abstracts belonged to the discipline of Language and Literature, and the one left was from Microbiology. These results may indicate that this model has not gained enough attention in the Iranian context in the disciplines investigated in this study, or perhaps, the writers of the texts have not been familiarized with this model. It is worth mentioning that in thirteen abstracts this structure was used as an introductory section to the IMRC/D structure (see Table 1). In our analyses, these abstracts were not considered as bona fide candidates of the CARS structure, but as candidates of the Mixed structure, which is elaborated below.

(iii) Mixed structure
Totally, around 11% of the abstracts were written based on the Mixed model in the corpus, in which sections of both IMRC/D and CARS models were used together to form a whole unit; hence, forming a rhetorical structure that was recognized as the second model of the rhetorical structures representing dissertation abstracts in our study. Geology abstracts, which
are the second set of the abstracts standing in the experimental sciences, revealed interesting results in this respect. Contrary to the hypothesis that experimental abstracts would fit to the IMRC/D structure, only eight out of the fifteen Geology abstracts followed this structure and the rest (seven) did not match either of the two models, i.e. IMRC/D or CARS, but matched up to a Mixed rhetorical model. These abstracts included an Introduction section of the IMRC/D structure which contained the three rhetorical moves of the CARS model. This is perhaps due to fact that the writers of these abstracts feel the need to use a comprehensive introductory section to show the insufficiency in previous studies, followed by the other three sections of the IMRC/D model, in which the ‘methods’, ‘results’, and ‘conclusion or discussion’ is presented. There were other abstracts from other fields in which the Mixed model was employed (see Table 1). Abstract 1, taken from Geology abstracts, is a good sample of this rhetorical structure. Roman numbers show the units of the Introduction section of the abstracts.

Abstract (1):

I (Establishing a territory) In the recent years, use of sewage sludge as a fertilizer has become prevalent in .... II (Establishing a niche) Nevertheless, sewage sludge has some heavy metals that can result in soil pollution and ....

III (Presenting the research) The objective of the present study is: to see the influence of amended sewage on .... (Methods) This study was carried out in field for a period of growth barley with two .... (Results) Result of plant analysis shows that application of sewage sludge increases... (Discussion) The application of sewage sludge offer for growth of crops that do not use by .... (written by a Geology M. A. student).

In this example, the writer establishes a general setting, introduces a gap in the literature, and presents a general idea of how to deal with the identified gap in the Introduction to his abstract. After that, the writer sets out to give a synopsis of the ‘method’, ‘result’, and ‘discussion’ sections of the project. In this way, both the CARS and IMRC/D models have been employed and each serves its own purpose. It can be suggested that the writers who use the Mixed model intend to explicitly explain the method used in their study and present their results cogently to attract the readers and convince them to spend some more time reading their texts, while presenting a gap in the previous studies in the Introduction section of their abstracts to justify the currency and up-to-date status of their work.

4.2 Move frequency
A total of 429 moves was identified in the corpus. Sixty one of these were the moves realizing the abstracts that followed the CARS structure and the Introduction sections of the Mixed structure. The other 368 moves were the micro-moves actualizing the IMRC/D structures. Here are a few points worth noticing. First, in the abstracts representing the Mixed structure, the Introduction section of the IMRC/D model (represented by the initial I) consisted of three rhetorical moves which are typical of the CARS model. In our analysis, these three moves are considered as shaping the Introduction (I) section of the traditional IMRC/D structure. We can subtract 37 moves counted as the CARS moves and consider them as forming 13 Introduction sections of the Mixed model. In this way, the number of the rhetorical moves is reduced to 405. Second, there were cases where two sections were linguistically inseparable, but were intuitively identifiable through top-down approach. These moves were counted as separate ones in this study, which are illustrated in Abstract 2 below:

Abstract (2):

(Mixed Introduction and Methods sections) In the first section a new molecular concept, which is called “Molecular Compressibility”, is defined for diatomic molecules using the classical definition of pressure and isothermal compressibility. For a homonuclear molecule in which R and r are bond length and atomic radius, respectively. This parameter has the simple form as: $\beta = \pi r^2/k R$. For twenty homonuclear diatomic molecules (the elements of IA, VB, VIB, AND VIIB groups), these compressibility are calculated (written by a Chemistry Ph. D. student with the underlined and bold mine).

The underlined part of sample abstract 5 demonstrates how two sections of the IMRC/D structure are combined and become hard to separate. Though the phrase which starts from the word ‘using’ lacks a comma just prior to it, it is still comprehended as a separate grammatical unit. However, the point is that this phrase is, in fact, the ‘Method’ section of this abstract which is merged into the Introduction section of the abstract. Bear in mind that the unit of analysis was the clause, but, in this example, a phrase was taken to perform the function of a whole clause. Also, there were abstracts in which only one section was identified. These abstracts were put under the category called ‘none’ in section 4.1 and were not counted for rhetorical structures in this study. Abstract 3 shows one of these abstracts that were composed of only one section. However, those abstracts that had at least two rhetorical moves or sections, i.e. I and M, or M and R, were considered as representing the intended structure (IMRC/D).
Abstract (3):

(Introduction) Mathnavi (roughly equivalent with heroic couplets), one of the most popular forms of the Persian poetry, was devised by Iranian for expressing various terms, themes, and subject matters, ranging from love, allegory, Gnosticism, and epic to myth and history. Nezami’s love songs along with such great works ... (written by a Persian Language and Literature M. A. student).

This sample abstract clearly shows that the writer has only focused on the introductory part of the abstract and has not written anything about the ‘method’, ‘result’, or ‘conclusion’ of the research. This abstract does not meet the standard, cornerstone definition of an academic abstract in which an abstract is defined as a summary or of the entire research. The second reason is that this set of abstracts does not comply with the characteristic norms of their disciplines. For instance, in comparison to the other abstracts of the same discipline (Persian Language and Literature), where there is a recognizable structure, abstract 6 is deficient in representing a reasonable, identifiable pattern.

Table 2: Move frequencies in rhetorical structures of six disciplines

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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>CARS</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move 2</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>move 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>move 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>move 3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: the moves realizing the CARS model are as follows: Move 1 (establishing a territory), Move 2 (establishing a niche), and Move 3 (presenting the research).
4.3 Gap indication in IMRC/D and CARS

One hundred and twelve abstracts in our corpus were found to have a brief Introduction section. Accordingly, it is worthwhile to suggest that this rhetorical unit is one of the most frequent and sometimes the longest section of abstracts analyzed in our study. The results in this part fall in line with the results obtained in such previous studies as Swales (1990), Martín-Martín (2003), Lorés (2004), and Tahririan and Jalilifar (2004) in which great emphasis was put on the presence of this rhetorical unit in the abstracts. Seven of these 112 abstracts were only composed of the Introduction section of the IMRC / D model and had no sections called ‘methods’, ‘results’, and ‘discussion’; however, the rest of the abstracts were truly in compliance with the rhetorical structures found in our corpus. These seven abstracts, which exclusively belonged to Persian Literature, were also taken into account in the stage of identifying the micro-moves and the steps of IMRC/D and CARS structures. The remaining nineteen abstracts in this field represented the CARS and Mixed structure.

It has been established by Martín-Martín (2003:26) that the four basic units of IMRC/D structure that are normally found in RAs and dissertations are also recognizable as summarized versions in their accompanying abstracts. Martín-Martín (2003) goes further to suggest that it is possible to analyze the Introduction section of the abstracts based on the rhetorical moves put forward by Swales’s (1990) CARS structure. In his initial examination, this was confirmed. Most of the analyzed abstracts in that study were found to include the three moves of CARS structure and their associated steps. As a measure to substantiate this hypothesis, the same procedure was exercised. Contrary to Martín-Martín’s (2003) results, in our analyses only 13 abstracts of the entire abstracts in the corpus were consistent with this hypothesis. These abstracts were observed to possess the so called ‘Mixed model’ in our analyses. The rest of the abstracts contained an Introduction section that was hardly analyzable as proposed by Martín-Martín’s (2003).

Tahririan and Jalilifar (2004, p. 134) assert that the rhetorical unit ‘Introduction’, along with the statements of the aims and results sections, should be considered as a compulsory section of any abstract. This was also established in our findings in view of the statistical results. Eleven micro-moves comprising all sections of the abstracts were identified in Tahririan and Jalilifar’s (2004) corpus. However, in our study, unlike the study by Tahririan and Jalilifar (2004), only the micro-moves of the Introduction section of the IMRC / D model and the steps realizing the move 2 of Swales’s (2004) model were attended and analyzed. According to the definitions given in IMRC/D sections in Chapter Two, the following micro-moves were identified in the Introduction sections of the abstracts in this study: (1)
presenting background, (2) reference to previous work, (3) outline of purposes or objectives, and (4) the problem to be tackled. The abstracts pertaining to the CARS model were found to have two rhetorical strategies, i.e. steps, in Move 2. This Move, as asserted in Swales (2004), is composed of an obligatory step 1A, i.e. indicating a gap, or step 1B, which is adding to what is known, and an optional step 2, that is presenting positive justification.

Table 3: Frequency of occurrence of micro-moves and steps in Introduction section and Move 2 of abstracts

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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Micro-move 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro-move 3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micro-move 4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that the fourth micro-move of the Introduction unit of IMRC/D model stands out as an obligatory strategy. There is a preponderance of this micro-move in Chemistry abstracts, in particular. Despite the fact that reference to previous studies in academic writings would enhance the position of both the author and his or her writing, even in concise part-genres like abstracts, micro-move 2 showed the least number of occurrences in our study. This gives us an idea about how detached the writers of the sample abstracts are from the d. c. that most of them aspire to join for membership.

Overall, 35 steps of rhetorical Move 2 were found in the corpus. As the numbers in Table 3 indicate, there is an equal distribution of steps in the abstracts containing Move 2. Swales (2004) in the new version of the CARS model postulates that the second step of this Move is optional; however, in our analyses this step was found in 12 abstracts out of the thirteen abstracts following the CARS model. This insinuates that the writers who indicate a gap in the literature in one way or another may feel that they need to attend to the persuasion measure just after the gap introduced by means of a positive justification.

The objective of the study was to reveal the rhetorical structures of dissertation abstracts. Four possibilities were found in the first phase of the study. Most of the abstracts were found to follow the traditional IMRC/D structure, while a few of them conformed to CARS and Mixed structures. A small number of the abstracts were also found to observe neither of the
rhetorical models. The differences of the abstracts written in the six disciplines in terms of conformity to different rhetorical structures can be attributed to the nature of the language employed in each of these disciplines. Generally, it can be maintained that the language of the abstracts should be economical, inviting, and persuasive in nature. Chemistry, Microbiology, Veterinary, and TEFL abstracts were overwhelmingly descriptive. In these fields of study, ‘Methods’ section, briefly discussed in almost every abstract, constituted the main part of it. This is perhaps because writers believe that the more they make their methods scientific, the more they can leave a positive impression on their readers. Another interesting point is that the boundaries between the rhetorical units of the abstracts were clearly identifiable. Explicitly, it was not difficult to find the closing of one rhetorical unit because of the presence of some lexical elements, such as ‘in this study 100 samples were planted in a field …’ that signaled the opening of the ‘Methods’ section, or ‘it can be concluded that …’ that signaled the beginning of the ‘Conclusion/Discussion’ section. In contrast, Geology abstracts were descriptive-exploratory in nature. These abstracts had a significant difference with other abstracts in that almost half of them involved a Mixed model. In Mixed rhetorical structure, the writers first indicate a gap in the literature through an introductory part of their abstracts, which is written based on CARS model, and then continue to elaborate on the ‘Methods’, ‘Results’, and ‘Discussion’ of their study, where a clear IMRC/D structure is recognizable.

As long as rhetorical structure is still concerned, Persian Language and Literature abstracts were identified as the most problematic abstracts in the corpus. Specifically, the abstracts consisted of intermingled rhetorical units and sometimes were composed of only one rhetorical unit. For instance, only the Introduction section of the IMRC/D structure was sometimes identifiable. Concerning clause construction, the abstracts in this field were also poorly written in comparison to the other fields. There were abundant lexical and grammatical errors in these abstracts at the clause level. The reason for these deficiencies witnessed in Persian Language and Literature abstracts can be the limited contact of the students of this field of study with English courses during their curricula; accordingly, they are not equipped with the linguistic means for writing even a 200-word abstract.

Deeper analyses of the Introduction section of abstracts pertaining to the IMRC/D structure and the rhetorical Move 2 of those abstracts that were written based on CARS structure showed interesting results. Micro-moves one and four (setting background and announcing purposes) were identified as the obligatory micro-moves of the Introduction section of the abstracts pertaining to IMRC/D structure. The other two micro-moves in this
rhetorical unit were found in a very small fraction of the abstracts. In particular, the second micro-move, which references to previous studies, was viewed as an unimportant strategy by most writers of the abstracts. In a small number of the abstracts conforming to CARS structure, it was realized that the number of occurrences of the steps materializing Move 2 of the structure was more or less similar. This indicates that the obligatory and optional steps were not discriminated by the writers. Regardless of the choice between the step 1A, step 1B, or even both, the small number of the writers who used CARS structure also chose to use step 2, since they found that providing a positive justification for the gap identified in the study was an essential part of their abstracts.

Such descriptive statistics did not do much to show the differences between disciplines studied in this study, neither does it indicate the significance of differences between the ‘masters’ level and ‘doctoral’ level abstracts. Although the corpus examined in this study is rather small, the inferential statistics allow us to draw conclusions and make generalizations at this stage. The significance test utilized to show the differences with regard to the obligatoriness of certain rhetorical Moves in this study was Chi-square test (with a level of significance of \( p = 0.05 \)). The results of the test indicate that there are significant differences between the expected frequencies and the observed frequencies of the obligatory rhetorical units across the six disciplines. This means that there is no relationship between the obligatoriness of one rhetorical structure and one field of study. This is shown in Table 4 and 5:

**Table 4: Crosstabulation of rhetorical structures and fields of study**

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<td>34</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>85</td>
<td>326</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARS</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>422</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5: Chi-square test for the significance tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance tests</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df.</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2 sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-square</td>
<td>198.907*</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-linear association</td>
<td>13.686</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of valid cases</td>
<td>422</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*3 cells (22.2%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 2.56.

5. Conclusion
This study set out to analyze the rhetorical structure of the dissertation abstracts of six disciplines in the exploration of the generic conventions and textual mechanisms which lay under the construction of this genre. The results suggest that the IMRC/D structure, which mirrors the sections of the entire dissertations in summarized form, is the conventional structure of the abstracts in the six disciplines. The frequency of the micro-moves of the Introduction section of the IMRC/D structure indicates that presenting the background and an indication of the way to tackle the problem are the most frequent micro-moves of this rhetorical unit. Contrary to our expectation, the number of the abstracts complying with the CARS structure was significantly smaller that of abstracts conforming to the IMRC/D. Further analysis of the steps realizing the Move 2 of the abstracts (establishing a niche) following the CARS structure indicates that there is high tendency to use both steps of this rhetorical move (see Table 3 for this move). Another rhetorical structure, i.e. Mixed structure, was also found to be typical of those fields of inquiry in which the language is descriptive-explanatory.

Nowadays, raising awareness of the rhetorical conventions of the fields of study and setting agendas for novice writers or the would-be researchers is an undeniable practice in many fields of study around the world (Mustafa, 1995; Skulstad, 1999; Martínez, 2002; Rowley-Jolviet and Carter-Thomas, 2005; Afros and Schryer, 2009).

The findings of the present study have pedagogical implications that are pertinent to these considerations. Important rhetorical and linguistic features of research article abstracts should be incorporated into academic writing courses for postgraduate students to prepare them for participation in the world of publication. In such courses, students need to be made aware of not only the rhetorical structure or generic organization of the research article abstract in their disciplines, but also the language they need in order to express the rhetorical moves. Such knowledge is essential for graduate students in the course of their study and in their subsequent academic career. Thus, at the academic level, raising students’ awareness of usage types and the generic patterns in relation to genre Moves is far more crucial than instruction in grammar.

It remains our conviction that more descriptive and explanatory work needs to be done on rhetorical structures of abstracts and their functional linguistic means, and that text analysis still has a place in this inquiry. This line of inquiry can be extended and applied to other rhetorical units of abstracts or even to other unexplored academic genres like RA Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion.
At the academic level, raising students' awareness of usage types and the generic patterns in relation to genre Moves is far more crucial than instruction in grammar. The findings of the present study have pedagogical implications for classroom practices and material development. Important rhetorical and linguistic features of research article abstracts should be incorporated into academic writing courses for postgraduate students to introduce them into the world of academic publication. In such courses, students need to be made aware of not only the rhetorical structure or generic organization of the research article abstract and other RA sections in their disciplines, but also the language they need in order to express the rhetorical moves.

Regarding the ever-increasing demands for publications in international journals as a means of communicating scientific knowledge, this study suggests that ESP students need to be taught the required rhetorical norms and conventions of their D.C. in order to be able to understand and produce the genres of their fields effectively. Until recently, the focus has been on teaching reading skill with emphasis on acquiring a list of words and their equivalents of, sometimes, irrelevant texts, and unfortunately the identification of the rhetorical conventions was left to the students' immature recognition themselves (Martínez, 2003). However, this can be amended by teaching reading and writing academic texts using the genre approach. Genre analysis is a powerful pedagogic tool for ESP teachers and is beneficial for students as knowledge of the rhetorical structure of any type of genre provides insights into the working of the genre and develops genre awareness.

The present study has raised a number of interesting differences across the disciplines studied, but a larger corpus is needed to establish how far they can be generalized. It remains our conviction that more descriptive and explanatory work needs to be done on rhetorical structures of abstracts. Still, another possibility is conducting contrastive analyses on different genres across different disciplines or across different languages.

References


Abstract

This paper sets out to examine the hegemony of semantic transfer with respect to a cross-linguistic issue in the framework of two form-focused approaches to vocabulary teaching. The study is primarily bidirectional with respect to the objectives it pursues. The target population of the research included seventy six juniors at the Islamic Azad University, Roudehen Branch. On the one hand, it investigated the impact of the provided interventionist treatments on the learners’ depth of knowledge regarding the two sets of lexicalized and nonlexicalized items pedagogically. On the other hand, it attempted to flesh out the overarching issue of L1 lexicalization in terms of its underlying psycholinguistic significance. The results of the independent t-test indicated a significant difference between the two experimental groups dealing with both groups of lexicalized and non-lexicalized vocabulary items. The results related to the paired t-test demonstrated a significant
difference between the mean scores obtained for the two sets of words in favor of lexicalized items in the first interventionist group. The results pertinent to the second interventionist group were representative of the fact that the learners had greater familiarity with lexicalized items at pretesting, and they were more successful in learning lexicalized items in comparison with nonlexicalized ones at posttesting. However, no significant difference was found with respect to the gain scores (pre to post testing differences) in this interventionist group. The findings are interpreted in terms of several theoretical and psycholinguistic foundations as well as practical elaborations that act in concert to serve the major objectives of the article.

**Keywords**: Form-focused instruction, L1 lexicalization, Bilingual mental lexicon, Noticing

1. Introduction

The study of Lexis was ignored for a long period of time in spite of the fact that the exciting large corpora denotes the idea that lexical errors are the most prevalent among second language learners. Instead, many teachers and researchers focused their attention on some other fields like syntax and phonology as issues deserving more scrutiny (Luchini & Serati, 2010). However, research carried out in FLA justifies the fact that efficient communication emerges as a result of enriched and appropriate knowledge of vocabulary rather than the acquisition of grammatical rules (Vermeer, 1992; Coady, 1993; Rott, 1999 as cited in Zaid, 2009).

The importance of vocabulary acquisition could be pinpointed by referring to many scholars who were immersed in the field of vocabulary teaching and learning. Widdowson (1989) believed that communicative competence could not be regarded as a matter of “knowing rules but a matter of knowing a stock of partially pre-assembled patterns’’ (p. 135). He argued that rules are not generative but regulative and subservient and they are useless unless they can be used for lexis. The above-mentioned clarifications present the fact that one of the major pitfalls facing foreign language learners involves a huge number of words they need to acquire. In spite of the fact that such a requirement is widely accepted by several scholars, the existing research proposals are devoted to the description of vocabulary learning strategies, the learners’ breadth of lexical knowledge, and the passive and active ramifications of vocabulary knowledge without considering the underlying psycholinguistic
mechanisms involved in the bilingual learners’ mental lexicon. Consequently, the strategies and the methods provided in academic courses are not really efficient and even they appear to be demotivating.

As mentioned by Schmitt (2010), the issues which are considered to be worthy of investigation in the field of L2 vocabulary acquisition could be primarily classified into three types: Firstly, the nature of the lexical item under investigation is of great significance. Secondly, its utilization in language serves as an important issue. Finally, the strategies or techniques facilitating its acquisition should be evaluated. Although the complexity of the nature of the vocabulary knowledge is confirmed by many scholars, we have a few if any empirical work designed to scrutinize vocabulary knowledge from a cross-linguistic perspective with reference to the inherent nature of words.

This piece of research, however, revolves around an issue referred to as L1 lexicalization in the field of second language vocabulary acquisition. The researchers attempted to explore the bilingual mental lexicon, with a particular emphasis on the overarching issue of L1 lexicalization empirically with respect to two different form-focused instructional interventions. In other words, the major cornerstone of this study as L1 lexicalization acts as a projector resembling the hegemony of semantic transfer phenomenon. This paper examines the role of L1 lexicon in L2 vocabulary acquisition and suggests that the transfer hegemony is pivotal in understanding the bilingual mental lexicon and the learners’ lack of convergence on the foreign language. To highlight the significance of the issue of L1 lexicalization as the major theme of this research proposal, it is beneficial to initially explicate the differences between first and second language vocabulary acquisition and subsequently provide a more palpable view of the lexical transfer phenomenon.

2. Background literature

According to Bly-Vroman (1990), the differences between L1 and L2 acquisition can be clarified in terms of the idea of Fundamental Difference Hypothesis. In fact, the development of L1 is directed by “an innate domain-specific acquisition system, comprising knowledge of Universal Grammar (UG), which delimits the possibilities for a natural human grammar, and ‘domain specific learning procedures’ which make possible the acquisition of an abstract formal system of great complexity” (Bly-Vroman, 1990 as cited in Stringer, 2008, p. 233).

However, the L2 acquisition involves a totally different process due to the lack of continued access to universal grammar and the presence of a priori knowledge of
grammatical principles associated with the learner’s L1. Consequently, the learner resorts to problem-solving systems rather than LAD as he becomes involved in learning. The basic tenant of the Fundamental Difference Hypothesis could be crystallized in the following schematization.

*The Fundamental Difference Hypothesis (adapted from Bley-Vroman, 1990, p. 14)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HYPOTHESIS SPACE</th>
<th>LEARNING MECHANISMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L1 ACQUISITION</td>
<td>Universal Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2 ACQUISITION</td>
<td>L1 knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above-mentioned hypothesis helps us to have a more vivid perspective regarding the transfer accounts involved in the acquisition of L2 lexicon. As mentioned by Stringer (2008), “despite the increased importance attributed to syntactic and phonological transfer in recent years (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1994, 1996; Archibald, 1998; Brown, 2000) transfer accounts have largely ignored the acquisition of the lexicon” (p. 233).

To our knowledge, research on the influence of L1 lexicalization pattern on L2 lexical acquisition and use is sparse. The current study is centralized on the effect of the cross-linguistic issue of L1 lexicalization on L2 lexical acquisition. Such a scrutiny is followed with respect to two form-focused explicit interventions referred to as glossing in the form of direct contrasting with L1 and morphological awareness. To shed light on the fact, it seems necessary to crystallize L2 lexical acquisition with respect to the issue of L1 lexicalization. According to Jiang (2004), L2 vocabulary acquisition involves three successive stages: word association stage, L1 lemma mediation stage, and full integration stage.

In second language acquisition, the adult language learner is deprived of having simultaneous access to a rich conceptual or semantic system in L2. Instead, he resorts to the existing linguistic and conceptual system of his/her L1 which has now an intermediating role in the process of L2 acquisition. Jiang (2000) referred to this stage as the hybrid-entry stage due to the fact that an L2 entry state at this stage is a combination of L2 linguistic and conceptual information and the syntax and semantic system pertinent to the learner’s L1. Subsequently, the learner becomes involved in a lexical processing activity which could be termed as L1 lemma mediation stage since lexical processing at L2 is mediated by the lemma information provided as a result of the act of translation from L2 to L1. The existence of such a hybrid entry stage is of great significance due to the fact that it makes L2 vocabulary acquisition different from L1 lexical development.
Accordingly, L2 vocabulary acquisition encompasses a process of mapping the already available meanings or concepts in learners’ L1 to the novel lexical item in their L2. However, such an extrapolation from already existing mappings to mappings to new concepts may not occur for a majority of words, and consequently, L1 lemma mediation often resists as the steady state of lexical performance in the learners’ interlanguage even at advanced levels (Jiang, 2004).

As mentioned by Paribakht (2005), an unfamiliar L2 word not lexicalized in learners’ L1 does not exist as a lemma package. Therefore, it seems plausible that the absence of such a lemma package with respect to nonlexicalized items may affect the quality of L2 lexical acquisition. Therefore, it could be speculated that a deep understanding of the role of L1 lexicalization in L2 lexical acquisition may pave the way towards a deeper understanding of the stages that particular words might move through.

The term ‘lexicalization’ is defined by Brinton and Traugott (2005) as the process through which new items which are regarded to be ‘lexical’ come into existence. As Brinton, 2002 (as cited in Brinton & Traugott, 2005) mentioned, several definitions exist in the literature regarding the concept of lexicalization from an onomasiological perspective. The most prevalent definitions are as follows: First, lexicalization could be simply defined as the common process of word formation instantiated as compounding, conversion, and derivation which augments the breadth of a vocabulary of a language and simultaneously enriches the resources pertinent to any special field. Second, lexicalization encompasses the processes of fusion leading to decrease in compositionality. More important, several terms like ‘conflation’ or ‘coding’ are available in the existing literature to refer to the term ‘lexicalization’ as fusion (Brinton & Traugott, 2005, p. 32). Third, lexicalization involves a process of separation which increases autonomy. All these processes may be characterized as different processes of institutionalization. Brinton and Traugott (2005) defined institutionalization as “the spread of a usage to the community and its establishment as the norm” (p. 45).

The issue of L1 lexicalization stands as an area of difficulty in the field of L2 vocabulary acquisition. As a consequence, it has inherently profound pedagogical implications for explicit vocabulary learning. Furthermore, any new findings in this regard may assist to formulate a general theory depicting the mental processes involved in lexical achievement and retrieval at both receptive and productive levels stressed by Chacon-Beltran, Abello-Contess, and Toreblanca-Lopez (2010).
This piece of research attempts to evaluate the effect of two different form-focused instructions pivoting around glossing in the form of direct contrasting and metamorphological awareness as two explicit strategies on the behavior of lexicalized and nonlexicalized vocabulary items. Perhaps, the selection of either strategy can be justified in reference to the idea of noticing hypothesis which encourages the processes through which learners notice the input as a result of which the input becomes intake. Moreover, both strategies belong to the category of form-focused activities. In fact, the idea of form-focused instruction has just recently been applied to the field of vocabulary acquisition and teaching.

Ellis, 1990 (as cited in Ellis, 2008) referred to noticing as a pedagogical device for language acquisition. He subsequently asserted the idea that a formal explicit instruction as a facilitative tool may be helpful in fostering learner’s awareness of target language features. As soon as the learner notices a particular feature in L2, he/she would be able to detect the noticed feature in subsequent communicative input events. Such a process is helpful in further processing which ultimately leads to the acquisition of that specific feature.

According to Doughty and William (1998), an interventionist explicit instruction brings three salutary offshoots to the field of SLA compared with naturalistic setting: first, it accelerates the rate of learning, second; it may have some impact on long term accuracy pertinent to learning processes, and finally, it raises the ultimate level of attainment. Additionally, Web (2008) reported that many recent researchers like Laufer (1991, 2001), Laufer and Paribakht (1998) as well as Web (2008) suggested the idea that this is the explicit vocabulary teaching and learning which is responsible for the vast majority of L2 vocabulary learning. It is of utmost significance to mention the fact that form-focused instruction is considered as a prominent interventionist instruction which draws learners’ attention to language form in explicit or implicit fashion (Spada, 1997). The two interventions provided in this study (as direct contrasting with L1 and morphological awareness) instantiate form-focused instruction in an explicit fashion.

Form-focused instruction is defined by Ellis (2008) as a type of teaching which “requires some attempt to focus learners’ attention on specific properties of the L2 so that they will learn them” (p. 963). As such it stands in conformity with the goals of communicative language teaching which are centralized on the provision of comprehensible input and meaning-centered tasks in second language acquisition. However, in order to boost learners’ grammatical competence, it was suggested by many applied linguists to include tasks demanding deeper attention to form as well (Ellis, 2001; Housen & Pierrard, 2005). The idea puts emphasis on the role of explicit instruction along with Schmidt’s noticing hypothesis.
According to Long and Robinson (1998), it is the responsibility of language teachers to assist learners in finding the incongruities involved in complex tasks by focusing their attention on problematic areas. Such an instruction provides attention to the discrete forms of the target language when necessary and encourages teacher-learner negotiation. Form-focused instruction (FFI) could be classified into two types: Focus on form and focus on forms. Unlike focus on forms which disregards meaning, the focus on form hypothesis puts emphasis on the provision of meaningful contexts. In other words, such an approach emphasizes a form-meaning connection and teaches vocabulary within contexts.

However, as mentioned by Laufer and Girsai (2008), the lion’s share of the FFI research is devoted to the teaching of grammar and not vocabulary and only recently researchers, have employed FFI for vocabulary instruction. (Hill & Laufer, 2003; Laufer, 2005, 2006). It is worth mentioning that “the overall conclusion of the researches conducted so far in the area of vocabulary learning is that FFI, notwithstanding whether the focus on Form or whether the focus on Forms approach is employed, is a useful and effective way of vocabulary teaching’’ (Jahangard, 2010, p. 45).

In the present research, form-focused instruction was adopted to teach a group of lexicalized and nonlexicalized vocabulary items. It is evident that the two receptive activities as L1 glossing in the form of direct contrasting with L1 and meta-morphological treatment belong to the category of focus-on-forms activities. However, the contextualized productive activities of reconstruction in the form of paraphrasing, sentence translation, and sentence making (providing cross-linguistic information as to the meaning of the sentences comprising the intended words with focused attention on contextualized meaning) replicate focus on form activities. Both interventions were accompanied by similar corrective feedback activities.

Despite the fact that glossing could be traced in the Middle Ages, it is surprising that it has remained unexplored. Lomicka (1998) defined glosses as brief definitions, translations, or explanations of a word provided to facilitate the two cognitive processes of reading and comprehension for L2 learners. As mentioned by Laufer and Girsai (2008), as the learner becomes involved in L2-L1 translation activities, he subconsciously notices the particular meaning and the word form at the initial levels which are followed by the process of attending to the use of the selected lexical items at productive levels. Subsequent research on proficient bilinguals revealed the fact that lexical and semantic information becomes active in LI during comprehension and production in L2 (Kroll & Sunderman, 2003 as cited in Barcroft, 2004). It is believed that glossing has a considerable effect on the intake of
vocabulary as a result of increased salience and the formation of associations leading to a more effective storage of items. Nisbet (2010) believed that “when students know a particular word in their native language, learning an English label is a relatively straightforward, easy process” (p. 13).

However, we have no research proposal devoted to the measurement of the effect of such an overarching attentive procedure on the acquisition of lexicalized and nonlexicalized vocabulary items considering the impact of the cross-linguistic issue of L1 lexicalization. Such a scarcity motivated the researchers to select L2-L1 glossing in the form of direct contrasting as the first treatment for teaching lexicalized and nonlexicalized items in this study.

The second pedagogical intervention provided in this study focused on the learners’ metalinguistic vocabulary knowledge. Generally speaking, metalinguistic knowledge is defined by Roehr and Ganem-Gutierrez (2008) as “a learners’ explicit knowledge about the syntactic, morphological, lexical, phonological, and pragmatic features of the L2” (p. 2). It is of utmost significance to know that explicit knowledge can be considered as a type of knowledge that “could be brought into awareness, that is potentially available for verbal report, and that is represented declaratively” stated by Roehr and Ganem-Gutierrez (2008, p. 2). According to Anderson, 2005; Hulstijn, 2005 (as cited in Roehr & Ganem-Gutierrez, 2008) that type of knowledge contradicts with implicit knowledge which cannot be brought into awareness.

As one of the potential strategies for explicit instruction of words, one can directly refer to the utilization of morphological awareness for learning novel lexical items. Morphological awareness involves the recognition and manipulation of the morphemic structure of words. It involves the three processes of inflectional morphology, derivational morphology, and lexical compounding (Carlisle, 1995 as cited in Rispens, MC Bride-Chang & Reitsma, 2008).

Kue and Anderson, 2006 (as cited in Zahedi & Fallah, 2011) defined morphological awareness as the ability to use the knowledge of word formation rules and the pairings between sounds and meanings (e.g., adulthoods = adult + -hood + -s), learning the meanings of roots, affixes (adult= mature human being, -hood= the state of being, -s= to indicate plural nouns), and synthesizing the meaningful parts into novel meanings (motherhood, fatherhood, brotherhood). The practice of this dissecting-synthesizing method is called morphological analysis.

The present paper monitored University-level foreign language learners’ metamorphological awareness as an explicit learning approach supported by the noticing
hypothesis inspired by Schmidt, 1990, 2001 (as cited in Schmidt, 2010). The idea was further linked with the overarching psycholinguistic issue of first language lexicalization. The issue of L1 lexicalization has been presented as a factor of difficulty in foreign language vocabulary acquisition in general and has been hypothesized to be affected by the learners’ metalinguistic knowledge more specifically. The metamorphological awareness was specifically examined with regard to the knowledge of derivational morphology (involving the construction of a new word by the combination of a word stem and a suffix).

As mentioned by Shaw (2011), morphological knowledge can pave the way to recognize both grammatical and semantic relationships between related word forms. Grammatically, a lemma includes a single base word and all of its syntactic inflections. Understanding that decide, decides, decided, and deciding are all related grammatically is not obvious to all students. However, a lemmatized search along with derivational knowledge of morphology may be helpful in recognizing all grammatically pertinent forms of a word and may facilitate those connections. “This can especially be useful in the difficult task of inflecting phrasal verbs and idiomatic expressions” (Shaw, 2011, p. 38).

Bellomo (2009) conducted an investigation to scrutinize the effectiveness of morphological analysis as a vocabulary strategy for L1 and L2 college students. The findings were suggestive of the utility of morphological analysis as a vocabulary acquisition strategy regardless of language origin. Similarly, the results of the study conducted by Bowers and Kirby (2009) confirmed the beneficial effect of morphological instruction on vocabulary acquisition. However, it is not evident whether or not morphological knowledge is helpful in recognizing and manipulating particular L2 words (e.g., L2 words not lexicalized in learners’ L1) both receptively and productively.

3. Research objectives

It is evident that teachers use several methods to teach vocabulary. In the same way, skillful learners resort to a multi-form set of vocabulary-learning strategies. By scrutinizing the existing literature regarding different methods of vocabulary instruction including implicit and explicit ones, one is easily convinced that some methods of vocabulary instruction may be more efficient than the others. However, no single study was devoted to the investigation of vocabulary teaching and learning strategies with respect to the cross-linguistic issue of L1 lexicalization neither in EFL nor in ESL educational environment. Further research is
obstrusively required in this area to fill the existing gap regarding this issue in an explicit manner.

Generally speaking, learners’ lexical gains can be affected by several factors involved in cognitive processing pertinent to L1 and L2. In fact, the major objective of this research, however, was to investigate the bilingual mental lexicon with the enthusiasm of scrutinizing lexical acquisition from an overarching perspective linking L1 to L2. Such a psycholinguistic scrutiny was carried out with the intention of being helpful in refining the existing mental models. Furthermore, the researcher tried to provide a comparative view regarding the impact of two different interventionist approaches on the acquisition of the two sets of words from a pedagogical perspective. Hence, the following research questions were raised:

1) What is the relationship between the learners’ degree of familiarity with the two sets of English words lexicalized and nonlexicalized in their L1, their receptive and productive knowledge, and the two sets and their receptive and productive knowledge at pretesting?

2) Is there any significant difference between the two interventionist groups receiving basic dictionary form L1 glossing and metamorphological treatments dealing with L2 words lexicalized and nonlexicalized in Persian?

3) How does L1 lexicalization, as an overarching issue, affect the learners’ lexical gains in the two interventionist groups?

4. Methodology

4.1 Participants

This research was conducted on a group of seventy six undergraduate university students majoring in English translation studying at the Islamic Azad University, Roudehen Branch. The intermediate level learners were selected on the basis of the results obtained from the 2000 level of the version I of the Vocabulary Levels Test (Schmitt, Schmitt, & Clapham, 2001). Accordingly, the learners whose mean score on the 2000 word level was 28 or more out of a possible 30 (indicative of the mastery of intermediate level) were selected as the participants of the study. The mean score of the selected group on the 2000 word level of the VLT (version I) was 28.12 out of thirty. Therefore, the selected individuals were regarded as the participants of a homogeneous sample, and they formed the two interventionist groups of this study.

4.2 Instruments
The measurement devices employed in this study were as follows: Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) including the receptive and productive versions, a vocabulary test encompassing lexicalized and nonlexicalized items, and the revised version of Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS). The following sections will be devoted to the description of the above-mentioned instruments sequentially.

4.2.1 Target words

The target words for the study encompassed 76 English words (38 lexicalized and 38 nonlexicalized items). The words were categorized into lexicalized and nonlexicalized ones, with an equal number of nouns, verbs, and adjectives (17 verbs, 17 nouns, and 4 adjectives) in the two interventionist groups. The lexicalized items were selected from the TOEFL word lists. Based on the definition provided by Paribakht (2005), the nonlexicalized words were defined as those that can be paraphrased in Persian but do not have a fixed one word or compound equivalent in Persian (on the basis of several bilingual dictionaries and the judgments of several educated bilingual native speakers of Persian). All target words including lexicalized and nonlexicalized ones were polysyllabic to satisfy the requirement of the second type of treatment as a morphological analysis.

The final selection included words which were considered to be relatively difficult for intermediate students (e.g., panacea, surmount). The selected words in both groups belonged to the second tier of the three-tiered vocabulary framework proposed by Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002) which includes academic vocabulary used in sophisticated academic discourse across a variety of domains.

4.2.2 Receptive version of VLT

Nations’ Vocabulary Levels Test (revised and validated by Schmitt, Schmitt, & Clapham, 2001) was the first instrument utilized in this research project with the purpose of assessing learners’ receptive knowledge of vocabulary. The participants who passed the 2000 level with the score of 28 out of the possible 30 were selected as the participants of this study. The test includes samples from five levels of frequency which are as follows: The 2000 most frequent words, the 3000 most frequent words, the 5000 thousand, the University Word List, and the 10000 thousand most frequent words. Learners should match groups of three words out of six with their paraphrases.

The following formula developed by Laufer (1998) was used to estimate students' passive (receptive) vocabulary level.
{(2000 passive score * 2) + 3000 passive score + Academic vocabulary score + 5000 passive score + [(3000 passive score + 5000 score) / 2] + [5000 passive score + 10000 passive score) / 2 * 4] + 10000 passive score} / 330 * 10000

4.2.3 Productive version of VLT

This test was developed by Laufer and Nation (1995) with the purpose of measuring the learners' productive vocabulary size. The major difference between this test and VLT is that items are not provided but rather elicited in short sentences. However, each item includes the first letters of the target word to avoid the elicitation of nontarget words which may fit the sentence context. Like the previously mentioned test, VLT, this test also consists of five frequency levels, each comprising 18 items, with a maximum score of 90.

In this study, the items were scored dichotomously in that each correct response received one point and each incorrect or blank one received zero. Furthermore, items with incorrect grammatical forms (e.g., present instead of past) or unobtrusive errors were considered as correct responses.

The following formula (suggested by Laufer, 1998) was employed in the way of measuring students' active vocabulary level.

\[
\frac{(2000 \text{ active score} * 2) + 3000 \text{ active score} + 5000 \text{ active score} + \text{University word List score} + [(3000 \text{ active score} + 5000 \text{ active score}) / 2] + [(5000 \text{ active score} + 10000 \text{ active score}) / 2 * 4] + 10000 \text{ active score}} {198 * 10000}
\]

The reliability of both parts of the test including the receptive and productive sections was calculated by employing the KR-21 formula. The estimated reliabilities were .72 and .77 for the receptive and productive sections respectively.

4.2.4 Lexicalized/nonlexicalized vocabulary test

The lexicalized/nonlexicalized vocabulary test was devised by the researchers to examine the participants’ knowledge of lexicalized and nonlexicalized words in the context of sentences before and after the treatment. Due to the fact that the list of target words included some polysemous words, in order to elicit the participants’ knowledge of the target meanings, the target words were presented in the context of separate sentences without defining the words.

The test encompassed 76 items of lexicalized and nonlexicalized vocabulary items which were arranged randomly. Three professors were consulted in devising the test. The reliability of this test was calculated by Cronbach’s alpha and it was estimated .84.

4.2.5 Vocabulary Knowledge Scale (VKS)

The VKS was selected as a measure of assessing learners’ depth of vocabulary knowledge from an incremental (developmental) approach to compare participants’ performances
dealing with the two sets of words contextualized in sentences before and after the treatment. The participants were provided with a vocabulary task devised by the researcher on the basis of the modified form of the vocabulary knowledge scale (VKS; Paribakht & Wesche, 1996). As mentioned by Schmitt (2010), “VKS is the best known and most widely used depth of knowledge scale for the most complete description of the instrument” (p. 218). He further provided the following description regarding the fundamental features and application of the VKS.

The VKS has the advantage of utilizing both self-report and performance data, which provides information about the participants’ level of awareness ranging from total unfamiliarity to the capability to implement the word with semantic and syntactic accuracy in a sentence. As mentioned by Wesch and Paribakht (1996), the VKS can be utilized purposefully to capture the initial development of knowledge of both groups of lexicalized and nonlexicalized vocabulary items. The reason is that it proved to have sufficient sensitivity to muster incremental gains in the initial stages of special words.

Paribakht and Wesche (1993) reported that the learners proved able to respond to the VKS with certainty, and the results of the scrutiny detecting patterns of change in knowledge of the target words during their course of study in two interventions revealed that the scale could appropriately capture progression in the development of knowledge of particular words.

As mentioned by Schmitt (2010), Wesche and Paribakht recently reintroduced this measurement approach as being appropriate for showing comparative gains obtained as a result of different instructional interventions. More important, “it revealed significant intragroup gains and also proved to be sensitive to intergroup differences in content vocabulary gains” stated by Paribakht and Wesche (1993, p. 30). Wesche and Paribakht (1996) stated that the VKS is sensitive enough to both intragroup and intergroup gains. Such a feature is evidently in conformity with the goals of this research which seeks a bimodal comparative analysis regarding a cross-linguistic issue (L1 lexicalization) both pedagogically and in terms of its underlying psycholinguistic mechanisms involved in learning. The first facet pinpoints the issue pedagogically dealing with the inter-group relationships. However, the second facet analyzes the intragroup relationships between the two sets of lexicalized and nonlexicalized items in each group in a distinct manner.

4.3 Scoring

As mentioned by Wesche and Paribakht (1996), the VKS score utilizes an amalgamation of two types of knowledge referred to as self-reported and demonstrated ability. The elicitation
categories I and II lead to scores 1 (total unfamiliarity with form and meaning) and 2 (initial 
familiarity with form but lack of knowledge with respect to meaning) respectively. In the 
modified version of the scale, the elicitation category III leads to the score of 2 (if the 
synonym or translation is wrong) or 3 (if it is partially acceptable in situations in which the 
learner knows one of the basic constituents particularly in reference to nonlexicalized words;
For instance, defining ‘simulcast’ as broadcasting a program) or 4 (if it is correct). At this 
level, the researchers intended to differentiate between learners regarding their receptive 
knowledge by devising three scoring categories presenting a complete lack of knowledge, 
partial knowledge, and full knowledge of a word. In other words, the learner receives the 
score of 4 if the provided answer presents all the basic lexical constituents of a word at 
receptive level.

Unacceptable receptive responses at category IV likewise result in a score of 2. The 
partial knowledge of the learner in category IV leads to the score of 3 and the full knowledge 
receives the score of 4 respectively. Category V deals with the students’ initial productive 
knowledge at sentence level. The produced sentences at this level are evaluated only dealing 
with those learners who pass the receptive self-reported categories successfully. If knowledge 
of a meaning of the word is shown in a category V response but the word is not appropriately 
used in the sentence context, a score of 4 is given. A score of 5 is given if the word is 
employed in the sentence in a way that presents the learner's knowledge of its meaning in that 
context but it has the wrong grammatical category (e.g., a target noun utilized as a verb- He 
announced his retire’) or if a mistakenly conjugated or derived form is provided (e.g., 
'catched' for 'caught'). A score of 6 reflects both semantically and grammatically correct 
application of the target word -- even if other parts of the sentence include wrong forms.

5. Procedure
The participants of this study were initially judged as being at the intermediate level of 
vocabulary knowledge on the basis of their performance on the 2000 word level assessed by 
the VLT. One week before commencing the treatment, the pretest (designed based on the 
VKS) was administered to both groups and the results were recorded for later comparison 
with the posttest results. Both groups were taught for 12 weeks, each week contained one 
session and each session was 90 minutes long.

The learners in the experimental groups were provided with two different activities as L 
glossing (as an instance of a recognition task) and morphological analyses (as an instance of a

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manipulation task) regarding both groups of lexicalized and nonlexicalized ones at the receptive level to be comparable with each other. The selection of these two activities at the receptive level followed by similar contextualized exercises at the productive level could be justified in terms of the idea of noticing hypothesis as intention and noticing as consciousness (understanding) proposed by Schmidt (2001). He believed that nothing could be learned unless it has been noticed. Technically speaking, the two pedagogical interventions employed in this study are consistent with the distinctions made by Schmidt (2010) between the two terms of consciousness as intention and consciousness as awareness (understanding). Furthermore, both types of treatments could be supported by the features of form-focused instruction.

The beneficiary impact of the first intervention as L1 glossing can be rationalized with respect to the idea of consciousness as intention in which paying attention through explicit teaching is transparently fruitful to help the learners notice the nonsalient cues or complex ones which are the sources of difficulty due to the cross-linguistic distinctions existing between the learners’ L1 and L2. Clearly, it could be speculated that words not lexicalized in learners’ L1 could epitomize such a case with respect to the differences involved in mental processing. Another reason for the selection of such a strategy is to be able to detect the hegemony of the transfer phenomenon in a situation in which the learners’ attention is directed towards their L1.

Initially, the learners in the first interventionist group were provided with a technical theoretical elaboration of the two issues of L1 lexicalization and institutionalization that served as a criterion focusing their attention on the existing differences between the lexicalized and nonlexicalized items. The provision of such a description seems quite logical since all the learners were the participants of a course of morphology. They were initially asked to read the sentences including bold-typed lexicalized and nonlexicalized items. The task was aimed at drawing learners’ attention to the target words to make sure they noticed the selected lexical items. As mentioned by Gass (1988, as cited in Paribakht & Wesche, 1997), selective attention is the first stage in the acquisition of the word that ascertains the noticing process.

In order to provide the learners with a comparative view crystallizing the significance of the issue of L1 lexicalization, a glossing activity was provided. Accordingly, the learners were expected to work with the target items accompanied by their equivalents and explanations (provided for nonlexicalized items) together with the equivalents of two to four other words not included in the available contexts through a matching activity. The intended
words were provided at the foot of the page in no particular order. The participants were required to match each lexicalized/nonlexicalized word with its equivalent or paraphrase in their L1 to grasp the lexical cues signifying the cross-linguistic distinctions between their mother tongue and English as a foreign language.

The task was primarily aimed at helping the participants learn the conceptual meaning of the words by finding their equivalents in L1. However, the ultimate goal pursued by the task was to raise learners’ consciousness regarding the issue of lexicalization for each individual word in their L1. Such a consciousness-raising activity was conducted by asking the learners to choose between the two options of L (lexicalized) or NL (nonlexicalized) for each selected lexical item. According to Paribakht and Wesch (1997), activities like the above-mentioned one belong to the category of recognition exercises due to the fact that the learners are provided with the necessary elements and they are expected to match the lexicalized and nonlexicalized words with their equivalents or definitions.

Subsequently, the learners were asked to work with the unknown words including the lexicalized and nonlexicalized ones by translating the sentences encompassing the selected items. In other words, the participants in this interventionist group as direct contrasting with L1 were involved in a sentence translation task as well. Here, a necessity was felt to make the glossing activity (provided in the form of direct contrasting with L1) obtrusively meaningful. To achieve such an inclination, the learners were involved in a translation task as an opportunity to consider the expressive possibilities of the target language and to discover that it is not always possible to attain exact equivalence to lexical items. Finally, the participants were expected to generate original sentences in L2 by using the intended words if they could.

The selection of the second pedagogical intervention as a morphological treatment can be rationalized in reference to the idea of consciousness as a higher level of awareness (understanding). As mentioned by Schmidt (2010), “knowledge of rules and metalinguistic awareness of all kinds belong to this higher level of awareness” referred to as understanding which can facilitate SLA (p. 6). Therefore, the second pedagogical intervention involving metalinguistic analysis of lexicalized and nonlexicalized words is in line with the idea of consciousness as a higher level of awareness (understanding) explicated by Schmidt (2010).

The instruction in this group was intended to implement morphological analysis as a tool to develop a skill not limited to the teaching of the selected specified words. At the end of the instruction the participants in this group were expected to have awareness of several productive and semi-productive word families, stems, meaningful affixes, and base forms derivational and inflectional affixes pertinent to several words including the specifically
selected lexicalized and nonlexicalized vocabulary items. Perhaps, the learners were initially provided with some theoretical descriptions regarding the above-mentioned concepts like root, stem, derivational and inflectional affixes, and combining forms as the basic terminologies of morphology. The procedure was accompanied by some practical activities in a consecutive manner.

The learners in the second experimental group were involved in an individual activity to draw their attention to the derivational morphology of English. Before initiating with the completion task which was carried out individually, the whole class was provided with some explicit instruction regarding the roots, stems, and the derivational affixes relevant to the selected words presented each session. The instructor attempted to draw learners’ attention to the selected constituents by providing some further examples of the words encompassing the intended morphological constituents. Subsequently, learners in this experimental group were given a photocopy of the target contextualized words containing the bold-faced lexicalized and nonlexicalized items each session. The major aim of such a task was to draw learners’ attention to the target words in an explicit manner (to assure they noticed the selected lexical items). Next, the learners were expected to provide the meaning of the selected words by dissecting both sets of items into their meaningful constituents and finally write the whole meaning after the analysis. Such an activity could be classified as a manipulation exercise. The justification for the provided classification is that to accomplish the task learners should rearrange and organize the selected items by using their knowledge of morphology (stems, roots, and affixes) as stated by Paribakht and Wesch (1997). Accordingly, the instructor intended to focus the learners’ attention on the derived forms that made each word different and the part of speech of each related word.

Once weekly for the rest of the semester learners in this experimental group were assigned 8-9 new words and asked, for each new word, to repeat each step of the activity in class. However, the morphological treatment in this group was not limited to the analysis of the selected words as it involved the conceptual acquisition of several roots, derivational, inflectional affixes, and combining forms. Like the first interventionist group, the interventionist activities in this group were accompanied by some output activities such as reconstruction and sentence making in which the participants were asked to work on the intended words by reconstructing the contextualized sentences through paraphrasing and finally they were expected to provide original sentences if they could.
The requirement of the sentence writing task in both groups could be justified in terms of the idea mentioned by Joe (1995 & 1998) who believed that “the original uses of words has been shown to lead to retention of these words” (as cited in Laufer, 2001, p. 47). Similarly, as Lee (2004) noted, attempts to implement newly learned words in writing after explicit instruction significantly increases the likelihood of recognition vocabulary diverting to productive vocabulary. That is, at least one of the advantages of writing activities for vocabulary acquisition is that they, besides reinforcing already-learned vocabulary, help recognition vocabulary become productive. Accordingly, it seems logical to speculate that switching to activities that require production of the target word such as using it in written sentences may improve the chances of further recall. In fact, the inclusion of the above-mentioned productive activity is consistent with the idea of pushed output hypothesis formulated by Swain,1995 (as cited in Gass & Selinker, 2008) predicting the fact that production practices push learners to implement their linguistic abilities as they try to make themselves more comprehensible. Consequently, it could be assumed that productive activities play a significant role in the acquisition of syntax and morphology.

It is evident that the interventions provided in the two groups were concordant with form-focused instructions. In fact, the form-focused instruction in the two interventionist groups consisted of a special amalgamation of receptive and productive tasks which were accompanied by some oral corrective feedback recommendations. Each treatment was considered to amplify a particular aspect of lexical competence and the tasks in each group were arranged from the less demanding to the most demanding one.

In fact, the two receptive activities as L1 glossing in the form of direct contrasting with L1 and meta-morphological treatment belong to the category of focus-on-forms activities. However, the productive contextualized activities of reconstruction in the form of paraphrasing, sentence translation, and sentence making (providing cross-linguistic information as to the meaning of the sentences comprising the intended words with focused attention on contextualized meaning) replicate focus on form activities.

The learners in both groups were provided with some oral positive and negative corrective feedbacks which primarily focused on the grammaticality of the produced sentences, semantic appropriateness of the target words in contextualized sentences, optimum pronunciation, and questions related to the collocations of the selected words in both interventionist groups. The learners in both groups were demanded to submit their papers for further analysis by the instructor in each individual instructional session. In fact, such an
evaluation did not have any effect on their final assessment. Ultimately, the learners in both groups were administered a posttest (the same as pretest to be comparable with each other by mirroring the same features) to be evaluated and compared with respect to the amount of lexical knowledge gained by the end of the instructional course.

6. Results

In order to find the relationship between the learners’ degree of awareness of the lexicalized and nonlexicalized items at the time of pretesting and their size of vocabulary knowledge a correlational analysis was conducted between the two tests. The results are presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Lexicalized</th>
<th>Nonlexicalized</th>
<th>Receptive</th>
<th>Productive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lexicalized</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.20*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonlexicalized</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receptive</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.41**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productive</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)  
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 1 presents Pearson correlations between participants’ breadth of vocabulary knowledge including receptive and productive knowledge and their degree of familiarity with the two sets of lexicalized and nonlexicalized items at pre-testing before being exposed to the treatment. As table 1 shows, there is no significant relationship between the learners’ receptive vocabulary knowledge and their degree of familiarity with the two sets of words. As is illustrated in Table 1, there is a weak positive correlation between the learners’ productive knowledge and their knowledge of lexicalized words (p< .05). In other words, learners with a larger productive vocabulary were found to have more familiarity with the lexicalized words. However, neither their receptive nor their productive knowledge was predictive of their degree of familiarity with nonlexicalized items. Accordingly, it could be speculated that a larger breadth of vocabulary including receptive and productive knowledge than the range presented by the participants of the study is probably required for a more successful performance related to the selected words before being exposed to the treatment. Furthermore, the results show a modest positive correlation between the learners’ knowledge of the two sets of words at the beginning of the instruction (p< .01). Additionally, a modest
positive correlation exists between the learners’ receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge (P < .01).

The descriptive statistics related to the two experimental groups with respect to lexicalized and nonlexicalized items at pre and posttesting sessions are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics Related to the Pre/Post Test Scores Pertinent to the Two Interventionist Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Pairs</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lexicalized Pre</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>59.69</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossing</td>
<td>Lexicalized Post</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>164.25</td>
<td>28.21</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonlexicalized Pre</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>52.58</td>
<td>6.88</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonlexicalized Post</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>148.47</td>
<td>26.26</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to see whether or not the provided treatments were effective in each interventionist group a paired \( t \)-test was conducted to observe the significance of the mean differences between pre-and post test scores in each group. The results are shown in table 3.

Table 3. Results of Paired \( t \)-test for Pre-Post Lexicalized/Nonlexicalized Items in the Two Interventionist Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>VKS scores</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair1</td>
<td>(lexicalized Pre/lexicalized Post)</td>
<td>-104.556</td>
<td>27.62</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Nonlexicalized Pre/Nonlexicalized Post)</td>
<td>-95.88</td>
<td>27.43</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair1</td>
<td>(lexicalized pre/lexicalized Post)</td>
<td>-85.00</td>
<td>31.75</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair2</td>
<td>(Nonlexicalized Pre/Nonlexicalized Post)</td>
<td>-81.67</td>
<td>25.39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** (p< .01)

As Table 3 shows, the \( t \)-test results with (p< .01) indicate significant differences between the mean scores of the learners at pre and posttesting sessions in both interventionist groups dealing with both sets of words. In other words, both treatments were effective in helping the learners grow their depth of lexical knowledge dealing with both groups of
words. In order to find out whether or not the mean differences between the two interventionist groups (interrelationships between the two groups) are significant with respect to the lexicalized items an independent t-test analysis was conducted. The results of the t-test analysis between the first interventionist group involved in glossing and the second interventionist group receiving morphological treatment dealing with lexicalized items are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of Independent t-test Analysis for Lexicalized Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Scores</th>
<th>Levene’s Test For Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexicalized</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre</td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>73.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexicalized</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post</td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>73.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain score</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexicalized</td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>73.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** (p < .01)      * (p<.05)

The independent samples t-test results in Table 4 with (df = 74) and (P = .049) regarding lexicalized items present the fact that the participants in the two groups were significantly different with regard to their knowledge of lexicalized vocabulary items at pretesting. The t-test result at the time of posttesting with (df = 74) and (P=.002) with regard to the same group of participants is representative of a significant difference between the two interventionist groups. To be able to compare the two groups in reference to their gain knowledge from pre to posttesting a t-test analysis was conducted dealing with the gain scores. The results present that the measured rate of learning of the lexicalized set of items from pre to posttesting sessions is significantly different (p < .006). In other words, the learners involved in the first experimental group of this study outperformed their counterparts in the second group dealing with lexicalized items.

To find out whether or not the mean differences between the two groups (interrelationships between the two groups) are significant dealing with nonlexicalized items an independent t-test analysis was conducted. The results of the t-test analysis between the first interventionist group involved in glossing and the second group involved in a morphological analysis related to nonlexicalized items are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of Independent t-test Analysis for Nonlexicalized Items
Table 5 demonstrates that the participants involved in the two interventionist groups did not have any significant difference considering their degree of familiarity with nonlexicalized items at pretesting with (df = 74). However, the test analyses with (df=74) and (P = .02) at posttesting and with regard to the gain score (pre to posttesting differences) present the idea that the difference between the two groups is significant in reference to the degrees of achievement regarding nonlexicalized vocabulary items (p <.05). In other words, the learners in the first experimental group outperformed their counterparts in the second group with respect to their knowledge of nonlexicalized items.

In order to answer the research questions pertinent to the overarching issue of L1 lexicalization, a test analysis was conducted after splitting the file to see whether or not the performances of the students in this study differed significantly regarding the two sets of items (in terms of the intra-relationships between the two groups of words) in the two interventionist groups simultaneously. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Results of Paired t-test for Lexicalized/Nonlexicalized Items in the Two Interventionist Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>VKS scores</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>Lexicalized Pre/Nonlexicalized Pre</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>6.32</td>
<td>6.74</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2</td>
<td>Lexicalized Post/ Nonlexicalized Post</td>
<td>15.77</td>
<td>17.98</td>
<td>5.26</td>
<td>.000**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 3</td>
<td>Gainscore lexicalized/Gain score nonlexicalized</td>
<td>-8.66</td>
<td>20.66</td>
<td>-2.51</td>
<td>.017**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* (p < .05)
As shown in Table 6, the learners in both interventionist groups had greater knowledge of lexicalized items in comparison with nonlexicalized ones at the time of pretesting (p < .01). The *t*-test results are also significant for lexicalized words at post-testing (p < .01). As Table 6 shows, the measured rate of learning (pre to posttesting difference) is significantly different only in the first interventionist group (P< .01). In other words, the learners’ degree of achievement in the second interventionist group receiving morphological treatment was not significant considering the difference between the two sets of lexicalized and nonlexicalized items.

7. Discussion and Conclusion

The *t*-test results demonstrated a significant difference between the mean scores of the lexicalized and nonlexicalized items at pre and posttesting sessions. In other words, both instructional treatments (glossing in the form of direct contrasting with L1 and morphological analyses) resulted in significant gains in learners’ vocabulary knowledge with regard to both groups of target words. Generally speaking, the findings of this investigation could be supportive of the idea that pedagogical interventions in the form of explicit instructions bring salutary effects to the field of second language vocabulary acquisition and teaching with respect to both usual and particular groups of words.

Consequently, the findings in favor of the two explicit instructions in this study are consistent with the findings reported by different scholars in the field of explicit vocabulary acquisition. It is interesting to mention that extensive research during the past 20 years suggested the fact that learners benefit more from explicit vocabulary teaching compared with incidental vocabulary learning through extensive reading. (Hinkel, 2006; Nation, 2005; Sokeman, 1997 as cited in Nisbet, 2010). In the same way, Web (2008) reported that many recent researchers like Laufer, 1991, 2001; Laufer and Paribakht (1998) as well as Web (2008) suggested the idea that this is the explicit vocabulary teaching and learning which is responsible for the vast majority of L2 vocabulary learning.

To elaborate on the priority of the two interventions provided in this study with regard to their degree of effectiveness on the two sets of words, it seems necessary to evaluate the obtained gains from a comparative view. The *t*-test analyses related to the gain scores relevant to the participants of the first interventionist group who were exposed to the explicit treatment of glossing in the form of direct contrasting with L1 and the one pertinent to the
participants in the second interventionist group who received morphological treatment, presented a significant difference between the degrees of achievement in the two groups (for both sets of words). Accordingly, both instructional treatments (glossing in the form of direct contrasting with L1 and morphological analyses) resulted in significant gains in learners’ vocabulary knowledge with regard to both sets of lexicalized and nonlexicalized target words, but that the first intervention which was focused on the learners’ L1 in a comparative manner led to greater gains. It should be remembered, however, that both types of interventions reflected form-focused instruction encompassing an amalgamation of focus on form and focus on forms practices. Furthermore, the pushed out-put tasks (e.g., writing original sentences) and corrective feedback activities were identical in both interventionist groups.

The findings could be theoretically rationalized in the framework of the idea of noticing as intention. The learners in the first group were more successful in detecting the nonsalient cues or complex ones related to the target words which were considered to be complicated due to the differences existing between Persian and English. In other words, the cross-linguistic comparisons between the participants’ mother tongue and the target language were more revealing. Besides, it could be speculated that the comparative discussions over the target words which were intentionally directed towards the issue of L1 lexicalization led to a stronger retention of the words at receptive level. Consequently, the learners in the first group may have been more successful in grasping the meanings more appropriately with reference to all basic constituents of the words. Such a case is more tangible dealing with nonlexicalized items which are regarded to be more complex semantically.

On the basis of the postcommunicative priority of the saliency of form as it anchors to meaning, and the primacy of noticing in the acquisition process, we may hypothesize that the stance towards L1 should reflect the goals of instruction. Accordingly, selective use of contrastive analysis as a teaching technique for particular groups of words offers beneficiary results. As such outright prohibitions on learners’ L1 seem to be unfounded, irrational, and imprudent.

The morphological analyses provided in the second experimental group as a treatment presenting the idea of consciousness as awareness (a higher level of understanding) was shown to be less successful in helping the students grow their depth of lexical items accurately compared with the first group. Morphological awareness, as an explicit strategy, proved to be effective both as a mnemonic aid and a general strategy dealing with usual vocabulary items with regard to several studies like Bowers and Kirby (2009) and Bellomo
However, its success was a matter of degree in this study particularly with respect to nonlexicalized items carrying more complex lexical constituents.

As mentioned before, this study is bidirectional dealing with the goals it pursues. The first ramification of this study focuses on the cross-linguistic issue of L1 lexicalization with respect to two different pedagogical frameworks. However, the second facet pinpoints the significance of the issue dealing with the underlying psycholinguistic processes involved in the bilingual mental lexicon. It should be remembered, however, that such a scrutiny was carried out with respect to the identical methodology followed in each interventionist group for teaching lexicalized and nonlexicalized items in a distinct manner.

The data pertinent to the first experimental group showed that the participants had greater familiarity with lexicalized words at pretesting in comparison with the nonlexicalized items. The comparative analysis of the data at posttesting demonstrated greater achievement in favor of lexicalized items. More important, the results of the $t$-test analysis of the gain scores (pre to posttesting difference) related to the two sets of words, presented a significant difference in favor of lexicalized items in this group.

The findings of this study can lead us to the speculation that the idea of L1 lexicalization appears to be a significant factor affecting foreign language learners’ vocabulary achievement. The complexity of the nonlexicalized items could be rationalized theoretically dealing with several psycholinguistic hypotheses and models like the lexicalization model devised by Jiang (2004) and the idea of semantic transfer proposed by Ellis, 1985 (as cited in Jiang 2004) to elaborate on the underlying learning mechanisms involved in the bilingual mental lexicon.

According to Jiang (2004), the adult language learner resorts to the existing linguistic and conceptual system of his L1 in the process of L2 acquisition through the act of translating lexical items from L2 to L1. This stage is termed as the hybrid-entry stage due to the fact that an L2 entry state at this level is an amalgamation of L2 linguistic and conceptual information and the syntax and semantic system pertinent to the learner’s L1. From a processing perspective such a stance could be termed as L1 lemma mediation stage due to the fact that lexical processing in L2 at this level is mediated by the lemma information provided as a result of the act of translation from L2 to L1. The existence of such a hybrid entry stage is of great significance because it makes L2 vocabulary acquisition different from L1 vocabulary acquisition. Subsequently, it could be speculated that learners’ greater difficulty with the acquisition of nonlexicalized items may arise as a result of the students’ failure to access exact equivalents for the intended L2 items at the hybrid-entry stage.
This hypothesis could be also logically justified with regard to the idea of semantic transfer proposed by Ellis (1985). He described L2 vocabulary acquisition as a process encompassing “a mapping of the new word form onto pre-existing conceptual meanings or onto L1 translation equivalents as approximants” (Ellis, 1985 as cited in Jiang, 2004, p. 104). Here, it seems quite transparent to assume that the occurrence of semantic transfer totally depends on the existence of similar relevant lexical concepts in both languages (Jiang, 2004). The idea gives credence to the assumption that the teaching and learning of nonlexicalized words could be considered more deeply as a factor of difficulty.

The results pertinent to the effect of L1 lexicalization in the first experimental group are consistent with the results reported by Paribakht (2005) and Chen and Truscott (2010) who treated the issue of L1 lexicalization in different noninterventionist situations. However, the findings of this study suggest the idea that L1 lexicalization is a significant factor in lexical acquisition in particular L1-based interventionist situations.

The \( t \)-test analysis related to the second interventionist group presented a significant difference between the mean scores of the two sets of words at the time of pretesting. In other words, learners had a higher degree of familiarity with lexicalized items before being exposed to the treatment. Similarly, the analysis of the results demonstrated a considerable achievement in favor of lexicalized items at the time of posttesting. However, unlike the results related to the first interventionist group, the \( t \)-test analysis of the gain score (pre to posttesting difference) was not significantly different in this group.

It can be speculated that the significance of the issue in this interventionist group is a matter of the degree of lexical achievement. The examination of the \( t \)-test results in this group dealing with the effect of lexicalization may suggest the fact that such a stance could be an emerging area of research. Much needs to be done to provide a clearer understanding of how, when, and why the issue of L1 lexicalization may affect learning in L2-based instructional situations. In other words, a fuller understanding of the issue could not be achieved unless we treat it in different L2-based interventionist situations in a comparative manner to be able to make more validated judgments regarding the actual behavior of the intended words.

8. Pedagogical Implications and Suggestions for Further Research

The findings related to the experimental groups in this study may imply the idea that the importance of the issue of the cross-linguistic factor of L1 lexicalization increases as the
learner glides towards higher levels in terms of the depth of lexical knowledge. In other words, the direct influence of the learners’ L1 becomes more palpable in situations in which much more learning occurs in its deeper sense.

This study could be regarded as a complement to the other two studies carried out by Paribakht (2005) and Chen and Truscott (2010), monitoring the acquisition of nonlexicalized words while inferencing and incidental learning. Accordingly, the findings of this study confirm the idea of L1 lexicalization proposed by Jiang (2004) in explicit L1-based interventionist atmospheres pursuing form-focused instruction. Hence, the empirical findings of this research proposal could be interpreted as a piece of evidence supporting the hegemony of transfer phenomenon in the bilingual mental lexicon and as such it paves the way towards a more palpable understanding of the nature of the learners' lexical knowledge and may then prove to be helpful to pedagogy.

In fact, further research is needed to improve the characteristics of the tests as measuring and research tools and to determine the effect of different teaching and learning strategies on the development of learners' passive and active levels of knowledge of vocabularies with respect to the issue of L1 lexicalization. Furthermore, the overarching issue of lexicalization could be further detected with reference to learners’ cognitive styles or particular learning strategies.

Another suggestion would be to adopt a more comparative view regarding L1 lexicalization. In fact, it is not evident whether or not similar results could be obtained with learners at higher levels of vocabulary knowledge. Therefore, a comparative study with learners at different levels of language proficiency could be conducted to monitor the issue of L1 lexicalization. Perhaps, such a longitudinal study will provide a deeper understanding of the issue under investigation by examining the performances of language learners at different levels with a more magnifying glass.

Acknowledgement
We would like to extend our most profound words of appreciation to Dr. T.S. Paribakht from the University of Ottawa, for her insightful comments on different facets of this study including the scoring procedure related to the VKS as well as the selection of the target words.

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