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Foreword
Welcome to volume nine and the second edition of the year 2013. The journal has had strong growth over the last few years with a monthly readership now exceeding 2500 readers. For a journal examining the topics of EFL/ESL, Literature and Translation studies, the growth and readership has been pleasing. Statistically, readers are coming from almost eighty countries. 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 and ESL studies. In the first article, Javad Hayatdavoudi and Zohreh Kassaian present the relationship between language anxiety and psycho-physiological responses to oral performance: a study on Iranian EFL students. In the second article of the issue, On the Relationship among Language Learning Attitude, Academic Motivation and Language Proficiency of Iranian EFL learners is done by Jahanbakhsh Langroudi and Nasibeh Amiri. In the third article of the issue, Leila Bahrami, Mansoor Tavakoli and Zahra Amirian have studied investigating development of interactive metadiscourse resources in the writings of Iranian EFL learners: a process-based approach to writing. In the next article, reanalysis and its operation in different languages is studied by Ahmad Farahmand and Asghar Hatami. In the fifth article of the issue, Fatemeh Ali Panahi and Sajjad Bakhtiari Pabandi present the effect of using computer-assisted language learning (CALL) on the listening comprehension of expository texts for the Iranian university female senior. The next article which is about English vs. Persian compounds; a contrastive study of compound verbs is done by Seyed Mohammad Mohammadi. In the seventh article of the issue Omid Tabatabaei and Yegnahe Nazem have studied the relationship between EFL teachers’ level of research engagement and their qualification, experience. In the eight article of the issue the effect of task-based language teaching accompanied by songs on Iranian EFL learners’ learning L2 grammar and their attitudes is done by Mansoor Tavakoli. In the next article, the relationship between extroversion/introversion and Iranian EFL learners’ language learning strategy preferences is studied by Amir Hamid Forough Ameri. In the tenth article of the issue, Mahboobeh Tavakol and Maryam Dehghan have studied the fundamental features of EFL/ESL textbooks’ blurb. In the eleventh article of the issue the representation of a presidential speech: a critical discourse analysis is studied by Ali Mansouri Nejad, Mohammad Reza Shamsaddini, Ambigapathy Pandian and Omer Hassan Ali Mahfoodh. In the twelfth article of the issue, focus on form and
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We hope you enjoy this edition and look forward to your readership.
The Relationship between Language Anxiety and Psycho-Physiological Responses to Oral Performance: A Study on Iranian EFL Students

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Biodata

Javad Hayatdavoudi is a graduate student at the University of Isfahan. His research interests include psycholinguistics, CDA and Phonetics.

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Abstract

The present study aims at investigating the correlation between language anxiety and perceived psycho-physiological responses to oral performance in Iranian female EFL learners. The population of the study consisted of all elementary and intermediate female EFL learners. Using simple random sampling, a number of 50 EFL learners were selected as the participants. A modified version of foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) and a researcher-made psycho-physiological questionnaire were used to collect the data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics including Pearson correlation formula and independent t test...
were run to analyze the data. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS 18. The results showed a significant positive correlation between language anxiety and psycho-physiological responses to oral performance in either group. Accordingly, students with higher levels of language anxiety experienced higher levels of psycho-physiological tensions in oral performance. The results of independent t test revealed that intermediate students were more language anxious than elementary students. They also experienced higher levels of both psychological and physiological tensions in oral performance.

Keywords: Language anxiety, Psycho-physiological responses, EFL learners, Oral performance

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, the rising tide of interest in the affective side of human behavior has captured the attention of many scholars within a variety of disciplines including anthropology, psychology and applied linguistics. As far as applied linguistics is concerned, affective variables have proven to be of primary importance in foreign language learning and teaching.

Put simply, “affect refers to emotion or feeling. The affective domain is the emotional side of human behavior…” (Brown, 2006, p. 153). The affective domain, then, has undergone dramatic stratifications within the respective disciplines under different perspectives. The picture becomes more overwhelming when each entity within the affective domain comes to encompass divisions and subdivisions as well. One such entity amazingly dismantled into diverse categories is anxiety; general anxiety, academic anxiety, state anxiety, trait anxiety, test anxiety, facilitative anxiety, debilitative anxiety and language anxiety, to name but a few.

Of all these, Language anxiety has secured itself a permanent position in psycholinguistic studies. Language anxiety is thus defined by Richards and Schmidt (2002) as “subjective feelings of apprehension and fear associated with language learning and use” (p. 285). Other scholars have also offered alternative definitions that hold language anxiety as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 128). Over the last few decades, psycholinguist scholars have invested highly in foreign and second language anxiety studies, investigating its associations with several corresponding factors including age, gender, language proficiency, character traits, learning
styles, language skills, psychological and physiological variables, among others. From among the variables associated with language anxiety- *gender, physiological and psychological factors* along with *language performance on tests* has attracted many scholars throughout the world.

Some scholars have investigated the associations between language anxiety and performance on language tests (e.g., Horwitz et al, 1986; Wilson, 2006) and have found interesting symptoms in the learners taking tests, particularly oral ones. They have reported such physiological symptoms to oral tests as trembling, distortion of sounds, freezing up, going blank and sweating. As Wilson (2006) asserts, “the literature suggests that the speaking skill is extremely anxiety-provoking in many language students and that it is often seen to arouse more anxiety than the other skills” (p. 103). Several authors have also reported psychological reactions to oral performance in language tests such as procrastination, silence, apprehension, etc. (e.g., Horwitz et al.,1986; Xianping, 2003). However, the findings have not always been unquestionably agreed upon. Incorporating the gender variable in the same line of research adds up to the obscurity of the issue to some extent. Some scholars suggest that the female is generally more anxious than the male subjects (e.g., Cheng, 2002), while others have reported no significant correlation between language anxiety and gender (e.g., Dewale, 2002; Aida,1994).

Following the same line of research and taking Iranian language students into consideration, this study is going to investigate the relationship between language anxiety in Iranian EFL students and perceived physiological and psychological reactions on oral performance.

### 2. Literature Review

Despite the growing concern for the affective side of human behavior, it was not until the latter part of the twentieth century, in the 1970s, that “SLA researchers began to study the significant role played by personality variables in second language acquisition” (Tanveer, 2007, p. 9). Then it was Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope’s (1986) path-breaking work that introduced language anxiety as an independent construct in the literature. They maintained that “just as anxiety prevents some people from performing successfully in science or mathematics, many people find foreign language learning, especially in classroom situations, particularly stressful” (p. 125). Horwitz et al (1986) further reported that “the subjective feelings, psycho-physiological symptoms of the anxious foreign language learner are
essentially the same for any specific anxiety. They experience apprehension, worry, even
dread. They have difficulty concentrating, become forgetful, sweat and have palpitations” (p.
126).

Since then quite a few psycholinguist scholars have followed the model of Horwitz
and colleagues in addressing the associations of language anxiety with a variety of other
factors. Considering the correlation between language anxiety and language performance,
MacIntyre et al (2000) in their study on university students enrolled in French programs
reported that 39% of the students “said they felt unsure, self-conscious, nervous or
uncomfortable and 34% reported feeling inadequate, stupid, unprepared, incapable and
inferior.” Quoting one of their male subjects, they reported him as: “…feeling confident any
time that I spoke French that I didn’t have to do so for a good mark. But whenever I am
marked I get a little nervous and began to mess up”. Still, contrary to male subjects, they
found that giving presentations in the classroom were particularly of interest for the female
students. Finally, they came to the conclusion that language anxiety will not be likely to
reduce unless the students’ proficiency increases (p. 316-336). However, in a more recent
research, MacIntyre et al (2003) found contrary evidence with regard to the correlation
between language anxiety and oral performance so that they had to assert that

…the results [of their new study] might be taken to suggest, possibly
counterintuitively, that anxiety is a greater problem for more advanced learners.
Increasing communication opportunities and challenges in the language classroom
likely provokes anxiety which help to determine whether a student speaks up or
remains silent (p. 603).

In a recent research on Turkish EFL adolescent students, Sila Ay (2010) found that “
foreign language anxiety, experienced by young adolescent Turkish students, differs in
relation to levels of instruction and basic language skills” (p. 89). She reported that foreign
language anxiety shows up first in receptive skills (listening and reading) at beginner levels
and then mounts up in productive skills (speaking and writing) as the levels advance. She
maintained that with the advancement of students’ proficiency of foreign language, their
language anxiety with regard to comprehension diminishes and their anxiety toward
production increases.

With regard to the associations between language anxiety and testing settings, Horwitz et
al (1986) contended “foreign language anxiety frequently shows up in testing situations.
Students commonly report to counselors that they know a certain grammar point but forget it
during a test or an oral experience when many grammar points must be remembered and
coordinated simultaneously" (p. 127). Drawing further on students’ oral performance, they wrote: “oral tests have the potential of provoking both test and oral communication anxiety simultaneously in susceptible students” (p. 128). Similarly, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a), while handling the links between language anxiety and tests, asserted that oral tests in foreign languages are likely to trigger language anxiety and communication apprehension. Many a psycholinguist scholar believes the speaking skill, especially in the form of oral performance on tests, to be the most anxiety arousing of all language skills (e.g., Horwitz et al., 1986; Wilson, 2007). As Wilson (2007) asserts “indeed, speaking tests seem to be particularly anxiety provoking as they probably arouse the three constituents of language anxiety…communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety, all at the same time” (p. 103).

Taking another corresponding variable, gender, into account and trying to work out its associations with language anxiety, Cheng (2002) in his study on Taiwanese English learners discovered that females were considerably more anxious than males. He reported that “…female students in the present study were found to suffer significantly higher levels of English writing anxiety (M=85.67, SD=16.28) than male learners (M=77.41, SD=18.73)” (p. 651).

Ever since the pioneer scholars began studying language anxiety as a distinct construct, they attempted to devise scales in order for the variable to be quantitatively measurable. Horwitz et al. (1986), in their seminal work, devised and implemented Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCAS) which is still widely in use. The scale contains 33 items on a 5-point Likert scale. Other scales have also been developed such as The Language Class Discomfort Scale (Ely, 1986) and The English Language Anxiety Scale (Pappamiheil, 2001), among others.

Despite the ongoing controversies, contradictions and complications in the literature as to the associations between language anxiety and a plethora of other variables, psycholinguist scholars have devoted themselves to more exploration and research on the issue to which this study may be a contribution.

Whether or not controversy could be a legitimate justification for conducting further research on an issue, there seems to be persuasive supports to vindicate the present study. First, the findings have been so contradictory; from the ones that claimed the female students to be generally more language anxious than the males (Cheng, 2002) to the studies that found no significant correlation in this regard (Dewaele, 2007) to the ones that addressed the male subjects to be more language anxious in oral performance (MacIntyre, 2000). Second, the
socio-cultural contexts in which the previous studies have been conducted throughout the world are so diverse; from the westernmost (the U.S) to the easternmost (Japan) nations in the world. Thus, while this might account for the contradictions in findings, it would as well be justifiable to undertake such research in Iranian socio-cultural context. Third, to the researcher's knowledge, there has not yet been a study to cover these factors all at the same time among Iranian EFL learners. Besides since the EFL courses in Iranian EFL setting is mostly grammar-based with no definite concern for oral skills, one might think of Iranian EFL students as experiencing high psycho-physiological tensions in oral performance, which is particularly of interest for a researcher to investigate.

In this regard, this study aims to investigate the correlation between language anxiety, as a situation specific anxiety, and perceived psychological and physiological responses Iranian EFL learners experience in oral presentations. Furthermore, the relationship between EFL learners' proficiency level and perceived psycho-physiological responses to oral presentations will be investigated. Therefore, from among the aforementioned factors, there are language anxiety, proficiency level whose relationship with psycho-physiological responses to oral performance will be explored.

Based on the already-stated aims and the topic under discussion, the following research questions were formulated:
1) Is there any correlation between language anxiety and perceived psycho-physiological responses to oral performance in Iranian EFL students?
2) Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL students’ level of proficiency and their perceived psycho-physiological responses in oral performance?
3) Is there any significant correlation between Iranian EFL students’ level of proficiency and their psychological responses as compared with physiological responses to oral performance?

3. Method
3.1 Participants
The participants of this study consisted of 50 Iranian female EFL students at two levels of proficiency, namely, elementary and intermediate. An oral proficiency test was administered to the participants in advance to ensure their level of proficiency and assign them into due levels. Since Iranian EFL learners rarely continue their studies to advanced levels of proficiency or actual advanced levels, the participants were selected from elementary and intermediate levels.
3.2 Instruments

Two main instruments were drawn upon in order for the relevant data to be collected and the research questions to be answered:

1. FLCAS: Foreign language classroom anxiety scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz and colleagues in 1986 has since been a frequently-used instrument in measuring language anxiety. FLCAS comprises 33 items based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). It tends to measure general language anxiety associated with the four major language skills. “The scale [in the original study by Horwitz et al (1986)] has demonstrated internal reliability, achieving an [Cronbach’s] alpha coefficient of .93 with all items producing significant correlated item-total scale correlations." However, a modified version of FLCAS was used in the present study. This version was first developed by Ay (2010) to investigate language anxiety in Turkish EFL students. The modified scale consists of 20 items on a 5-point Likert scale. She reported the reliability coefficient of the modified FLCAS to be 0.0829. The reliability of the scale was calculated to be $\alpha=0.90$ in the present study using Cronbach alpha formula.

2. Psycho-physiological Questionnaire: A researcher-made questionnaire to examine perceived psycho-physiological tensions was developed. To this end, a corpus of diverse psycho-physiological tensions reported in previous studies was collected first. The previous studies over the last few decades have pinpointed a good many of the psycho-physiological manifestations of language anxiety, which were conveniently used to develop the questionnaire. Then through comparisons with general symptoms of anxiety as reported in psychological studies, a number of physiological and psychological symptoms were selected as potential symptoms that EFL learners may experience. The questionnaire items were accordingly prepared to address two general rubrics: the psychological (internal) responses and physiological (external) responses. The scale consisted of 20 items on a 3-point Likert scale. Using Cronbach alpha formula, the reliability of the scale was calculated to be $\alpha=0.93$. The content validity of the questionnaire was approved by a professor of psycholinguistics and two other experts.

4. Results

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Table 1 illustrates the results of descriptive statistics of research variables.

Table 1. Statistics of research variables
As shown in the table, the results of each group's performance on every questionnaire are illustrated separately consistent with research variables. Psycho-physiological questionnaire was developed to examine both psychological and physiological factors so that 10 items examined psychological and 10 items examined physiological responses.

Inferential statistics including Pearson correlation formula and t test were run to investigate the significance of the relationship between research variables and compare the performance of the two groups on either questionnaire, respectively. Table 2 illustrates the results of Pearson correlation test of research variables.

Table 2. Pearson correlation test of the significance of relationship between research variables

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<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Anxiety</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>.67140</td>
<td>.12258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>.58790</td>
<td>.13146</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physiological Responses</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>.37453</td>
<td>.06838</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.30997</td>
<td>.06931</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>2.0300</td>
<td>.31805</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psycho-Physiological Responses</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Elementary</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1.6500</td>
<td>.34215</td>
<td>.06247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1.9725</td>
<td>.30108</td>
<td>.06732</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in table, the correlation between all research variables was examined two by two in order to provide answers to the first two research questions. The level of significance is calculated to be Sig=0.000 in all correlation tests. Therefore, there is 99% certainty that there is a significant correlation between every two factor in either group. Accordingly, the correlation between language anxiety and physiological responses as well as between language anxiety and psychological responses equals $r=68.4$ and $r=77.1$, respectively. The correlation between language anxiety and psycho-physiological responses was calculated to be $r=76.8$ in either group. The correlation between participants' physiological responses and psychological responses was calculated to be $r=79.3$.

In order to know answer to the third research question, independent samples t test was run to examine the difference between the two group on their performance in either questionnaire. Table 3 illustrates the results of t test of between-group analysis.

**Table 3. Independent t test results of participants' performance in either questionnaire**
Physiological Responses

2.360 .131 - 4.408 .016 - .44912 .17974 -.81128 -.08697

Psychological Responses

1.543 .220 - 3.087 .003 - .31000 .10043 -.51193 -.10807

Psycho-Physiological Responses

1.503 .226 - 3.422 .001 - .32250 .09426 -.51202 -.13298

As shown in the table, the significance of groups performance in FLCAS equals $\text{sig}=0.016$ with negative upper and lower limits. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the mean scores between the two groups. Besides, intermediate students had a larger mean score than the elementary students. The significance of groups performance in psycho-physiological questionnaire equals $\text{sig}=0.001$ with negative upper and lower limits. Besides, intermediate students had a larger mean score than the elementary students. The results also showed significant differences in both psychological and physiological responses between the two groups and the intermediate students had higher mean scores in either type of responses.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The present study was conducted to investigate the correlation between language anxiety and perceived psycho-physiological tensions Iranian female EFL learners experience in oral performance in language classrooms. To this end, two self-report questionnaires were used, including a modified version of FLCAS and a researcher-made questionnaire. The reliability of either questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach alpha formula which yielded high reliability coefficients.

The results of statistical analysis showed a significant positive correlation between language anxiety and psycho-physiological responses to oral classroom performance in both elementary and intermediate female EFL learners. Therefore, students with higher levels of
language anxiety reported to suffer from higher levels of psycho-physiological tensions on oral performance. The results also showed a significant positive correlation between language anxiety and physiological responses in either group so that students with higher levels of language anxiety experienced higher levels of physiological tensions on oral performance. This is consistent with the findings of Horwitz et al (1986) and Wilson (2006). The results revealed a significant positive correlation between language anxiety and psychological responses to oral classroom performance in either group. Therefore, students with higher levels of language anxiety experienced higher levels of psychological tensions on oral performance. This is consistent with the findings of Horwitz et al (1986), Xianping (2003), MacIntyre et al (2000), MacIntyre and Gardner (1991a).

The highest correlation was noticed between physiological and psychological responses (r=79.3) so that learners with higher levels of language anxiety experienced both higher levels of psychological and physiological tensions on oral performance. Besides, the correlations between physiological and psycho-physiological responses as well as psychological and psycho-physiological responses were calculated to be 94.8 and 94.6, respectively.

The results of independent t test showed a significant difference between elementary and intermediate students in terms of language anxiety and psycho-physiological responses to oral classroom performance. Accordingly, there was a significant difference in the mean scores of language anxiety between the two groups, and intermediate students were found to be more language anxious than elementary students. This is consistent with the findings of MacIntyre et al (2003) and Sila Ay (2010). MacIntyre and colleagues (2003) reported that "anxiety is a greater problem for more advanced learners." Similarly, Sila Ay (2010) found that anxiety toward productive skills (speaking and writing) increases at higher levels of proficiency.

The results also revealed a significant difference in psycho-physiological responses between the two groups. In this regard, intermediate students obtained higher mean scores on psycho-physiological questionnaire, which indicates that they experienced higher levels of psycho-physiological tensions on oral performance. There were also significant differences in psychological and physiological responses between the two groups separately. The intermediate learners obtained higher mean scores for both physiological and psychological responses.

Overall, the present findings showed that intermediate female EFL learners are more language anxious than elementary students, which is consistent with previous findings.
However, further studies may be required to investigate this issue on more learners at other proficiency levels in Iranian EFL learners including advanced learners. Besides, the same study may be conducted on Iranian male EFL learners to compare with the present findings. The psycho-physiological questionnaire developed in this study proved both valid and reliable to examine the psychological and physiological tensions EFL learners experience in oral classroom performance. However, it may not assess such tensions in other language skills. Therefore, further studies may be required to examine the reliability and validity of this scale in assessing psycho-physiological tensions in other language skills including listening, reading and writing.

Although the study is correlational and descriptive, it might still have practical implications in order for the practitioners to consider the difficulties Iranian students come up with while required to have oral performance either in oral tests or in classroom presentations. The practitioners may then take students’ levels of language anxiety and proficiency level into consideration in their teaching practice, employing more affect-friendly approaches in order to facilitate learning and lower students’ anxiety. They might also want to modify their oral test procedures in a way to put the learners in more comfortable state, hence the betterment of their performance. Besides, measures should be taken to relax the oral communication atmosphere in the classroom at more advanced levels of proficiency.

References


Title

On the Relationship among Language Learning Attitude, Academic Motivation and Language Proficiency of Iranian EFL Learners

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Biodata

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Abstract

The present study is an attempt to explore any significant relationships among language learning attitude (LLA), academic motivation (AM), and language proficiency (LP) of Iranian EFL learners. One hundred and twenty Iranian EFL students studying at the Department of Foreign Languages of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman took part in this study. The participants, including both males and females, were selected using cluster sampling, a type of probability sampling, from junior and senior students majoring in EFL related fields (Teaching, Literature and Translation). In order to obtain the required data, three questionnaires were utilized: the Language Attitude Scale (LAS) to measure learners’ language learning attitude, The Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) to measure learners’ academic motivation, and Michigan Proficiency Test, short version, to determine the level of students’ Language Proficiency. The findings of this study revealed that first, there was a significant positive relationship between LLA and LP ($r= 0.24$): the more positive language attitude the students have, the...
higher their scores of LP; second, there was a significant positive relationship between AM and LP ($r = 0.44$): the more motivated the students, the higher their scores of LP; third, there was a significant positive relationship between LLA and AM ($r = 0.76$): the more positive language attitude the students have, the higher their academic motivation scores.

**Keywords:** Language Learning Attitude (LLA), Academic Motivation (AM), Extrinsic Motivation (EM), Intrinsic Motivation (IM), Amotivation, Language Proficiency (LP)

### 1. Introduction

Attitude as a psychological concept has been the focus of much research in the fields of psychology, sociology, social psychology and educational psychology. Language learning attitudes, as Fasold (1987) comments, only differ in the sense that they are attitudes about languages and nothing else.

It has been suggested that the most likely fundamental and salient factor affecting foreign language proficiency is motivation (Rahman, 2005). According to Bailey, Onwuegbuzie, and Daley (2000), as motivation has a direct effect on the target language proficiency, it is a strong predictor of substantial foreign language proficiency as well.

Several studies on learner variables (motivation, attitude, anxiety) and their relationships with learners’ foreign language proficiency have been carried out over the course of more than three decades. All of those studies have proved that learner variables have influences on learners’ language proficiency (Lukmani, 1972; Kachru, 1992; Oxford and Shearin, 1994; Brown, 1994 and 2000; Warden and Lin, 2000; Dornyei, 1994 and 2002; Masgoret and Gardner, 2003; Lamb, 2004; Gardner, Masgoret, Tennant, & Mihie, 2004; and Rahman, 2005).

In addition, there has been considerable research demonstrating that attitudinal and motivational variables are related to achievement in a second language, and that this association is independent of language aptitude (e.g., Inal, Evin and Saracaloglu, 2005). Gardner (1982) states that although some possibly negative results have been reported, the overwhelming evidence indicates that attitudinal variables are related to, and possibly influence proficiency in second language.

Moreover, the relationship between motivation and attitudes has been considered a prime concern in language learning research. Gardner and Lambert (1972) state that “his
motivation to learn is thought to be determined by his attitudes towards the other group in particular and by his orientations towards the learning task itself” (p.2).

2. Review of the Literature
2.1. Language Attitude
“Learning a language is closely related to the attitudes towards the languages” (Starks & Paltridge, 1996, p.218).

Social psychologists started to investigate language attitudes in the 1950s. The increased interest in studying language attitudes in the early years needs to be seen in relation to the growing acceptance of the mentalist approach that regarded language production not as behavior but as cognitive or mental activity. Since then a lot of research has been carried out on describing and understanding language attitudes. The complexity of language attitudes with their linked concepts of language and attitude and their correlation with society make it impossible to devise a definition that is theoretically comprehensible and also applicable in the real world context (Smith, 1996).

Attitudes have been explored by many researchers in different parts of the world. A group of researchers (Latif, Fadzil, Bahroom, Mohammad, San, 2011) conducted a research to determine the relationship between various socio-psychological variables like attitude, motivation, anxiety and instrumental orientation on performance in English as a second language. The results indicated that all of the four variables were significantly correlated with learners' performance in the English course conducted at Open University of Malaysia. Moreover, the regression analysis showed that all the variables except for personal motivation exerted significant impacts on performance with anxiety having a negative impact while attitude and instrumental orientation having positive impacts.

Liu’s (2007) study on Chinese university students’ attitudes and motivation to learn English and the correlations of both variables with the students’ English proficiency also revealed similar findings. The third-year undergraduates had positive attitudes and high level of motivation towards learning English. Liu (2007) suggested that this may be due to the rapid demand for university graduates to be highly proficient in English. In addition, correlation analysis showed that students who had more positive attitudes towards learning English tend to score higher in the proficiency test. However, Liu suggested that more positive attitudes and higher instrumental and travel orientations might also be the result of students’ higher English proficiency.
Haitema (2002) and Saracaloğlu (2000) in their studies reveal that there is a positive relationship between affective characteristics and foreign language achievement. In her study, Saracaloğlu (2000) refers to the students’ attitudes that they differ according to the type of high school, that is Anatolian High School and private high school showed high positive attitudes towards foreign language.

Bartley (1970) stated that his studies have showed that there was a direct relationship between positive attitudes and high achievement as well as negative attitudes and low achievement. That positive attitudes enhance achievement has been confirmed and described by Lambert et al. (1963), and Spolsky (1969).

Chalak and Kassaian (2010) investigated motivation and attitude of Iranian undergraduate EFL students towards learning English. The research focused on the motivation orientations of the students and their attitudes towards the target language and its community. A group of 108 students majoring in English Translation in Isfahan, Iran was surveyed using Attitude, Motivation Test Battery (AMTB). The results revealed that these Iranian non-native speakers of English learned the language for both ‘instrumental’ and ‘integrative’ reasons and their attitudes towards the target language community and its members were generally found to be highly positive.

2.2. Academic Motivation

The relationships between academic motivation and language proficiency have long attracted researchers’ attention. Motivation determines how and why people learn and how they perform (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996).

Clement and Kruidenier (1985) and Dornyei (1994) have demonstrated that measures of proficiency in the second/foreign language are related to motivational characteristics of students. In this respect, Corria (1999) claims that a full understanding of students’ motivation is necessary to maximize the English language results and positive outcomes. Kharma (1977) also found that different kinds of motivation to learn a foreign language may produce different rates and ultimate levels of proficiency.

Thus, the importance of motivation in enhancing second/foreign language learning is undeniable. Lifrieri (2005) points out that “when asked about the factors which influence individual levels of success in any activity – such as language learning – most people would certainly mention motivation among them” (p. 4). Brown (2000) states that “it is easy in second language learning to claim that a learner will be successful with the proper motivation” (p. 160). With similar views, Gardner (2006) posits that “students with higher levels of motivation will do better than students with lower levels” (p. 241). He further adds
that “if one is motivated, he/she has reasons (motives) for engaging in the relevant activities, expends effort, persists in the activities, attends to the tasks, shows desire to achieve the goal, enjoys the activities, etc” (Gardner, 2006, p. 243).

Moreover, relations between students’ academic motivation and academic achievement have been routinely established in the literature (Ames, 1992; McInerney, 2001; Pintrich and Maehr, 1995; Wentzel, 1991). Skaalvik and Valas’ (1999) study of Norwegian elementary and middle school students also included a measure of motivation (interest and investment) into their study of reciprocal effects. In the two oldest cohorts, the results revealed that motivation was affected directly by achievement.

Gardner (1985) found that motivation has close relationship with learner’s achievement. He analyzed the role of attitude and motivation in second language acquisition through his previous study. The results indicate that the attitudinal-motivational factors were also related to student’s achievement.

In Japan, learners’ motivation and attitudes towards the English language were also of concern for many researchers. One of the most relevant studies was that of Benson (1991) who surveyed over 300 freshmen to assess their motivation towards learning English. The results demonstrated the importance of integrative and personal goals as factors in motivation among Japanese college students as he stated, “integrative and personal reasons for learning English were preferred over instrumental ones” (Benson, 1991, p. 34).

In Iran, a few similar studies (e.g, Shaikhholeslami & Khayyer, 2006; Rastegar, 2003; and Tohidi, 1984) have also been conducted with different groups of students among Iranian students to investigate their motivation. Most of them (learners), however, were college students. Sadighi & Maghsudi, (2000) investigated the effect of the two types of motivation (integrative and instrumental) on the English proficiency of the EFL senior students at Islamic Azad University of Kerman city. The results of their study showed a significant difference between the means of the English proficiency scores of the integratively motivated students and the instrumentally motivated ones and there were significant correlations between the integrative and instrumental motivation with the students' English proficiency scores. It was also found out that the personal, social, and educational factors had significant relationships with the EFL students’ motivation.

Other studies done in this area are as follows: Ramazanian (1998); Hassanpur (1999); Salimi (2000); Sedaghat (2001); Roohani (2001); Hassani (2005); Fazel and Razmjoo (2007); Neissi (2007); and Zarei (2009).

This study intends to answer the following major questions:
1. Is there any significant relationship between language learning attitude and language proficiency?
2. Is there any significant relationship between academic motivation and language proficiency?
3. Is there any significant relationship between language learning attitude and academic motivation?

3. Methodology
3.1. Participants
The participants of this study were selected using cluster sampling, a type of probability sampling (Mousavi, 1999). The sample were selected from the population of senior and junior university students who were majoring in EFL related fields (Teaching, Literature and Translation) from Bahonar University of Kerman during the academic year of 2012.

In general, 120 students formed the participants of the study among which 50 were males and 70 were females. The rationale behind selecting EFL senior and junior students was that they had already passed more English courses, comparing to the sophomore or freshman students and they had already gained relative language proficiency. This was due to the fact that in this study the researcher aimed at finding whether language attitude and academic motivation could have any contribution to the differences in language proficiency scores among the university students or not.

3.2. Instrument
For achieving the required data on the appointed variables, i.e. language proficiency as the dependent variable and language attitude and academic motivation as the independent variables, three different instruments were used.

1. Language Attitude scale (LAS), Saracaloğlu (1992)

3.2.1. Language Attitude scale (LAS), Saracaloğlu (1992)
The first questionnaire is Language Attitude Scale (LAS) developed by Saracaloğlu (1992). This Scale, which is 5- point Likert-type, consists of 38 items, 23 of which are positive and 15 of which are negative statements. The lowest score to be obtained from the scale is 38, the highest score is 190. The higher scores refer to positive attitudes towards foreign language. Positive items are scored from 5 to 1; negative ones are scored 1 through 5. Negative items
are “2, 4, 7, 9, 11, 14, 16, 18, 20, 24, 25, 27, 29, 33, 35” numbered ones. The statements were graded as Totally Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Disagree, Totally Disagree. In addition, the scale, whose Cronbach alpha reliability was found as .096, has one dimension.

3.2.2. Academic Motivation scale (AMS), Vallerand, et al. (1989)
The second questionnaire is Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) developed by Vallerand, R.J., Blais, M.R., Brière, N.M., & Pelletier, L.G. (1989). This scale is a 28-item measure of students’ motivation for attending university. The AMS uses a 7-point Likert-type scale that measures three major motivation dimensions: Intrinsic, Extrinsic, and Amotivation. They are graded as Does not correspond at all, Corresponds a little, Corresponds moderately, Corresponds a lot, and Corresponds exactly. The Intrinsic motivation has three sub-scales (to know, toward accomplishment, to experience stimulation) like the Extrinsic motivation (identified, introjected, external regulation). However, for the purpose of the present study, the three major dimensions were used. The range on the SDI is from -18 to +18. The higher the score, the more intrinsic the participant is considered to be. Vallerand et al. reported that Cronbach’s coefficient alphas for the subscales ranged from .83 to .86, with the exception of the identified subscale of extrinsic motivation, which had an internal consistency of .62.

3.2.3. Michigan Proficiency Test, short version (1997)
In order to evaluate English proficiency of the participants, short version of Michigan English proficiency test was chosen. The examination for the certificate of proficiency in English (ECPE) was developed at English Language Institute of the University of Michigan (ELIUM). It is a test battery for assessing English proficiency as a second language at an advanced level. The short form of this test consists of 35 items which are embedded in 4 different sections: Cloze, Grammar, Vocabulary and Reading.

4. Data collection procedure
120 senior male and female EFL students of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman took the Michigan proficiency test and two other questionnaires, Language Attitude and Academic Motivation.

Each student was provided with an answer sheet and a test booklet. First, the subjects were asked to answer the 35 multiple choice items of the proficiency test in class in 35 minutes and take the two questionnaires home to answer. Before starting to answer, the students were asked to write their student numbers on both the answer sheet and the questionnaire in order that the researcher would be able to match the scores of each student.
After collecting the proficiency answer sheets, subjects were informed about how to fill the Language Attitude and Academic Motivation. They were assured that neither their teachers nor any other person, other than the researcher, would have access to their responses. At the end, the researcher asked those students who wanted to receive the result of the study to write their Email address in the specified place at the end of the second questionnaire.

5. Results

Table 4.1 presents the basic statistical description for the scores of Language learning attitude, academic motivation, each of academic motivation factors, and language proficiency for the sample of university EFL students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. The descriptive statistics of the variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive Statistics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Statistic</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Language Attitude</td>
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<td>Academic Motivation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language Proficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amotivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extrinsic Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.1. Learners’ Language Learning Attitude (LLA)

In order to describe the variable of language attitude, the five possible answers to each item of this category (“1. Totally agree, 2. Agree, 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree, and 5. Totally disagree”) have been coded and then summed up. For the variable of language learning attitude, the scores ranged from a minimum of 52.00 to a maximum of 190.00, with the mean of 148.45 and a standard deviation of 28.15 (Table 4.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. The Descriptive Statistics of Students’ Language Learning Attitude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statistic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Attitude</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The histogram for the distribution of language attitude scores is displayed in figure 4.1. On the whole, the collected data demonstrate a negative skew (Skewness = -0.940) in the distribution of students' language learning attitude scores which means that most of the students have positive language attitude.

The negative skew means that scores are slightly more spread out at the low end than
the high end of the scores. According to Farhady (2009, p.176) “If most of the scores are high and a few scores are low, the peak of the distribution will fall toward the right side of the graph and the few low scores will make the distribution skewed”. So, because a few low scores are the cause of skewness, the distribution is called negatively skewed.

Figure 1. Distribution of language attitude scores in the sample

5.2. Learners’ Academic Motivation (AM)
In order to describe the variable of academic motivation, the five possible answers to each item of this category (“1. Does not correspond at all, 2. Corresponds a little, 3. Corresponds moderately 4. Corresponds a lot, and 5. Corresponds exactly”) have been coded and then summed up. For the variable of academic motivation, the scores ranged from a minimum of -5.00 to a maximum of 18.00, with the mean of 8.26 and a standard deviation of 6.23 (Table 4.3).

Table 3. The Descriptive Statistics of Students’ Academic Motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Motivation</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>-5.00</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.2692</td>
<td>6.23576</td>
<td>38.885</td>
<td>-.131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The histogram for the distribution of academic motivation scores is displayed in figure 4.2. On the whole, the collected data demonstrate a rather normal distribution because the majority of scores are located in the center of the graph and the curve is somehow bell shaped. Moreover, the number of skewness that is -0.131, is just a few less than zero. So it can be considered as a normal diagram (Figure 4.2).
Figure 2. Distribution of academic motivation scores in the sample

5.3. Learners’ Language Proficiency (LP)

For the variable of language proficiency, the scores ranged from a minimum of 5.00 to a maximum of 35.00, with the mean of 19.88 and a standard deviation of 8.64 (Table 4.7).

Table 4. The Descriptive Statistics of Students’ Language Proficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Proficiency</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>120</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>19.8833</td>
<td>8.64829</td>
<td>74.793</td>
<td>.439</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The histogram for the distribution of language proficiency scores is displayed in figure 4.6. On the whole, the collected data shows a positive skew (skewness= 0.439) in the distribution of students' language proficiency which shows the learners’ low language proficiency. Positive skew means that scores are more spread out at the high end of the scores. According to Farhady (2009, p.177) “If most of the scores are low and a few scores are high, then the peak of the distribution will fall on the left side of the graph”. So, because a few high scores will be the cause of the skewness, the distribution is called positively skewed.

Figure 3. Distribution of language proficiency scores in the sample.
5.4. Statistical Analysis

In this section, the statistical analysis of the data will be presented.

5.4.1. Analysis of the relationship between LLA and LP

To answer the first research question (Is there any relationship between language learning attitude and language proficiency), Pearson Correlation was conducted. The analysis of the collected data shows that Pearson correlation coefficients between language learning attitude and language proficiency is 0.24 with the P-values of 0.008 which is less than the significant level of $\alpha=0.05$ (Table 4.8). Moreover, according to the correlation coefficient which is positive and the gradient of the fit line in Figure 4.7, the relationship between the above-mentioned variables is positive. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a high positive significant relationship between language learning attitude and language proficiency, that means by increasing the learners’ language attitude (independent variable), the scores of learners’ language proficiency (dependant variable) increases too.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation between LLA and LP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlations</th>
<th>Language Attitude</th>
<th>Language Proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Attitude</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Proficiency</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.242**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

According to scattering of the dots in the scatter diagram below, it is clear that as the scores of language attitude increase, the scores of language proficiency increases too, which shows a positive relationship between the variables. Moreover, fixing coefficient between language learning attitude and language proficiency is 0.059. In other words, %5.89 of the changes between above-mentioned variables is common. (%5.89 of changes of dependant variable is justified by the degree of independent variable).
5.4.2. Analysis of the relationship between AM and LP

To answer the second research question (Is there any relationship between academic motivation and language proficiency), Pearson Correlation was conducted. The analysis of the collected data shows that Pearson correlation coefficients between academic motivation and language proficiency is 0.44 with the P-values of 0.00 which is less than the significant level of $\alpha = 0.05$ (Table 4.9). Moreover, according to the correlation coefficient which is positive and the gradient of the fit line in Figure 4.8, the relationship between the above-mentioned variables is positive. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between academic motivation and language proficiency, that means by increasing the learners’ academic motivation (independent variable), the scores of learners’ language proficiency (dependant variable) increases too.

Table 6. Pearson Correlation between AM and LP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Academic Motivation</th>
<th>Language Proficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Motivation</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.440**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Proficiency</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

According to scattering of the dots in the scatter diagram below, it is clear that as the scores of academic motivation increase, the scores of language proficiency increases too, which shows a positive relationship between the variables. In other words, the more motivated the students are, the higher their scores of language proficiency will be. Moreover, fixing coefficient between academic motivation and language proficiency is 0.194. In other words, %19.4 of the changes between abovementioned variables is common. (%19.4 of changes of dependant variable is justified by the degree of independent variable).
5.4.3. Analysis of the relationship between LLA and AM

To answer the third research question (Is there any relationship between language learning attitude and academic motivation), Pearson Correlation was conducted. The analysis of the collected data shows that Pearson correlation coefficients between language learning attitude and academic motivation is 0.76 with the P-values of 0.00 which is less than the significant level of $\alpha = 0.05$ (Table 4.10). Moreover, according to the correlation coefficient which is positive and the gradient of the fit line in Figure 4.9, the relationship between the above-mentioned variables is positive. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between language learning attitude and academic motivation, that means by increasing the learners’ language learning attitude (independent variable), the scores of learners’ academic motivation (independent variable) increases too.

Table 7. Pearson Correlation Coefficient between LLA and AM

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Language Attitude</th>
<th>Academic Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Attitude</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.769**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Motivation</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.769**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

According to scattering of the dots in the scatter diagram below, it is clear that as the scores of language learning attitude increase, the scores of academic motivation increases too, which shows a positive relationship between the variables. Moreover, fixing coefficient between language learning attitude and academic motivation is 0.592. In other words, %59.2 of the changes between above-mentioned variables is common. (%59.2 of changes of language attitude is justified by the degree of academic motivation).
6. Discussion

In order to answer the first research question (Is there any significant relationship between language learning attitude and language proficiency), the data obtained from Language Attitude Scale (LAS) and Michigan Proficiency Test were analyzed. Pearson Correlations was conducted to find any significant relationships between LLA and LP. The results revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between LLA and LP (r = 0.24). Moreover, the result of this study supports previous established results. For example, Oxford and Shearin (1994), Lukmani (1972), and Kachru (1992) found similar findings in their studies. According to them, learner variables (attitude, motivation, anxiety) have positive influences on learners’ language proficiency. In their classic study on attitude and motivation, Gardner and Lambert (1972) also concluded that attitude and motivation are factors that influence the development of second-language proficiency. Successful language learners “must be psychologically prepared to adopt various aspects of behavior which characterize members of another linguistic–cultural group” (Gardner and Lambert, 1972, p.3). In addition, Liu’s (2007) study on Chinese university students’ attitudes and motivation to learn English and the correlations of both variables with the students’ English proficiency also revealed similar findings. In Liu’s (2007) study, correlation analysis showed that students who had more positive attitudes towards learning English tend to score higher in the proficiency test. Considering their studies, it can be concluded that the more positive attitudes the students have, the higher the scores of their language proficiency will be.

In order to answer the second research question (Is there any significant relationship
between academic motivation and language proficiency), the data obtained from Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) and Michigan Proficiency Test were analyzed. Pearson Correlations was conducted to find any significant relationships between AM and LP. The results revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between AM and LP (r=0.44). In fact, the more motivated the students, the higher their scores of LP. Concerning the significant positive relationship between AM and LP in this study, Bailey et al.(2000), also found that as motivation has a direct effect on the target language proficiency, it is a strong predictor of substantial foreign language proficiency as well. In addition, Kharma (1977) found that different kinds of motivation to learn a foreign language may produce different rates and ultimate levels of proficiency. Clement and Kruidenier (1985), and Dornyei (1994) also have demonstrated that measures of proficiency in the second/foreign language are related to motivational characteristics of students. In this respect, Corria (1999) claims that a full understanding of students’ motivation is necessary to maximize the English language results and positive outcomes.

In order to answer the third research question (Is there any significant relationship between language learning attitude and academic motivation), the data obtained from Language Learning Attitude (LLA) and Academic Motivation (AM) were analyzed. Pearson Correlations was conducted to find any significant relationships between LLA and AM. The results revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between LLA and AM (r=0.76). The result of this study supports previous results, for example, (Dörnyei, 2001; Gardner, 1985; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; Liu, 2009; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995) have confirmed that positive attitudes towards a language often lead to higher motivation to learn and higher proficiency in the language as well.

In addition, Gardner and Lambert (1972) state that the learners’ motivation to learn is thought to be determined by his attitudes towards the other group in particular and by his/her orientations towards the learning task itself. Moreover, Gardner (1999) in one of his research using Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) to measure the major attitudinal and motivational variables, and indices of anxiety associated with learning a second language concluded that it was obvious the basic associations between attitudes and motivation on the one hand, and achievement on the other were quite stable. Cook (1996) in his research concluded that the usual meaning of motivation for the teacher is probably the interest that something generates in the students and it relates to the attitudes of students towards the target language, as these are rooted in their minds and their background (Cook, 1996). So, attitudes are related strongly to motivation, it is evident that people with a negative attitude
towards a language could not be motivated learners, and there is evidence to support the correlation between the positive attitude about a language and high achievement (Wilhelm, 1999).

7. Conclusion
This study sets out to find out 1) relationship between language learning attitude and language proficiency, 2) the relationship between academic motivation and language proficiency, 3) the relationship between language learning attitude and academic motivation. The study found that first, there was a significant positive relationship between language learning attitude and language proficiency; Second, there was a significant positive relationship between academic motivation and language proficiency; third, there was a significant positive relationship between language learning attitude and academic motivation. In fact, the more students have positive language attitude, the higher their scores of language proficiency; the more motivated the students, the higher their scores of language proficiency, and the more students have positive attitude, the higher their scores of academic motivation.

References


Title

Investigating Development of Interactive Metadiscourse Resources in the Writings of Iranian EFL Learners: A Process-Based Approach to Writing

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Biodata

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Abstract

This study conducted an in-depth analysis of the development of interactive metadiscourse resources (IMRs) during a process-based writing course by applying qualitative and exploratory methods. The use of IMRs in terms of frequency, appropriacy, and diversity was analyzed throughout drafting, revising, and editing stages. Furthermore, learners' perception was investigated to find out how confident they felt as they were writing and rewriting the drafts. Based on the OPT results, 30 intermediate EFL learners were chosen to participate in this study. During the period of one semester, the participants wrote essays on argumentative topics. Each participant submitted three drafts on a topic, the first draft, the draft after revising and the draft after editing. Word and frequency counts revealed a gradual increase from drafting, revising to editing for each
topic. Experts’ appropriacy judgments showed a clear improvement in the appropriate use of IMRs from the participants’ earlier drafts to their final drafts. While experts’ diversity judgments revealed no significant changes in the use of different categories of IMRs throughout the stages, a total of 45 new items were added to the participants’ repertoire of IMRs. Moreover, analysis of the interviews’ data showed that most of the interviewees had positive views towards this kind of writing and believed that their level of confidence in using IMRs increased gradually through the stages and they felt more confident towards the end of the course.

**Keywords:** Frequency, Appropriacy, Diversity, Process-oriented, Approach, Interactive Metadiscourse Resources

### 1. Introduction

Undoubtedly, the primary goal of learning a foreign language is to develop the ability to communicate effectively in that language. Since English is culturally, politically, economically, and scientifically one of the most widely used languages, there is a growing need for good communication skills in English all around the world. Furthermore, writing skills assume a much more central position than it occupied before because of the changes in the ways of communication.

Hyland (2003) states that the ability to communicate ideas and information effectively in the 21st century is heavily dependent on written communication through the global digital network, thus a command of good writing skills is increasingly seen as vital to equip the 21st century man with success. Adel (2006) further believes that in the world today, writing in English plays a significant role not only in the academic context, but in the daily life as well.

Hyland (2005) believes that the writer can construct the text effectively only when he/she assesses the readers’ resources for interpretation of the text and also their possible responses to it. He also emphasizes that while explicit knowledge of rules is necessary for writing, it cannot be enough for writing effectively and coherently. The writers need to show desirable command of textual and interpersonal resources of the target language in order to make the text work within the given contexts.

Therefore, Students need to be aware that focus on surface feature accuracy by itself cannot guarantee effective writing and producing good written texts necessitates focus on organization, coherence, development of thoughts, and effective expression of ideas as well.
(Kern & Schultz, 1992). Nevertheless, many teachers and learners still see writing as an exercise in mastering grammar and vocabulary ignoring the process and also the interactive and interactional aspects of writing.

According to Faghih and Rahimpour (2009), a key to effective text production and processing of written discourse is conscious awareness of the rules and conventions of rhetorical functions of the target language. One aspect of such awareness is metadiscourse awareness. The awareness of metadiscourse devices helps EFL students contextualize the content of their writing, increase persuasiveness in the text, make text coherent, and develop a sense of audience. Consequently, metadiscourse is an integral part and a central feature of composition (Hyland, 2005).

Hyland (2005, p. 37) defines metadiscourse as “The cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assist the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community.” A number of taxonomies of metadiscourse have been proposed since its emergence. Some of the major models of metadiscourse markers are Vande Kopple (1985), Crismore et al. (1993), Hyland and Tse (2004), and Adel (2006). Most of the models organize metadiscourse markers under the labels of textual and interpersonal. Textual metadiscourse refers to the organization of discourse and interpersonal metadiscourse reflects the writer’s attitude toward the content and the audience. Hyland and Tse (2004) propose an interpersonal model of metadiscourse believing that all metadiscourse resources are interpersonal and organize the metadiscourse resources under the headings of interactive (instead of textual) and interactional (instead of interpersonal) metadiscourse.

Interactive resources refer to those features of the text which set out an argument to explicitly establish the writer's preferred interpretations. These features are used to organize prepositional information in the ways that the audience finds the text coherent and convincing (Hyland & Tse, 2004). Table 1 summarizes Hyland and Tse’s interpersonal model of metadiscourse.

Hyland (2003) indicates that foreign language learners experience considerable amount of trouble in using metadiscourse resources and use such devices very differently from their native counterparts. For that reason, students need to receive appropriate instruction which allows them to practice writing process and provides opportunities for increasing metadiscourse awareness.
However, product-oriented approaches to writing do not allow students to see writing as a recursive process and emphasize accuracy of form in single drafts. As a reaction to the shortcomings of the product-oriented approaches, the process approach to the teaching of writing was proposed. According to Zamal (1983, p. 165), process writing instruction model views writing as “a non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning.” This approach to writing is still regarded as an effective approach. Matsuda (2003) states that in the history of pedagogical reform in the teaching of writing, process writing can be regarded as the most successful movement. Furthermore, Atkinson (2003) as an advocate of “post-process” approach to L2 learning asserts that conceptualizing effective writing without process writing is very difficult.

With the above descriptions in mind, there seems to be a crucial need for more productive approaches to teaching of writing which produce a sense of audience, foster creativity, and also allow students to practice composition process. While some studies have been already done on second language writing product (Cheng & Steffensen, 1996; Adel, 2006; Simin & Tavangar, 2009; Vahid Dastgerdi & Shirzad, 2010), a lack of empirical studies to investigate the development of L2 learners’ metadiscourse awareness and writing process competence through drafting, revising and editing stages is quite obvious in the field, particularly in an EFL context like Iran.

This work is an attempt to contribute to EFL writing instruction through an empirical research which generally applies qualitative and exploratory methods to conduct an in-depth analysis of the writing processes of and metadiscourse use among Iranian EFL learners by addressing the following research questions:

1. What is the frequency of participants’ use of interactive metadiscourse resources across different stages of writing such as drafting, revising and editing?
2. How does the participants’ use of interactive metadiscourse resources change in terms of appropriacy of use from drafting, revising to editing in a process-based writing context?
3. How does the participants’ use of interactive metadiscourse resources change in terms of diversity of use from the first draft to the final draft in a process-based writing context?
4. What are the participants’ perceptions in the use of interactive metadiscourse resources in a process-based writing context at the end of the course? Do they feel more confident in the use of interactive metadiscourse resources?

1.1 Literature Review
1.1.1 Studies on Metadiscourse
Significance of metadiscourse is demonstrated in different studies from the descriptive and contrastive perspectives (Crismore et al., 1993; Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995; Vande Kopple, 1997; Hyland, 1999; Abdi, 2002; Marandi, 2003; Dahl, 2004; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Adel, 2006; Abdi, 2009; Abdi, Tavangar, & Tavakoli, 2009; Faghih & Rahimpour, 2009; Zarei, 2009, Noorian & Biria, 2010), or in experimental studies (Camiciottoli, 2003; Jalilifar & Alipour, 2007; Tavakoli, Dabaghi, & Khorvash, 2010, Vahid Dastjerdi & Shirzad 2010).

EFL/ESL writing, as Adel (2006) points out, is one of the areas in which studies of metadiscourse are lacking. Whereas a number of studies have been conducted in this respect, little empirical work has been done on this topic in EFL/ESL contexts.

Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995) analyzed metadiscourse in persuasive essays written by ESL university students. It was revealed that the good essays showed a greater variety of metadiscourse features within each category than the poor essays.

Simin and Tavangar (2009) looked at the foreign language learners’ written products with a focus on the use of metadiscourse markers; further they investigated the relationship between students’ proficiency level and the level of their metadiscourse use. They concluded that the differences in metadiscourse use were significant for different levels of proficiency, namely, the more proficient learners were, the more they used metadiscourse markers. In addition, they indicated that metadiscourse instruction has a positive effect on the correct use of metadiscourse markers.

In another study, Vahid Dastgerdi and Shirzad (2010) examined the influence of explicit instruction of metadiscourse on the writing performance of 94 EFL learners at the University of Isfahan. They concluded that after instruction, students’ performance on post-writing test was significantly better than their performance on the pre-writing test, especially in the intermediate group.

It seems that the studies reviewed above follow a product-based approach to writing; whereas, such approach to EFL/ESL writing has been proved to have many drawbacks (Matsuda, 2003; Nation, 2008). Second, they mostly apply the explicit instruction model without any attempt to investigate more productive ways to instruct metadiscourse.

2. Methodology

2.1 Design of the Study
The present study is an empirical research which generally applies qualitative and exploratory methods to conduct an in-depth analysis of the writing processes of and metadiscourse use among Iranian EFL learners.

2.2 Participants

The population from which the participants of this study were selected were 63 male and female EFL learners whose age ranged between 17 and 33 and enrolled for the summer courses at a private language center. To commence the study, an Oxford Placement Test (OPT) was used to ensure the homogeneity of the participants. Based on the OPT scores, 30 intermediate EFL learners, 17 male and 13 female, were chosen to participate in this study. The intended level was the intermediate level because the beginners couldn’t write essays and the advanced students had already developed essay writing skills, therefore they couldn’t produce reliable data for the purpose of this study.

2.3 Instruments

2.3.1 Oxford Placement Test

As to the purpose of the present study, an OPT (Dave Allan, 1992) test was used at the beginning of the study to ensure participants’ homogeneity in terms of their proficiency level. The OPT included 100 multiple choice items on vocabulary and grammar. The rationale behind the application of the OPT was firstly the fact that compared to the other tests, the participants of the study were believed to be more familiar with the structure of this test; therefore, they were expected to take the test better. Secondly, this test appeared to fully serve the purpose of the researcher to include homogenous participants in the study.

2.3.2 Interview

In order to investigate the fourth research question, that is, inquiring into the participants thought processes and feelings about their writings and their perceptions in the use of interactive metadiscourse resources in a process-based writing context and also to find out how confident they felt as they were writing and rewriting the drafts, 10 participants were chosen randomly, every 3rd person was chosen, and interviewed at the end of the course. Because of the unpredictable direction and unsystematic information of the unstructured interviews, a semi-structured interview format was used in this study. The interviews were conducted in Persian, the learners’ native language, in order to give the interviewees the best chance to explain their thought processes and feelings about their writings. Since using a guide facilitates the interviews and saves time, an interview guide (see Appendix A) was used. The students’ voices were recorded during the interviews and then the recorded retrospective data were transcribed, translated into English, and analyzed.
2.4. Data Collection Procedure

As mentioned earlier, the present study was conducted to investigate the development of interactive metadiscourse resources during a process-based writing course. The use of interactive metadiscourse resources in terms of frequency, appropriacy, and diversity were analyzed throughout drafting, revising, and editing stages. Furthermore, learners’ perception was investigated to find out how confident they felt as they were writing and rewriting the drafts. For this purpose, during the period of one semester, 3 argumentative topics of students’ interest and need were assigned to the participants to write about them. The topics were of argumentative nature to fulfill the requirements for the research questions. Table 2 demonstrates the topics assigned.

Each participant submitted three drafts on a topic, that is, the first draft, the draft after revising, and the draft after editing within two weeks. The first drafts of their writings were then reviewed and formative feedbacks were provided on their drafts; in process-based approaches to writing feedback is an essential element because it prompts the revision and editing of texts and gives a sense of audience (Keh, 1990). Then, the participants went through the revision process. After revision, students’ drafts were reviewed once again and the final feedbacks were provided. At this point, the participants edited their writings and submitted the final drafts. Finally after editing, each student’s writing process was checked to see how much he / she had improved during such processes.

In order to address the first research question, word and frequency counts were calculated for each draft and then changes were investigated across drafts. The second research question was addressed by analyzing the use of interactive metadiscourse resources in terms of appropriacy in 3 drafts of each essay. To do so, two experts in the field were asked to check the degree to which the use of an interactive metadiscourse resource was natural or acceptable in a particular context. To address the third research question, the diversity of use, that is, the use of different categories of interactive metadiscourse resources through the first, the revised, and the edited drafts of participants' writings, was further analyzed and judged by the experts. At the end of the course, through verbal retrospection 10 participants were interviewed to investigate their thought processes and feelings about the writings and to find out how confident they felt in using interactive metadiscourse resources so as to address the fourth research question. The students’ voices were recorded during the interviews, and then were transcribed and translated to be analyzed.
3. Results

3.1 The First Research Question

In order to answer the first research question, first, word counts were calculated for each draft of students’ writing. Then, by applying Hyland and Tse’s 2004 model of metadiscourse, the number of interactive metadiscourse resources were counted in each draft, and finally, the obtained numbers were summed up for all 30 participants in each draft. Since the word counts were different in each draft, the raw frequency counts were normalized, that is, frequencies were calculated per 1000 words so that they could be compared directly.

Table 3 displays total number of words, raw frequency counts and frequency per 1000 words of IMRs in each draft of the 3 topics. As this table demonstrates, on the whole, the frequency of interactive metadiscourse resources per 1000 words increases from drafting, revising to editing.

For the first topic, the frequency starts with 27.23 per 1000 words in the first draft, it indicates that the participants already knew a variety of interactive metadiscourse resources before starting this program, then, the frequency increases to 32.07 per 1000 words during revising, and finally after editing, the frequency of IMRs per 1000 words increases to 35.39. That is, through each stage of drafting, revising, and editing the frequency of IMRs increases, however, this increase is more apparent from drafting to revising than from revising to editing.

Similarly, for the second topic, the frequency increases from 35.18 per 1000 words in the first draft to 38.65 per 1000 words in the second draft and ends with 39.65 per 1000 words in the third draft; yet again, this increase is more noticeable after revising than after editing.

As for the first and second topics, for the third topic, the frequency of IMRs increases from drafting, revising to editing, 47.76, 49.15, and 51.28 per 1000 words respectively. This time, however, the increase is less rapid and the increase from revising to editing is more palpable than the increase from editing to revising maybe because the third draft of topic 3 was the last draft the participants wrote and they tried to utilize whatever they had learnt during the course. Figure 1 illustrates these findings.

Figure 2 illustrates frequency changes from the first draft of topic 1 to the last draft of topic 3. As it is demonstrated, in general, there is an increase in the frequency of IMRs from the first draft to the final draft during the course, namely, the frequency increases from 27.23 at the beginning of the course to 51.28 at the end of the course. This increase is more noticeable from topic 2 to topic 3 than from topic 1 to topic 2, that is, in topic 3 drafts
students has used IMRs more frequently and this indicates that writing and rewriting the drafts for the first two topics has influenced the participants’ use of IMRs in terms of frequency.

3.2 The Second Research Question

To address the second research question and also to provide an answer to it, two experts in the field checked the degree to which the use of an interactive metadiscourse resource was natural or acceptable in a particular context in each draft of the 3 topics. They judged the use of a device as appropriate or inappropriate, the total number of the appropriate uses and also the total number of inappropriate uses was later summed up separately in each draft and for all 30 participants. The given numbers by the two judges were further averaged. Moreover, since the number of IMRs was different in each draft of students’ writing, the raw numbers were standardized, that is, they were calculated per 100 words and expressed in percent to be compared directly. Table 4 summarizes the results of the appropriacy judgments by the two experts.

As it is represented in table 4, in general, the appropriateness rate shows a steady increase from drafting, revising to editing for the 3 topics, while the inappropriateness rate decreases gradually at a similar rate. The appropriate rate is quite low after the first draft of topic1; only 26.95 % of the IMRs are assigned as appropriate by the judges. After revising, this number increases to 32.36 % and indicates 5.41 % improvement. During the next stage, editing, this increase continues and reaches 34.05 percent in the final draft, this time with 1.69 % improvement. Therefore, for topic one the most noticeable improvement in appropriateness happens from drafting to revising.

This increase goes on with topic 2 drafts. As it is represented in table 4 the appropriacy percentage is 47.00 % in the first draft of topic 2 and increases to 53.84 % in the second draft with 6.84 % improvement comparing to the first draft. After revising, there is still increase in appropriacy percentage, with 57.20% appropriate use and 3.36 % improvement comparing to draft 2, however, the increase in appropriacy of use from revising to editing is less than the increase from drafting to revising.

The same manner of increase from drafting, revising to editing for topics 1 and 2 is repeated for topic3. That is, the appropriacy percentage starts with 61.86 % in drafting stage and by 8.18 % increase reaches 70.04 % after revising and with 2.44 % increase ends with 72.48% in final draft. As for topics 2 and 3, the increase in the percentage of appropriate uses is more visible from drafting to revising than from revising to editing.
Figure 3 provides a visual illustration of how the use of IMRs in terms of appropriacy changes through the three stages of drafting, revising, and editing for the 3 topics. Figure 4, further, demonstrate the changes in appropriacy and inappropriacy of the use of IMRs over time, that is, across the 9 drafts written by the participants.

Figure 4 shows a clear improvement in the appropriate use of IMRs from earlier drafts to the final drafts. In the initial writing task, less than 30% of the IMR tokens were considered as appropriate, whereas this rate increased to above 70% at the end of the course. On the other hand, the inappropriacy rate went down gradually from 73.04% to 27.51% over the course. The most noticeable increase in appropriacy of use happened from topic 1 to topic 2 where appropriacy from 34.05% in the third draft of topic 1 increases to 47.00% in the first draft of topic 2 with 12.95% improvement.

Examples of appropriacy and inappropriacy judgments are provided below (All errors are retained in the students’ writing excerpt):

**Topic 1**

In my idea telling the truth and being truthful is important and (Inappropriate: A device showing contrast is needed here.) I felt that sometimes in some situation it is better not to tell the truth because (Appropriate) telling the truth can lead to you various problems.

**Topic 2**

The third (Appropriate) reason is that we need family more than friends because they lead us to best way and want our successes. So, (Appropriate) spending time with them make us a perfect person and also the more we spend with family the more you enjoy life. Likewise (Inappropriate: A device showing consequence is needed here.) you’ll have strong relation in family and a life without stress.

**Topic 3**

The first (Appropriate) lesson is that all the traditions are not true. Because what they had done before wasn’t true so (Inappropriate: So is not needed here.) we shouldn’t listen to all them.

### 3.3 The Third Research Question

Diversity in this study refers to the use of different categories of interactive metadiscourse resources through the first, the revised, and the edited drafts of participants' writings. To detect how variously the participants applied interactive metadiscourse resources in their writings from drafting, revising to editing, expert judgment was used.
Applying Hyland and Tse’s 2004 model of metadiscourse, two experts in the field categorized the IMRs in each draft of the participant’s writing. Later, the total number of IMRs in each category was counted and summed up for all 30 participants in each draft. And lastly, the given numbers by the two judges were averaged. In view of the fact that the number of IMRs was different in each draft, the numbers were normalized, that is, they were calculated per 100 words and expressed in percent to be compared directly. Table 5 summarizes the results of diversity judgments by the two experts. As this table indicates, in all drafts of students’ writing above 50.00% of all the IMRs used belong to transitions, above 20% to code glosses, and below 20% is dedicated to frame markers. Evidentials build less than 3% of IMRs through the three drafts of the first topic, and their percentage decreases to 0 for topics 2 and 3, and finally, endophoric markers weren’t used in any drafts written by the participants. Figure 5 illustrates these results.

However, every time after revising or editing, some new items or phrases of IMRs are used by the participants. Table 6 represents the number of new items after each stage. As it is represented, a total of 45 new items are added to the participants’ repertoire of IMRs throughout the course out of which 21 items, 46.66%, belong to transitions, 11, 24.44%, to frame markers, and 13, 28.88%, to code glosses, moreover, out of the 45 new items 24, 53.33%, are added during writing the drafts of the second topic, 11, 24.44% items are added during writing the drafts of the third topic, and 10, 22.22% while writing the drafts of the first topic. Therefore, among the categories, transitions and among the topics, topic 2 shows the highest number of new items. Table 7 represents the new items added during the course.

### 3.4 The Fourth Research Question

In order to address the fourth research question, at the end of the course, 10 participants were chosen randomly, every 3rd person was selected, and through verbal retrospection were interviewed to investigate their thought processes and feelings about the writings and to find out how confident they felt in using interactive metadiscourse resources. Afterwards, the themes that emerged from the data were identified. Two major extracted themes were writing achievement and metadiscourse awareness, and increase in confidence as explained below.

#### 3.4.1 Writing Achievement and Metadiscourse Awareness

During the interviews, the students mentioned their ideas about their improvement in writing in general and awareness of IMRs in particular. Some students felt they had improvement in their overall writing ability and could write with more ease after such a writing practice. For instance, Vahid said:
This kind of writing provided me not only with the opportunity to practice writing, but also helped me use interactive metadiscourse markers more appropriately and variously.

Some students further believed that this course helped them overcome writing apprehension and caused them to write with more ease. As Hossein said:

I think apart from providing the opportunity to learn new resources and to reinforce what was learnt gradually, such a practice reduced the stress I experienced in previous courses for writing.

Moreover, most of the interviewees said that before this course, they had no or little knowledge of IMRs and were not aware of their role and of their significance in writing. This is manifested in the following excerpt taken from the one of the participant’s conversation transcripts.

Before writing in this course, I didn’t have any explicit knowledge of interactive metadiscourse resources and their function. … Now, I know many things about them. I also have learnt about some new categories and I know new words or phrases for such categories. (Elham)

Most of the students believed that writing and rewriting the drafts and also the feedbacks provided on their drafts helped them improve the use of IMRs in terms of appropriacy and diversity, and further caused the previously learnt items to be reinforced and motivated them to search for new items as shown in the interview data below:

This kind of writing caused metadiscourse markers to be stuck to my memory and whenever I want to write something I know I can use them with more ease and also more effectively. (Samira)

This kind of writing provided me not only with the opportunity to practice writing, but also helped me use interactive metadiscourse markers more appropriately and variously. Actually, there was always something new to learn during different stages. (Vahid)

### 3.4.2 Increase in Confidence

Almost all participants being interviewed believed that, in general, the course had positive influence on increasing their confidence in using IMRs more appropriately. The reasons they emphasized for such an increase were mostly the formative feedbacks provided by the teacher and the recursive model of the course, that is, the opportunity to write, revise, and edit the drafts. For instance, Hossein said:
Every time the teacher provided me with comments, I felt more confident. For example, when the first draft of the first topic was reviewed, I tried to employ what the teacher had noted, but I was not sure that what I was writing was correct or not and when I received feedback I felt more confident, so I used what I had learnt before in writing on the next two topics, this time more easily and with less doubt. (Hossein)

Mahnaz also said “Every time I received feedback, I could use the markers more confidently.”

Overall, there was a positive relationship between writing and rewriting the drafts and increase in the students’ level of confidence, in other words, their level of confidence in using IMRs increased little by little through the stages. In fact, the more they wrote the more confident they became. Almost all of the interviewees said that they felt more confident when they wanted to wrote the third draft of each topic and toward the end of the course. The interview data below illustrates these findings:

For me there was a positive relationship between receiving comments, rewriting the drafts and the level of confidence. I mean, the more I wrote, the more confident I became. (Amin)

I felt more confident when I wanted to wrote the third drafts because I had received the teacher’s feedback two times. (Navid)

Besides the positive aspects, some students pointed some negative aspects as well, for instance, Maryam indicated that “Sometimes, writing and rewriting the drafts took time and made me tired.”, or Samira emphasized that “The negative point was that it took me too much time to revise and edit my drafts.”

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The ability to write well in a foreign language is a difficult and demanding task to master for EFL students because producing a successful written text requires not only the ability to control over a number of language systems, but also the ability to take into consideration the ways the discourse is shaped for a particular audience and for a particular purpose (Kroll, 2001). However, Hyland (2003) indicates that foreign language learners experience considerable amount of trouble in using interactive and interactional resources of the language and use such devices very differently from their native counterparts.
Therefore, this study aimed to conduct an in-depth analysis of the development of IMRs during a process-based writing course by applying qualitative and exploratory methods. The use of IMRs in terms of frequency, appropriacy, and diversity was analyzed throughout drafting, revising, and editing stages. Moreover, learners' perception was investigated to find out how confident they felt as they were writing and rewriting the drafts.

The IMRs frequency counts showed a gradual increase from drafting, revising to editing for each topic. In most cases this increase is more apparent from drafting to revising than from revising to editing, this indicates that the participants did the major job of correction in the second stage and during revising. On the whole, the frequency of IMRs increased from 27.23 per 1000 words at the beginning of the course to 51.28 per 1000 words at the end of the course. This increase is more noticeable from topic 2 to topic 3 than from topic 1 to topic 2, simply because the participants learned more about IMRs as they moved towards the end of the course. This change in frequency indicates that the participants already knew a variety of IMRs, 27.23 IMRs per 1000, before they started this program and by employing the feedbacks provided on their texts, they tried to increase the frequency of IMRs towards the end of the course. This increase in frequency is not surprising as the participants were exposed to a very rich acquisition environment, that is, they wrote 3 drafts on each topic and they received formative feedback on writing and use of IMRs two times for each topic.

Acquiring IMRs is more than just acquiring new forms and increase in frequency. It is also about gaining mastery over forms which have been learned, this means, knowing more about the IMRs and about where and when to use them. Appropriacy judgments by the two experts and analysis of the judgments revealed that there was a clear improvement in the appropriate use of IMRs from the participants’ earlier drafts to their final drafts. In the initial writing task, less than 30% of the IMR tokens were considered as appropriate, whereas this rate increased to above 70% at the end of the course. The appropriateness rate shows a steady increase across the drafts, while the inappropriateness rate decreased gradually at a similar rate. This suggests that the participants’ improving mastery of IMRs was not a case of jumping from inappropriate use directly to appropriate use. Rather, the process was one of gradually improving. For each topic this increase was more noticeable from drafting to revising than from revising to editing. As for the frequency changes, it can be concluded that the major corrections happened during the second stage, i.e., revising, in terms of appropriacy as well. The improvements in appropriacy are in line with findings of Simin and Tavangar (2009) that metadiscourse instruction had a positive effect on the correct use of metadiscourse markers. Moreover, as intermediate learners’ in Vahid Dastgerdi and Shirzad
(2010) study who showed improvement in the use of metadiscourse markers due to explicit instruction, the intermediate learners of this study also showed clear improvements in terms of appropriacy of the use of IMRs through a process-based writing instruction model. However, this study’s point of departure from the studies mentioned above is that they only took into consideration the products of the students’ writings, whereas, this study investigates improvement through the process of text production. In addition, they view metadiscourse instruction as a means to improve writing, while, in this study, metadiscourse awareness is increased by writing and rewriting the texts along with an overall improvement in writing ability as well.

Apart from frequency and appropriacy of use, diversity of use is also a part of metadiscourse knowledge. The experts’ analysis of the drafts revealed that no significant changes happened in the use of different categories of IMRs from drafting, revising to editing. Indeed, the participants used transitions, code glosses, and frame markers with the same manner across the drafts. Evidentials were only used for the first topic and that was mostly because of the nature of the topic itself. Since this topic was about telling or not telling the truth in all cases, it had some religious color, thus, the participants used some religious quotations. But, endophoric markers were not used at all because they are mostly the feature of longer texts than essays and function largely in science and engineering texts as Hyland (2005) indicates. Although there was no significant changes in the use of different categories, a total of 45 new items were added to the participants’ repertoire of IMRs. In initial drafts, the students used only the simple forms such as but, then, and, so, and first. As the course progressed, they learned new and more complex forms such as however, in sum, all in all, consequently, put another way and so on. These findings provide further supports for Xu (2001) interesting findings in a study of metadiscourse use by 200 students across four years of an undergraduate course in English at a Chinese university. He found that students in the final two years employed more formally complex and precise interactive metadiscourse (consequently, therefore, as a result) than those in the first two years, who preferred forms such as but, then, and and. Moreover, among the categories, transitions with 21 items, 46.66%, showed the highest number of new items maybe because transitions constructed the highest fraction of IMRs used by the students, more than ½, from the beginning. And, among the topics, topic 2 with 24 items, 53.33 %, showed the highest number of new items possibly because for topic one, students knew a limited number of IMRs, this amount increased for topic 2, and before writing the third topic’s drafts, they already had learnt most of what they were supposed to learn.
Learning and using IMRs is only partly about gaining explicit knowledge about them; it is also about having the confidence to use those items. The analysis of the interviews’ data showed that most of the interviewees had positive views toward this kind of writing because the course caused them to write with more ease and less stress. The participants said that because they knew they had the opportunity to correct what they wrote two times and every time the teacher would guide them to improve the text, they didn’t experience the writing apprehension of the previous courses. On the whole, the participants believed that their metadiscourse awareness and knowledge increased during the course. They pointed out that they not only learnt many new items, but also learnt how to use the previously partially learnt items more appropriately. Overall, almost all participants said that their level of confidence in using IMRs increased little by little through the stages and they felt more confident when they wanted to wrote the third draft of each topic and towards the end of the course. Therefore, there was a positive relationship between the recursive model of the course and the increase in the participant’s level of confidence. This appears to show the benefits of a sustained and well-organized writing program in facilitating the acquisition of IMRs and to indicate the drawbacks of excessively narrow product-based approaches and explicit instruction.

From the theoretical point of view, the qualitative and quantitative findings of this research could add to the body of data provided by previous studies in the field. Moreover, this study can open up possibilities for further research in the area of L2 writing to investigate metadiscourse and writing process competence to produce coherent and effective texts in English among Iranian EFL learners. On the practical level, these findings seem to be of major significance for classroom application. Since many students have little awareness of interactive and interactional aspects of the target language, their writings seem uncontextualized and incoherent. Therefore, more appropriate and productive instruction models should be integrated into the EFL writing courses to help students become more successful writers in English. The results of this study led to this conclusion that process-based approach to writing can be a productive writing instruction in developing metadiscourse awareness and knowledge among Iranian EFL learners. Consequently, the Iranian EFL teachers can help their students develop metadiscourse knowledge and use by applying what was suggested in this study. Apart from that, they may reduce their student’s negative attitudes toward writing and also their stress as some participants in this study stated that the course was really effective in reducing their stress.
Overall, the results of this study not only can increase our understanding of writing process, but also can provide more effective instruction models for developing the appropriacy of metadiscourse use in L2 writing. In other words, writing can be practiced and metadiscourse knowledge can improve by actually writing.

Certainly, this study was not able to capture all aspects of this broad topic. Therefore, further research into this area could lead to more insight. Given the fact that the study examined only 30 students’ writings, they may not have been a true representation of the larger population of EFL Persian learners. Although rigorous care was taken by the non-native experts in the field to judge appropriacy and diversity of IMRs by referring repeatedly to the resources available, native English experts’ judges could assure the reliability of appropriacy and diversity judgments, however, it was not possible for the researcher to get help from native speakers in this study. This study only focused on the development of interactive metadiscourse resources, future studies might study the development of interactional metadiscourse resources as well and even there could be comparison between the developments of these two categories. The present study was limited to the genre of essay; other studies could study the other genres of communication, for example, letters or academic genre like research articles. Gender variations among the participants were not taken into consideration in this study; it might be interesting to consider gender to find out about any differences and similarities.

References


**Appendix (A): Interview Guide**

1. What did you like most or least about this writing program?
2. Do you think your level of confidence in using interactive metadiscourse resources changed after different stages such as drafting, revising, and editing?
3. Give your final comments about the efficiency of this course in your learning of interactive metadiscourse resources.

**Table 1. Model of Metadiscourse Proposed by Hyland and Tse (2004, p. 169).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Functions</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interactive</td>
<td>Help to guide the reader through the text</td>
<td>Resources in addition; but; thus; and finally; to conclude; my purpose is noted above; see figure; in section 2 according to X; Z states namely; e.g.; in other words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>express relations between main clauses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>refer to discourse acts, sequences or stages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>refer to information in other parts of the text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>refer to information from other texts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>elaborate propositional meaning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interactional</td>
<td>Involve the reader in the text</td>
<td>Resources might; perhaps; possible; about in fact; definitely; it is clear that unfortunately; I agree; surprisingly I, we; my; me; our consider; note; you can see that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>withhold commitment and open dialogue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>emphasize certainty and close dialogue</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>expresses writers' attitude to proposition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>explicit reference to author(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>explicitly build relationship with reader</td>
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</table>

Iranian EFL Journal
Table 2. Topics Assigned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Weeks 1 &amp; 2</th>
<th>Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Sometimes it is better not to tell the truth. Use specific reasons and details to support your answer.</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Weeks 3 &amp; 4</td>
<td>Some people prefer to spend most of their time alone. Others like to be with friends most of the time. Do you prefer to spend your time alone or with friends? Use specific reasons to support your answer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weeks 5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? There is nothing that young people can teach older people. Use specific reasons and examples to support your position.</td>
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Table 3. Summary of Word and Frequency Counts

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<th>Total Number of Words</th>
<th>Number of IMRs</th>
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Table 4. Summary of Appropriateness Judgments

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<th>Appropriate</th>
<th>Inappropriate</th>
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<tbody>
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### Table 5. Summary of Diversity Judgments

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<th>Total Num. of IMRs</th>
<th>Transitions</th>
<th>Frame markers</th>
<th>Endophoric markers</th>
<th>Evidentials</th>
<th>Code glosses</th>
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### Table 6. Number of New IMRs in Each Draft

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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Draft</th>
<th>Transitions</th>
<th>Frame markers</th>
<th>Endophoric markers</th>
<th>Evidentials</th>
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### Table 7. The New Items in Each Draft

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Draft</th>
<th>Transitions</th>
<th>Frame markers</th>
<th>Endophoric markers</th>
<th>Evidentials</th>
<th>Code glosses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>and, but, also, because, so</td>
<td>the first, second, third, numbering(1,2,3,…), finally, in conclusion</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>according to X- As Y says</td>
<td>for example, such as</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>however, since</td>
<td>in sum</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>for instance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>although, in addition</td>
<td>in short, lastly</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>that is, this means</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>similarly, furthermore</td>
<td>first of all</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>namely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>consequently, even</td>
<td>overall</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>specifically, in other words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>though, therefore, likewise</td>
<td>additionally, in contrast, by contrast, as a result, while</td>
<td>to conclude, all in all, in brief, to summarize</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>whereas</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>indeed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>moreover, the result is</td>
<td>to sum up</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>as a consequence, besides, rather</td>
<td>on the whole</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>put another way, that is to say</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 1: Frequency of IMRs per 1000 words

[Graph showing frequency of IMRs for each topic and draft]
Figure 2: Frequency of IMRs per 1000 words in the 3 topics

Figure 3: Appropriacy changes through the three stages

Figure 4: Changes in appropriacy of IMRs use

Figure 5: Proportion of each category of IMRs
Title

Reanalysis and its operation in different languages

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Abstract

Changes in language are manifested in various forms. One of the simplest and most applicable one is reanalysis which is used very frequently in every language. In this research, we are going to give a very clear definition of this process with some examples from various languages. In this paper, we are going to discuss with some examples the various types of reanalysis process from different languages.

Keywords: Language changes, Preservative reanalysis, Innovative reanalysis, Morphological reanalysis, Syntactic reanalysis

1. Introduction

Reanalysis is one of the frequent procedures for making changes in words. It is a process to make new words and syntactic structures. In this process a word or syntactic structures which have historically specific structure or specific morphological form, wrongly is used in another morphological and syntactic form by language speakers which result new words or new structures. Here we are going to investigate both of them.
According to Lyons (1970) reanalysis is originated from ambiguity. But what is ambiguity and where it comes from? Sentence ambiguity is created when a sentence has two different meaning. The other matter with ambiguity of a sentence is the fact that every reading of a sentence is available in language in various forms. Reanalysis makes a brand new structure which was not available in language before. In order to make and create a new reanalysis every parts and structures of a language had to be ready for several kind of analysis. Such a structure which its parts are capable of being analyzed in various ways, is said the base of analysis (Katamba, 1993). Exploratory expressions also can make reanalysis. These are expressions which have created via simple operations in grammar and syntax. As the time passes they became stable and more used expressions in a language. These expressions are created when speakers are going to explain other expressions or sentences. Example is French negative (ne …..Pas). At first in old French this expression contained (ne) plus verbal expression. In order to put emphasis on non stressed expressions they used (pas) which means PACE, POINT and WALK. These words are comparable with English word (bit). Like the sentence; I don’t care a bit. In French these words were not used for reinforcement or emphasis of non stressed expressions but used as a reanalysis and (ne…………pas) expression was reanalyzed as an unmarked negative marker expression solely.

2. Kinds of reanalysis

Here the kinds of reanalysis which are created in a language structure are studied.

2.1 preservative reanalysis; available elements of this kind change to adverb of time, we use the word (while) as a part of time and as a noun.

2.2 innovative reanalysis; a brand new structures of words are created which were not available in language before. Like nominative case in Georgian language which formerly has no nominative marker (i), but because of nominative reanalysis it was created.

Reanalysis is one of the most important concepts for explaining syntactic changes in linguistics history and especially recent thirty years. This phenomenon is one of the largest mechanisms in syntactic revolution which should be studied deeply in order to explore the reasons of syntactic changes. It is a mechanism which changes the deep structure of syntactic pattern and has influence in changing the surface structure too. Reanalysis directly changes the deep structure.

In order to know how it works, we had to know the following phenomena;
a) Constituency  

b) hierarchical structure  

c) category label  

d) syntactical relation  

e) cohesion

A reanalysis can influence every aspect. Here are examples of every one;

Constituency and hierarchical structure; complementary structure of (for+ to) is a reanalysis of an old structure of nominal expression which belongs to the main clause.

[It is better for me] [To hide myself than be discovered thus]

[It is better for me to slay myself than to be violated thus]

   In this example the word  me  is part of a constituent for me, but used as logical and co-referent subject for [to hide] infinitive, but latter [for+ nominal expression+ infinitive] is assumed as a constituent via reanalysis. As you can see in modern English sentence below, the whole of the constituent can be proposed;

[For me to slay myself] [Would be better than to be violated thus]

Category labels; in African TWI language the verb WO means to beat which reanalyzed as a preposition and became a prefix that have great influence in grammatical relations.

Grammatical relations; in old English there were a formula which convert the primary subject to indirect object. For example; me think. Reanalysis is done so that surface object is reanalyzed as surface subject.

Cohesion; It means that a linguistic sequence from an independent word to a clitic then to an affix and then to a non analyzable part of a bigger constituent altogether make a sequence (Crystal, 1992). The example is African language of NAHUA, the word NEMI is a main verb means to live, to walk, which has converted to verbal clitic means go around doing, and then converted to habit marker which is not analyzable from the main verb.

   2.3 Morphological reanalysis; in this process a word which historically has specific morphological structure is observed as a different word structurally by the language speakers. The example is the Persian word [DIV VARENEH] which means like a devil or beastly. Now this word has changed to [DIVANEH] which means insane or not healthy. As can be seen there is a new word has coined.

   English word BIKINI is another example; it is a simple morpheme and again wrongly interpreted as BI means TWO and KINI means SWIMMING SUIT, this misinterpretation has led to coin the words like MONOKINI.

   The word WILL in I will go is created by reanalysis. The original word was WANT which is bleached semantically and became grammaticalized as a future marker.

   Other kinds of these semantic changes can be seen in Meta analysis, in which the morpheme boundary is violated so that it led to coin a new word. Arabic word NARANJ,
when it came to English language the speakers violated the boundaries of the determiner \textit{A} and the word NARANJ so it led to coin a new word AN ORANGE.

Other example is Persian word DOGHOLOO, this word comes from Turkish language, in Turkish it means BORN. This language has the word EKIZTAY equivalent to English twins. But Persian speaker wrongly have thought that in this word DO means TWO and GHOLOO means baby. This misinterpretation has led to coin new words.

2.4 Syntactic reanalysis; in this process, language speakers wrongly use old structures which has its own specific usage in another syntactic structure which led to coin a new structures. For example in Turkish and Chinese languages there are no auxiliary verbs. But in old Chinese there was a syntactic form ( shi ) which was a demonstrative expression. But today and wrongly the Chinese speakers reanalyzed it as an auxiliary verb (is) and not demonstrative expression meaning (this) (Dabir-Moghaddam, 2004).

Another example comes from French; in French yes/no questions are created by reanalysis. Like English French also has used the form verb + subject (conversely). But via reanalysis this form is used in order to making questions. For example the equivalent for IT IS in French is CE EST, which its converse in yes/no question is EST CE. But via reanalysis is used as a question marker in yes/no questions;

\begin{verbatim}
Est ce que l’homme voit la femme .
\end{verbatim}

\textbf{Question marker} \textbf{man} \textbf{sees} \textbf{the woman}

\section*{3. Conclusion}

At this research the reanalysis process, its definition and kinds presented exactly. Then findings showed that reanalysis is one of the most used processes in creating new words and structures. Also by giving various examples from different languages has been proved its influence in every language.

\section*{References}


Title

The Effect of Using Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) on the Listening Comprehension of Expository Texts for the Iranian University Female Senior

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the effect of computer-assisted Language Learning (CALL) on the listening comprehension of expository texts of Iranian female freshmen. The study was designed as a true-experimental research-Randomized Control Experimental Group, Pre-test-Post-test Design. The subjects in this study were 60 female freshmen from Islamic Azad University of Khodabandeh who were studying English as their major course. They were freshmen who had been selected out of many other EFL students through the Standardized Nelson Test. These subjects were divided into two groups, control group and experimental group (each group subsumed 30 female subjects). The leven’s test indicated that the subjects were convincingly homogeneous. The experimental group was taught using computer-assisted instructions in a language laboratory, while subjects in the control group were taught using a traditional method of instructions in traditional classroom setting. The training took 12 sessions and the same instructor taught the groups three hours each session. During the first week, a pre-test was given to both groups. Then, a post-test was given at the end of the
instructions. An independent sample t-test appeared to be an appropriate tool for data analysis in this study since there were two groups who were evaluated twice through pre and posttest. The results showed that there were statistically significant differences between two groups that can be attributed to the effect of CALL on the listening comprehension of expository texts.

Keywords: Computer-assisted Language Learning, Expository Text, Traditional Method

1. Introduction

Many countries have realized the fundamental role of information and communication technology in the global economy where knowledge is becoming the primary engine of growth and development.

They are so widespread that one feels outdated if not using them. The influence of these over powerful technological tools has pervaded all aspects of the educational, business, and economic sectors of our world (Singhal, 2004). There is no doubt that just as the computer has established itself firmly in the world of business and communication technology, it has also succeeded in acquiring a fundamental role in the educational process. This role is becoming more powerful as computers become cheaper, smaller in size, more adaptable and easier to handle. Computers are becoming more appealing to teachers because of their huge capabilities and extensive effectiveness (Dhaife, 2004).

The computer gives individual attention to the learner at the console and replies to him. Traditionally, it acts as a tutor assessing the learner’s reply, recording it, pointing out mistakes and giving explanations. It guides the learner towards the correct answer, and generally adapts the material to his or her performance (Demaiziere, 1982). The computer thus promotes the acquisition of knowledge, develops the learner’s critical faculties, demands active participation and encourages vigilance (hah, 1996). Gnglewiski (2007) maintained that computer mediated instruction can provide a very valuable language learning experience.

Significant use of CALL began in the 1960s. Since then, the development of CALL software has followed the changes in teaching methodologies (Hah, 1996). As teaching methods changed to audio-lingual and communicative approaches, CALL software included simulations and more interactive programs. Research has shown that learning strategies employed in CALL can affect the quality of learning the language. However, it still lacks methods and a clear theoretical foundation (Christopher, 1995).
1.1. Research Questions
This study aimed to answer the following questions pertaining to the effect of computer assisted language learning on the learners’ TOEFL scores in listening section. The main questions of this study are stated as follows:

Is there a statistically significant difference concerning the gain scores on the listening section of TOEFL between the learners instructed by the CALL and the learners instructed by the traditional approach?

1.2. Statement of the Hypothesis
There is no statistically significant difference between the scores obtained by the control and experimental groups in the listening section when the subjects are exposed to either the CALL or the traditional approach.

1.3. Significance of the Study
The domain of Computer- assisted Language Learning (CALL) in the course of teaching TOEFL in Iran is in need of more research. To the researchers' best knowledge, studies about computer-based instruction in Iran have been almost ignored.

A few studies about the use of CALL in teaching TOEFL to Iranian EFL learners have been conducted but they are not enough to be influential in the realm of language education. It is anticipated that this study will shed light on the benefits of using computers in language learning in general, and in TOEFL exam of listening section in particular. This study also attempts to bridge the gap between the theoretical and practical sides of using CALL in teaching TOEFL.

2. Methodology
2.1. Subjects
The students in this study were sixty Iranian university male freshmen in Payyam-Noor university of Khodabandeh (educational year 2012) studying English as a foreign Language, with ages between 19 to 25. They consented to participate in this study and were motivated by being informed in advance that they would receive extra credit for their participation.

2.2. Instrument
To investigate the hypotheses, several instruments were utilized. They were validated through a pilot study before being employed in the project. The instruments applied were:

It is expedient to mention that pre- test and post -test were employed in this study. The questions were taken from the book, Longman complete course for the TOEFL test:
preparation for the computer and paper tests (TOEFL test, educational testing service, 2001, reprinted by the permission of educational testing service, the copyright owner). The pre-test and post-test involved 50 items about listening (in the multiple choice format along with an answer sheet. The pre-test and post test questions were different in wording but they are equal in the level of difficulty. Scores for both of them defined considering the number of correct item. A correct answer was rated 1 and wrong answer was rated 0.

Computer-assisted language learning, as defined for this study, was provided in a language laboratory where learners worked alone on a computer using the provided programs and learnt at their own pace. The instructor did not participate in the learning process, but he made sure that learners were working alone on their computers. On the other hand, traditional instruction was given in the lecture format as information going from the instructor to the learners. Subjects had to follow the instructor’s schedule and they could not learn at their own pace. All the materials used in the groups were identical. For classroom practice, TOEFL (2002) reading comprehension intermediate levels were used. The learners instructed by CALL used the CD versions of these.

2.3. Procedure
The subjects in the experimental group (30 male subjects) worked alone on a computer and learned at their will (all the subjects in the experimental group knew how to use computer). They studied any section as much as they liked. The researcher did not participate in the teaching/learning process, but the researcher monitored the class just to make sure that subjects were working with the computer and to help if anything went wrong with the computers. The subjects in the control group (30 male subjects) met me three hours each session during twelve weeks. The same materials played by tape recorder in the class according to the schedule set by the researcher. Subjects listened to the tape during three hours. On the last day of classes, the researcher administered the post-test. The scores obtained by the pre-test and post-test were statistically analyzed.

2.4. Data Analysis
An independent samples t-test appeared to be an appropriate tool for data analysis in this study since there were two groups who were evaluated through pre and post-tests.

3. Results and Discussion
Based on the finding, the difference between the control and experimental groups’ gain scores on the listening section of TOEFL was statistically significant, \( t_{\text{observed}}=7.87 \), \( t_{\text{critical}}=2.00 \) so \( t_{\text{observed}}>t_{\text{critical}} \).

The result of the t-test analysis which mentioned above indicate that the researcher has to reject the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no statistically significant difference between the scores obtained by these two groups in the listening section.

The experimental group surpassed the control group. This means that the subjects in the experimental group benefited significantly from the instruction in teaching listening with computer and hence this mode of training was significantly more beneficial than the traditional way of teaching listening. (See Table 8). The 3-D histogram chart below is representative of the difference between mean scores in the listening section after training. It shows that the there is significant difference between control and experimental groups in the listening section. (See figure 5).

**Table 8: Independent samples t-test analysis of gain score difference**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Difference</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Number of subjects</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>( t_{\text{observed}} )</th>
<th>( t_{\text{critical}} )</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>9.65</td>
<td>93.22</td>
<td>7.87</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36.33</td>
<td>9.07</td>
<td>82.35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P-value \( \leq 0.05 \)

Research question

Is there a statistically significant difference regarding the gain scores on the listening section of TOEFL between learners instructed by the CALL and the learners instructed by the traditional approach?

As mentioned in chapter 4, the reported difference between the control and experimental groups’ gain scores on the listening section of TOEFL was statistically significant, \( t_{\text{observed}}=7.87 \), \( t_{\text{critical}}=2.00 \) so \( t_{\text{observed}}>t_{\text{critical}} \). Result of the t-test analysis indicates that the researcher has to reject the null hypothesis, which stated that there is no statistically significant difference between the scores obtained by these two groups in the listening section. (See Table 8)
4. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of CALL on Iranian EFL Sophomores’ achievement on the TOEFL exam. Result showed that there was a significant difference in achievement between CALL users and nonusers in learning TOEFL. In addition, study result showed that the higher the computer skills, and the more computer experience, and the more time using computer, the more benefit language learners get from CALL. Thus, to maximize subjects’ benefit from CALL, subject should be trained on how to use CALL and should be encouraged to increase their competency of using computers. Result also showed a high self-perception of knowledge gain as a using CALL.

Based on the finding of the study, CALL didn’t have significant effect on the structure section, but CALL had significant effect on the listening and reading sections.

Based on the result of the study, it is suggested that the CALL be integrated into the traditional classrooms where the instructor is also available for further assistance and questions and teachers help students practice reading passages or articles on a computer and some activities should be provided in order that students can become familiar with reading access to reading materials online. It is also indicated that the CALL is a great help in learning/teaching situations where repetitive practice is required.

Figure 5. Difference between mean scores of control and experimental groups in the listening section after training.
References


Title

English vs. Persian Compounds; A Contrastive Study of Compound Verbs

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Abstract

Compounding is a fruitful and dynamic process of word formation which is commonly used to increase the lexical stock of any language and compound verbs have been the subject of quite a lot of remarkable research with different perspectives. The present article attempts to provide a comprehensive descriptive-analytical account of English and Persian verbal compounds. In this study, I mostly focus on the English and Persian compound verbs. Typology, orthography, stress pattern, and meaning in compounds will be also examined and discussed. Concerning meaning and affixation, it seems that English and Persian compounds have some features in common. Nevertheless, there are also differences between them. Persian compounds are more varied and flexible. Consequently, the results of present study can be useful in EFL instruction in terms of the interactive effects of Persian and English compounds.

Keywords: Compounding, Compound verb, Persian, English.

1. Introduction

New words and meanings are continually being added to the lexical repertoire of all human languages. A number of word formation processes are ceaselessly at work to flourish the lexicon of languages and give an explanation for new concepts, ideas, and objects and their socio-cultural functions (Yule, 1996). One of these productive processes is compounding. According to Koziel (1973), compounds communicate a single psychological reality; that is, the whole compound acts as a single entity and indicates a single meaning and concept.
Fromkin and Rodman (1988) proposed that “compounding is a common and frequent process for enlarging the vocabulary of all languages. Furthermore, there is almost no limit on the kind of combinations that occur in English” (p.136).

Furthermore and regarding the status of compounding, there are a number of contrastive analyses of English and other familiar world languages such as contrasting English and Persian Compounds (Barjasteh, 1983; Bagheri, 1998; Haji-Abdolhosseini, 2000; Rouhizadeh, Yarmohammadi & Shamsfard, 2010; Abedi, 2011; Hayatdavoudi, 2011; Abbollarhi-Guilani, Yasin, Kim Hua & Aghaei, 2012), English and Spanish (Mar Moure Peña, 2010), English and Vietnamese (Thi Lanh, 2010), and English and Arabic (Ibrahim, 2010). However, few, if any, research has been conducted on comparing or contrasting Persian and English compound verbs. As such, this review study attempts to synthesize as far data as possible in this regard and finally presents a comprehensive framework for contrasting Persian and English compound verb.

As Bauer (2005) states: “Given the difficulty that there has been for many years in defining a word, it is not surprising that there should be difficulty with the borderline of compounding. Items which fit poorly into the category of word should also fit poorly in the category of possible compound element” (pp. 106-107). So, devoting some lines on the elaboration of the very nature and definition of compound worth mentioning.

2. Defining a Compound

The deficiency of coherent standards in different attempts for defining compounding is overwhelmingly a wonderful reality. Furthermore, there are conflicting views on the very definition and scope of compounds. The simplest and probably most ordinary definition of compounding that can be located in the literature on word formation is as follows: “a compound is a word which consists of two or more words” (Fabb, 1998, p.66). Unfortunately and as Dai (1998) asserts, this definition cannot capture and illuminate the very complex nature of compounding process: “compound is used as a cover term for a collection of related, but not necessarily identical, phenomena in the literature, ranging from a word composed of two or more bound stems to a word consisting of two or more existing words” (p. 125).

Besides, Aronoff (1994, p.16) argued that compounding should be defined as “lexeme-internal syntax”. Bauer (2001) argues that a compound is a “lexical unit made up of two or more elements, each of which can function as a lexeme independent of the other(s) in other contexts” (p.695).
Plag (2002) asserts that: “Although compounding is the most productive type of word formation process in English, it is perhaps also the most controversial one in terms of its linguistic analysis” (p. 169). Scalise and Vogel (2010) state that there is no agreement on whether compounding is syntactic or morphological. In contrast, Booij (2005) and Ralli (2010) propose a morphological status of compounding. It seems that the most comprehensive and precise definition of compound is what Plag (2002) asserts: “A compound is a word that consists of two elements, the first of which is either a root, a word or a phrase, the second of which is either a root or a word” (2002, p. 173).

3. Compounding in English Language

English is an Indo-European Language with SVO structure. “The absence of neuro-linguistic studies specifically concerning verbs semantics can be due, at least in part, to the puzzling nature of verbs” (Finocchiaro 2000, p.226). In a similar way, the lack of sufficient research devoted to compound verbs in the overwhelming body of literature may, in part, be due to the even more puzzling nature of CVs. However, compounds in English have a very important systematic property; their head always occurs on the right-hand side (Williams 1981). The ample literature on compound classification (Fabb, 1998; Bauer, 2001; Haspelmath, 2002; Booij, 2005; Bisetto & Scalise, 2009) does not provide specific criteria for the classification of compound verbs. Plag (2002) and Xuan Khanh (2009) have also contributed a lot to illumination of status and structure of compounding.

3.1. Classification of Compounds

Several researchers have attempted to classify compounds (Bloomfield, 1933; Marchand, 1969; Spencer, 1991; Fabb,1998; Bauer, 2001; Olsen, 2001; Haspelmath, 2002; Booij, 2005) and all of them have consider the presence/absence of a head constituent as a major criterion in their classifications.

Spencer (1991), for example, offers that compounds are classed into 3 groups: a) endocentric head–modifier constructions; b) exocentric predicate-argument formations and c) copulative compounds–group. Similarly, Haspelmath's (2002) groups (endocentric, exocentric, coordinate, appositive and affixed compounds) seem to obscure the fact that both affixed and coordinate (additive) compounds of the type adult-child are exocentric while appositional ones are endocentric.

Moreover, inconsistency arises from these classifications. Haspelmath's (2002) proposal uses different classifying criteria: a) presence/absence of a head (giving rise to the distinction
between endocentric and exocentric compounds), b) formal structure of compounds (introducing a class of affixed compounds) and c) syntactic-semantic relation between constituents (determining the class of appositional compounds). As a consequence, it is not easy to understand whether or not criterion (a), i.e. presence/absence of a head, can be applied to compounds classed on the basis of criterion (b), i.e. formal structure, or whether there is any possible relation between affixed compounds and appositional ones.

More recently, a new vivid classification of compound has been presented by Bisetto and Scalise (2005).

Xuan Khanh (2009) presents taxonomy on compounds and divides different types of compounds in detail. He asserts that in terms of semantic feature, there are four types of English compounds: endocentric, exocentric, copulative, and appositional. Endocentric compounds are compounds that include a head. For example, the word *greenhouse*, where “house” is the head and “green” is the modifier.

The second type is exocentric compounds which do not have a head and their meaning often cannot be transparently guessed from its constituent parts. For example, the English compound *pickpocket* is neither a kind of pocket nor an action of picking. Copulative compounds have two semantic heads. For example, the word *sweet-sour* which refers to entities (in this case tastes or emotions) that is at the same time sweet and sour.

The last type of compounding is appositional compounds refer to lexemes that have two (contrary) attributes which classify the compound. For example, a *poet-translator* is a person whose job is both a poet and a translator.

Newly, Thi Lanh (2010) asserts that: “There are two main types of compounds: a) An endocentric compound (or headed compound), which is a combination of words that has the same word class as the nucleus word or both of the words forming a new one:

E.g. \[\text{book} \text{N} + \text{case} \text{N} \rightarrow \text{bookcase} \text{N}\]
\[\text{black} \text{N} + \text{bird} \text{N} \rightarrow \text{blackbird} \text{N}\]

b) An exocentric compound (or headless compound), which is a combination of words that has the different word class from the combining words.
E.g. “[pickpocket] N is not [pick] V nor [pocket] N but a person who steals money” (Thi Lanh, 2010, pp. 4-5).

Thi Lanh asserts that compound verbs are made of a verb plus a noun or verb and also by means of a noun, adjective or preposition plus a verb. Table 1 illustrates this more vividly (taken from Thi Lanh, 2010, p. 6).

Table 1: Classification of English Compound Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verb + verb</td>
<td>Kick-start</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb + noun</td>
<td>Do-time, dry-salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjective + verb</td>
<td>Ill-treat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverb + verb</td>
<td>overdo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun + verb</td>
<td>Baby-sit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, it is suggested that the most common type of compound verb in English is the phrasal verb, which contains a verb plus a preposition or adverbial particle (Thi Lanh, 2010).

E.g. Look through take out put out.

4. Compounding in Persian Language

Persian is an Indo-European Language with SOV structure. The most verbs in Persian are compound as there are few simple verbs in this language. Sadeghi (1994) argued that the numbers of simple verbs in Persian language is about 115 verbs. However, other researchers present different numbers. Khanlary (2004) for example, suggests 279 verbs and Family (2006) talks about 160 verbs.

According to Dabir-Moghaddam (1998), all of the previous studies on Persian compound verbs have focused on a number of verb formation processes. Lambton (1953) has provided taxonomy of compound verbs. Another interesting work that is discussed in Dabir-Moghaddam (1998) is chapter 3 of Bashiri (1981). In this chapter, which is devoted to the verb phrase, the semantic properties of the VP are discussed. Barjasteh (1983) discussed compound verbs in Persian. He considers compound verb formation as a productive lexical phenomenon generated by a number of lexical operations. Barjasteh (1983) makes a distinction between non-separable and separable compound verbs. Khanlary (2004) states that compound verbs will gradually replace simple verbs in modern Persian and this process has started from the 13th century.

According to Rouhizadeh, Yarmohammadi and Shamsfard (2010), two major morphological categories of Persian verbs are: simple and compound verbs. “Compound verb formation is highly productive in Persian. The number of simple verbs in Persian today, is less than 200 verbs while the number of compound verbs is more than 4000” (Rouhizadeh, Yarmohammadi and Shamsfard, 2010, p. 1).

Bagherbeygi and Shamsfard (2012) summarize all the views of previously mentioned researchers and assert that; “Persian compound verbs are the composition of a nonverbal element and a verbal element; the nonverbal elements include noun, adjective, adverb, prepositional phrase and particle. Verbal elements comprise of some Persian simple verbs which are called light verbs according to the Jespersen’s definition. Light verb is a simple verb which has undergone semantic bleaching” (p. p. 2863).

4.1. Compound Verbs in Persian Language

According to Bateni (1985), the morphological structure of words in Persian involves roots, prefixes and suffixes. Every word should obligatorily bear a root while the attachment of prefixes and suffixes are optional.

Dabir-moghaddam (1997,p.25) gives a suggestion about Persian compound verbs. He asserts that a compound “is made up of two otherwise independent constituents that form a compound word”. He emphasizes on the formation processes of compounds and makes a distinction between compound verbs formed through combination and those formed through incorporation and believes that these two vary in degree of productivity: “In compounds formed through combination, an adjective, noun, prepositional phrase, adverb or past participle has combined with a verb. In the formation of compound via incorporation, a nominal element functioning as a direct object loses its grammatical ending(s) and some prepositional phrases functioning as adverbs of location lose their preposition and incorporate with the verb.
Therefore, in incorporation there is always a corresponding non-incorporated construction” (Dabir-moghaddam, 1997, pp. 25-26).

Following him, compound verbs formed through combination are constituents from a nonverbal element with a verb. This type is constituent of an adjective and an auxiliary, in which the verb cannot be used in a separated form and thus no uncombined form of the verb can be considered. This is the kind that Barjasteh (1983) considers it as non-separable compound. Table 2 can illuminate this issue further.

Table 2  Classification of Persian Compound Verbs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjective + auxiliary</td>
<td>delkhor budan 'to be annoyed'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noun + verb</td>
<td>seda zadan 'to call'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositional phrase + verb</td>
<td>Bar bad dadan ‘to waste’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverb + verb</td>
<td>Va zadan ‘to reject’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past participle + Passive auxiliary</td>
<td>Gofte shodan ‘to be said’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also according to Dabir-moghaddam (1997), compounds formed through incorporation are those in which direct object or preposition phrase are incorporated with a verb. In Persian, when the direct object loses its grammatical endings (e.g., the post-position -rā, the indefinite marker -i) it may incorporate with the verb and then create an intransitive compound verb which is a conceptual whole. Incorporation occurs in Persian also in the case of prepositional phrases functioning as adverbs of location.

5. Similarities and Differences between Persian and English Compound Verb Structures

5.1. Orthography

English compounds are variously spelled; they may be written with a hyphen between the words (e.g. icy-cold), with spaces between the words (e.g. shop window), or with the two words intact (e.g. homework) (Fromkin et al, 2003).

According to Hayatdavoudi (2011) “inflectional morphemes of English always attach to the rightmost element which is the semantic head of the whole compound (e.g. barefoot+ ed:
barefooted, pighead+ ed: pigheaded). In Persian, the inflectional morphemes also attach to the second constituent” (p. 55). However, since the second constituent in Persian is not always the semantic head, inflectional affixes can also attach to the constituent which is not the semantic head. For example, the plural morpheme ‘ha’ can be attached to ‘bozorg’ (grand) and ‘siah’ (black) in pedar bozorgha (grandfathers) and taxtesiahha (blackboards), respectively (Bagheri, 1998).

5.2. Meaning

The meaning of compounds can sometimes be derived as the sum of their constituent meanings. For instance, barefooted in English and ketab forush (bookseller) in Persian can be easily understood by knowing the meaning of their constituent parts. Nevertheless, sometimes the compound as a whole is not the sum of its individual constituents. Accordingly, laughing gas is not a gas that laughs or sebil koloft (boor) is not a sebil (mustache) that is koloft (thick), rather it refers to a boorish guy (Fromkin et al, 2003). Besides, compounds behave as a semantic whole. This is the distinguishing factor which differentiates compounds from their non-compound counterparts. Semantically, compounds express a single psychological reality. That is, the whole compound acts as a single entity and indicates a single meaning and concept (Koziel, 1973).

5.3. Typology

English is an SVO language while Persian follows SOV. Morphologically, English verbs can fall into simple, derivative, compound and multi-word. Each of the verbs has their own description according to their morphological build-up. However, Persian verbs include simple, simple compound, prepositional, compound prepositional, and complex compound (Jahanpanah, 2010).

A subcategory of the Persian compound verbs is prepositional verbs or as some grammarians (e.g., Abolghasemi, 2009; Taheri, 2010; Rajabi, 2011) call prefixal verbs. It seems that prepositional verbs in two languages have exactly the same structures. These verbs are composed of a simple verb preceded by a preposition.

As Abdollahi-Guilani et al, (2012) argue, some verbs seem to be sex-oriented in Persian. For example, the verb ‘scream’ is sex-neutral in English. That is, it can be used for male and female subjects, but in Persian, there will be two equivalents:

English: Tom screamed. Persian: TOM FARYAD ZAD.
English: Mary screamed. Persian: MARY JIGH KESHID.

5.4. Stress placement
As far as stress and accent are concerned, English compounds bear different stress patterns (Thomson & Martinet, 1986). Hayatdavoudi (2011) argues that: “There seems to be a relationship between the orthography of English compounds and their stress pattern. Accordingly, the compounds that are written with no space between the constituents receive stress on their first constituent while the compounds that are written with space between the constituents are variously stressed, possibly based on the context in which they occur” (p. 55).

However, the stress pattern in Persian compounds is much more rule-governed and consistent. English compounds are distinguished from non-compound combinations via stress/accent while Persian compounds generally conform to the stress pattern of single words in isolation (Hayatdavoudi, 2011).

6. Conclusion

Regarding the above mentioned findings, one can strongly claims that regarding the morphological structure and their diversity, Persian compounds have a very much complicated structures than their English counterparts. Persian compounds can have either constituent as their semantic and syntactic head. As Ashouri (1993) puts it, in Persian, new compounds can be created through prefixing or suffixing different kinds of adverbs, nouns, adjectives and verb to other constituents.

Contrastively speaking, Persian and English compounds have several common features regarding typology, headedness, orthography, meaning and affixation. Conversely, there are also some noticeable differences between them. While English only permits the rightmost element to function as the semantic head, Persian compounds can have either the rightmost or leftmost element as the syntactic and semantic heads.

It may be interesting to Persian speakers that in English compounds, it is only the rightmost part which inflectional morphemes can attach to. English and Persian differ structurally in terms of right-headedness and further research has pointed out that this may lead to cross-linguistic transfer (Foroodi Nejad & Paradis, 2009). Consequently, Persian monolinguals generate less right-headed Persian compound comparing with Persian-English bilinguals. Research has also illuminated that faulty overgeneralizations of compounding in English and deviate forms are some common error committed by Iranian EFL learners. Abedi (2011) asserts that it is possible that learners mistakenly assume that every and all Persian compounds have an equivalent counterpart in English.
Finally, it is worthy to mention that being aware of compound structures is a prerequisite for language learners, because it can help them not generating erroneous combinations due to erroneous overgeneralizations.

References


Title

The Relationship between EFL Teachers’ Level of Research Engagement and Their Qualification, Experience

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Abstract

This study was conducted on 150 English Teachers in an attempt to shed light on the relationship between English teachers’ level of research engagement and their qualification, experience. Questionnaire responses followed by written questions were analyzed to understand the association between EFL teachers’ level of research engagement and their qualification, and experience. The findings indicate a negative significant relationship between years of experience and research engagement in both reading and doing research. On the other hand, there was a strong positive significant association between qualification in ELT and research engagement. The more qualified teachers reported reading research more frequently than those with fewer qualifications. Overall, teachers engaged in research reported being driven largely by practical and professional concerns rather than external motivation such as recognition or promotion.

Keywords: Research engagement, Teachers research, Evidence-based practice

1. Introduction
Teachers are one of the most important contributors to educational system, and their responsibility in schools extends beyond simply implementing and delivering the curriculum. They also need to know how to recognize and solve problems that may arise within the classroom when they deliver the curriculum (Davis, 1995). Moreover, a qualified teacher should be aware of, and be able to respond to, the direction of new development in teaching. (Lewis & Munn, 1997). In other words, in modern world, effective teaching requires that teachers engage in educational research in order to improve the standards of their teaching. At the present time, and especially in the developing countries, teachers are expected to follow and implement educational research findings in order to increase the quality of their teaching, and to solve problems that may come up in their classes (Everton, Galton & pell, 2000; Brown & Sharp, 2003).

Through research, teachers should examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully. Furthermore, research is about the nature of the learning process and links between practice and reflection (Skerritt, 1996) and aims to improve and produce knowledge. Through research, teachers investigate their own practice in order to make beneficial changes, and systematically analyze their own teaching and their students’ performance (Bassey, 1999). Engaging in research enables teachers to reflect on and evaluate different aspects of their work and perform better as teachers. So the quality of teaching and learning can be increased in light of research.

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. What is Research?

Research is used as a way of developing and interpreting new and profound information on any particular subject. Research creates a greater knowledge of a subject by means of vigorous investigation and testing of the material. Research has opened the door to the development of many theories and has validated or repudiated many hypotheses. Research is the foundation of science. Science is solely based on knowledge and knowledge is based on facts; facts are then based on research. Many scientists were researchers before they became scientist. Research is developed in different stages (Brown, 2009).

2.2. The Teacher as Researcher

The concept of the teacher as, in some sense, a researcher, is not a monolithic one: it is, rather, a growing trend, with a variety of manifestations. Nunan (1988), for instance, shows how teachers on a large-scale program, the Australian Migrant Education Program (AMEP),
are actively and integrally involved in data collection, needs analysis, and in the whole process of curriculum development. Langley (1987) described in-service program where teachers observed classes and exchanged views on learning strategies and classroom management. Ramani (1987) shows how teachers in training can move towards ‘theory discovery’ from the starting-point of their own observations of the raw data of recorded classes, lesson plans, and so on. Murphy (1985) discusses the necessarily active role of teachers in all stages of the process of course evaluation. Spread of reports on all these kinds of work, in addition to more exploration of the educational literature on possibilities for ‘interactive’, ‘collaborative’, and ‘action’ research, will undoubtedly broaden the basis for future developments.

2.3. Research engagement in English language teaching

In comparison to the volume of empirical work which has been conducted into teachers’ research engagement in education generally, little research into this area has been conducted in the field of English language teaching (ELT). In the work which does exist, McDonough and McDonough (1990) conducted a brief survey of the views of research of 34 teachers of English as a foreign language, while Brown (1992) surveyed 334 members of an international association for ELT teachers. These studies, echoing those outside ELT, reported notions of research closely tied to quantitative and statistical methods and a general ambivalence about the role of educational research in teachers’ professional lives. Crookes and Arakaki (1999) refer to some factors which hinder teachers’ research engagement (e.g. lack of time) while McDonough and McDonough (1990) cite conceptual inaccessibility as another barrier. Papers based on the languages in service program for teachers (LIPT) in Australia (a context which is perhaps unique in the opportunities it has provided for language teachers to be research engaged) have discussed in more detail how the conditions of teachers’ work may militate against research engagement and the strategies through which teacher research engagement might be achieved (Burton, 1997, 1998; Burton & Mickan, 1993). Generally, though, teachers’ conceptions of research and the nature of teachers’ research engagement do not seem to have been studied in any systematic way in ELT. There has, in contrast, been more extensive theoretical discussion of relationships between teachers and research in ELT, and this has included commentaries on the factors, such as the attitudes, knowledge and skills teachers have, which may support or discourage them from engaging with and in research (Borg, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c; Ellis, 1997; Freeman, 1996; Markee, 1997). Empirical research into these issues, though, is required if we are to develop an evidence-base which can inform policy and initiatives aimed at promoting research engagement by teachers in ELT.
2.4. Evidence-Based Practice

Evidence-based practice (EBP) is an interdisciplinary approach to clinical practice that was introduced in 1992. First it started in medicine then spread to other areas such as psychology and education. Its fundamental principles are that all decisions made must 1) be based on researches 2) that these research studies are chosen and interpreted based on some specific norms usually these norms are based on what counts as evidence (Roberts & Yeager, 2004).

The method of EBP is the way we go about findings and carrying out interventions that clients deserved to be provided with. (Cournoyer, 2003; Gibbs 2003; and Rubin 2007)

3. Research Questions

This study was an attempt to understand the relationship between EFL teachers’ level of research engagement and their qualification, experience held by L2 teachers. The following questions were, then, addressed:

1. What are the characteristics of good quality research in L2 teachers’ point of view?
2. To what extent do L2 teachers claim that they read published research? If not, why?
3. To what extent do L2 teachers claim that they do research? If not, why?
4. To what extent are teachers’ reported levels of research engagement associated with specific background variables: qualifications, experience?

4. Method

4.1. Participants

This study was conducted with 150 English language teachers. Their qualification and background information (years of experience, relevant qualification to ELT and age of learners they teach…) were identified in section 4 of the questionnaire.

With the aim of obtaining a broad perspective on the issues under study, the researcher approached a number of ELT contexts to invite practicing teachers (the only criteria for teachers participation) teaching at high school, university or language schools. In each context, 50 teachers were invited to take part in this study. The participants were chosen through cluster random sampling. As it was said before, this study comprised three different contexts: universities, high schools, and language schools. In each context cluster random sampling with the following steps was applied.

For the first context including universities, at first the list of all existing universities in Isfahan Province was taken from Wikipedia, all universities involved in Iran Higher
Education System. Each university was given a number, without any order like alphabetical ordering, and considered as one cluster. Second, 5 of them were chosen randomly. The chosen universities included Isfahan University, Islamic Azad University of Dehaghan, Higher Education Institute of Shekh-e-Bahae, Islamic Azad University of Mobarakeh and Kashan University. In third step, all ELT teachers in the chosen universities were sent an invitation to take part in this study.

Teachers of the second context, high schools, were chosen by taking the following steps. The list of all high schools in Isfahan province was taken from Educational and Training organization and without any order a number was assigned to each of them. Then 10 of them were chosen randomly. The chosen high schools were, Maarefat High School in Shahreza, Adab High school in Isfahan, Behesh Ayeen High School in Isfahan, All ELT teachers of the chosen high schools were participants of this study.

As mentioned earlier, the third context was related to language schools. In 1382 the new law was passed in relation to academic activities. Based on this law, most scientific and cultural organizations, including language schools were required to operate under the supervision of Educational and Training Organization. So with the help of that organization it was possible to have the list of the majority of language schools in Isfahan Province. In the second step, 5 of language schools were chosen randomly and all ELT instructors were invited to participate in this study. The chosen language schools included Nahid Cultural and Scientific Institute in Dehaghan, Shokouh Language Academy in Shahreza, Javan Language Center in Isfahan, Poyesh Language Center in Isfahan, and Pardis Language Center in Najafabad.

4.2. Instruments

In the form of a questionnaire, the cross-sectional survey allowed large amounts of data to be collected efficiently, economically, and in a standardized manner (Aldridge & Levine, 2001). The questionnaire used in this study contained four sections, focusing on the respondents’ views about the characteristics of good quality research, engagement in reading research, engagement in doing research, and background information. The goal was to obtain a broad perspective on issues under study and with this goal in mind the researcher approached a number of ELT contexts. To facilitate the achievement of these goals, two modes of administration were used, hard copy and email attachment.

The questionnaire used in this study was the instrument developed by Borg (2009). The questionnaire was piloted with a group of 21 English language teachers and its length,
wording, and organization were revised in line with their feedback and its validity and reliability have already been established by Borg (2009).

4.3. Data Collection Procedure

Teachers’ view about good quality research, their engagement in research in relation to their experience and qualification were found through cross-sectional survey. The range of themes covered in the instrument was informed by issues raised in the literature reviewed earlier.

As mentioned above, the questionnaire contained 4 sections which aim to answer the research questions. Section 1 included characteristics of good quality research. There was a list of characteristics that research may have. Teachers should tick one box for each to give their opinion about how important it was in making a piece of research ‘good’. After this part, second part of this section gave teachers a chance to choose if there were any other characteristics which in their opinion a study must have for it to be called high quality research.

Section 2 asked about reading research. This section started with this question, How frequently do you read published language teaching research? Then, the answers were divided into two groups first if they chose rarely, or never and second if they chose often, or sometimes. Part 2 and 3 of this section were answered by teachers who had chosen sometimes or often. In part 2 they clarified the source they read research and in part 3 they talked about the influence of reading research on their teaching experience. Part 4 answered by teachers who had chosen never or rarely. In this part they clarified some possible reasons for not reading research.

The same process was followed in section 3 for doing research, if they said often or sometimes they do research, in part 2 of the section they chose the reasons for doing research. And if they said rarely or never they would go to part 3 of the section and talked about reasons for not doing research. In all of the mentioned sections, there was a part to give participants an opportunity to write their own idea if they could not find it in the given choices.

Section4, the last section was about general information about the teachers themselves, information like, years of experience, highest relevant qualification to ELT, and type of institution they teach English in most often, the age of the learners they teach most often and etc.

4.4. Data Analysis

The closed questionnaire data were analyzed statistically using SPSS19. The obtained results about teachers’ idea about a research and the characteristics of good quality research,
research, and to what extent teachers read or do research in addition to the effect of research on teaching and reasons of not doing or reading research have been shown in tables of frequency and percentage and also in bar graphs. For finding the relationship between years of experience and characteristics of good quality research, reading research and doing research, correlation coefficient was run. Afterwards, the relationship between the highest relevant qualification to ELT and the characteristics of good quality research, reading and doing research was also found running correlation coefficient.

5. Result
5.1. Characteristics of Good Quality Research
Section 1 of the questionnaire has focused on the teachers’ conceptions of research by asking them to rate the importance to good quality research of a list of characteristics. Table 5.1 and figure 5.1 summarize the responses to this question. For the purposes of this table and this figure, 'Less important' includes 'unimportant' and 'moderately important' ratings for each characteristic, while 'More important' constitutes 'important' and 'very important' responses. Moreover, if participants had not been sure about the characteristics, they could have chosen ‘unsure’.

The characteristic which was seen overall to be most important was ‘the results give teachers idea they can use’ 87% of rating for this item were in the ‘more important’ group. ‘the results apply to many ELT context’ was the second most rated as important, while the third highest rated characteristic was ‘information is analyzed statistically’. Taken together, teachers’ views here reflect a conception of research where usefulness, relativity and statistically analysis are fundamental concerns. Other points worth noticing here are ‘a large number of people are studied’ and ‘questionnaires are used’ rated the least important. Respondents were also unsure for ‘experiments are used’ and ‘the researcher is objective’.

The teachers were asked to suggest further features of good-quality research and 11 respondents made suggestions. Four referred to the need for research to draw on existing sources, suggesting that these should be current, reliable and varied. Contemporary discussions of quality in research do in fact recognize the quality of communication as an important criterion. Other characteristics mentioned were the need for clear conclusions to be drawn from the analysis of the data, the need for a clear statement of the problem being investigated, the choice of topics that are 'interesting', and the integrity of the tools used to collect data.
### Table 5.1. Characteristic of good quality research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Less important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>More important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>percent</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. A large number of people are studied</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. A large volume of information is collected</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Experiments are used</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Hypotheses are tested</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Information is analyzed statistically</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Questionnaires are used</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. The researcher is objective</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. The results are applied to many ELT context</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. The results are made public</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. The results give teachers ideas they can used</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Variables are controlled</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Fig 5.1. Characteristic of good quality research

#### 5.2. Reading Research

Section 2 of the questionnaire asked respondents about the extent to which they read research, and if not, about their reasons for not doing so.
A total of 150 teachers reported how often they read published research, 79 teachers (57.2%) said they never or rarely read the published research. 71 teachers 47.3% said they often or sometimes read the published research.

**Table 5.2. The extent of reading research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>never / rarely</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sometimes / often</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>47.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig 5.2. The extent of reading research**

5.2.1. Reasons for not Reading Research

Teachers who reported reading research rarely or never were asked to comment on the reasons for their low engagement with research. As table 5.2.1 and figure 5.2.1 shows, lack of time is the main reason for not reading research. 92.4% teachers said they do not have enough time for reading the published research. This supports the views expressed earlier, where 80% teachers disagreed with ‘Time for doing research is built into teachers’ workload’. After lack of time, 83.5% of teachers said that the published researches are hard to understand. More than half of the teachers who said they read published research rarely or never said they are not interested in research or they do not have access to books and journals.

**Table 5.2.1. Reasons of rarely or never reading published language teaching research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I am not interested in research</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>67.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I do not have time</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>92.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I do not have access to books and journals</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
d. I find published research hard to understand  66  83.5

e. published research does not give me practical advice for classroom  49  62

f. other reasons  23  29.1

total  79  -

**Fig5.2.1. Reasons for not reading research**

### 5.2.2. Influence of Reading research on Practice

Teachers who said they often or sometimes read research were asked to indicate what influence they felt this reading had on their teaching. Of 64 teachers who said they read research sometimes or often, 43.7% reported moderate influence, 36.6% fairly strong influence, 9.9% slight influence, 8.5% strong influence, the extreme options for this item—no influence was selected just by 1.4% teachers. Table5.2.2 and figure 5.2.2 summarize the findings of this section.

**Table5.2.2. Influence of reading research on practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no influence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slight influence</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moderate influence</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fairly strong influence</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strong influence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fig 5.2.2. Influence of reading researches on practice

All 64 teachers also were asked to say which sources they read. Their responses were classified in Table 5.2.3 and Figure 5.2.3. Nearly all teachers read books, other sources except newsletters web-based sources were chosen by the majority of teachers, of course these two sources were also chosen by more than half of teachers.

**Table 5.2.3. Sources for reading research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Books</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Academic Journals</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>98.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Professional journal</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>87.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Professional Magazines</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Newsletters</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Web-based sources</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Other sources</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 5.2.3. Sources for reading research

5.3. Doing Research

Section 3 of the survey focused on teachers’ engagement in research. Teachers were asked how often they did research, if so, why, and if not, what the reasons for this were.
All teachers reported how frequently they did research. 57.3% of them said they never or rarely do research. 42.7% of teachers reported that they often or sometimes do research. Table 5.3 and figure 5.3 summarize the findings.

### Table 5.3. Frequent of doing research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>never / rarely</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sometimes / often</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Fig.5.3. Frequent of doing research*

#### 5.3.1. Reasons for Doing Research

64 teachers who reported they often or sometimes do research were asked to indicate their reasons for doing research by selecting items from a given list. The findings are summarized in table 5.3.1 and figure 5.3.1.

The four main reasons for doing research cited here were to as a part of a course I am studying on (96.9%), because I enjoy it (96.9%), because it is good for my professional development (95.3%), because it will help me get a promotion (95.3%). These reasons clearly have a strong personal, pedagogical, and professional, instrumental motivations focus. In contrast, closing ‘to solve problems in my teaching’ was chosen just by 9.4%. This expressed teachers’ attitude toward usefulness and practicality of research. These findings can help to facilitate conditions in enabling teachers to do research, it will be discussed later.

### Table 5.3.1. Reasons for doing research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. As a part of course I study on</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Because I enjoy it</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.2. Reasons for not Doing Research

The 86 teachers who reported rarely and never doing research were similarly asked to indicate their reasons for this. Their responses are summarized in table 5.3.2 and figure 5.3.3.

The overwhelming factors (cited by 93% of teachers) were ‘lack of time’ and ‘my job is to teach not research’. The next most common reason teachers cited for not doing research was” I do not know enough about research methods”. This points to the lack of enough knowledge. The other most common reasons chosen by teachers were “most of my colleagues do not do research” (76.7%) this points to the impact peers can have on teachers’ engagement in research and “other teachers’ would not cooperate if I asked for their
help” (72.1%). Choosing “I am not interested in doing research” by 47.7% of teachers shows positive attitude of most of them towards doing research.

**Table 5.3.3. Reasons for doing research rarely or never**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I do not know enough about research methods</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>81.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. My job is to teach no to do research</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. I do not have time</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. My employers discourage me</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>68.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. I am not interested in research</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. I need someone to advise me but no one is available</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>69.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Most of my colleague do not do research</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>76.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. I do not have access to the books and journals</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. The learners would not cooperate if I do</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>61.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. Other teachers would not cooperate if I asked</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>72.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Other reasons</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4. Background Information

Last section of the questionnaire asked teachers about their years of experience and their highest relevant qualification in ELT. Table 5.4.1 and figure 5.4.1 presents participants’ years of experience as an English language teacher. The majority of teachers had 10-14 years experience (42.7%) and just 1.3% had more than twenty years experience or only 2% had less than 4 years experience.

Table 5.4.1. Years of experience as an English language teacher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>26.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>42.7</td>
<td>68.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>89.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>98.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig 5.4.1 Years of experience as an English language teacher

Another question of this section, as said before, asked teachers about their highest relevant ELT qualification. Table 5.4.2 and figure 5.4.2 summarize their responses. Most of teachers,
51.3% had bachelor degree and 28% had masters degree. Among them only 0.7% had diploma. Having 11.3% graduated in doctorate, 39.3% of all participants had post graduate qualification.

**Table 5.4.2. Highest relevant qualification to ELT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>88.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate (PhD)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fig 5.4.2. Highest relevant qualification to ELT**

5.5. The Relationship between Years of Experience as an English Language Teachers & Frequency of Reading Research

Table 5.5 summarized the findings of using Kendall’s tau correlation. Based on them there is negative significant relation (significant level below 0.05) between years of experience and frequency of reading research.

**Table 5.5. The Relationship between Years of experience as an English language teacher & frequency of reading research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading research</th>
<th>0-4</th>
<th>5-9</th>
<th>10-14</th>
<th>15-19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>25+</th>
<th>Kendall’s tau</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>never / rarely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.007</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sometimes / often</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.232</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.6. The Relationship between Highest Relevant Qualifications in ELT & Frequency of Reading Research
Since both variables were ordinal, for analyzing the relationship between them Kendall’s Tau correlation was used. As table 5.6 shows there is a strong, positive and significant (significant level is below 0.05) relation between high relevant qualification and frequency of reading research. Thus, the more qualified teachers are, the more they engage in reading research.

Table 5.6. Relationship between highest relevant qualification to ELT & frequent of reading research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading research</th>
<th>highest relevant qualification to ELT</th>
<th>kendall’s tau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>certificate</td>
<td>diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>never / rarely</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sometimes / often</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.7. The Relationship between Years of Experience as an English Language Teachers & Frequency of Doing Research
Similar to the previous parts, Kendall’s Tau correlation was also used here for analyzing the relation between years of experience and doing research. As it can be seen from table 5.7 there is a significant, negative relation between these two variables.

Table 5.7. The relationship between Years of experience as an English language teacher & frequency of doing research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>doing research</th>
<th>Years of experience as an English language teacher</th>
<th>kendall’s tau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>5-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>never / rarely</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sometimes / often</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.8. The Relationship between Highest Relevant Qualifications in ELT & Frequency of Doing Research
Both variables were ordinals so for finding the relationship between them Kendall’s Tau correlation was used. The findings were summarized in table 5.8. There is a strong, positive, significant relation between high qualification and doing research. Therefore, by having high relevant qualification, teachers engage in doing research more often.
Table 5.8: The relationship between highest relevant qualification to ELT & frequency of doing research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>doing research</th>
<th>certificate</th>
<th>diploma</th>
<th>Bachelors</th>
<th>masters</th>
<th>doctorate</th>
<th>kendall’s tauc</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>never / rarely</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.665</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sometimes / often</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Discussion and Conclusion

6.1. Levels of Reported Research Engagement

At best, the result here point to moderate levels of engagement, both in terms of reading (with 47.3% of teachers saying that they often or sometimes read research) and doing research (with 42.74 of teachers saying that they often or sometimes do research). In terms of reading, teachers cited a range of sources they consulted from academic journals to practical newsletters. Nearly all teachers chose books and more than 98% chose academic journals as their sources for reading research. As a whole, teachers said reading research has moderate to fairly strong influence on their teaching practice. Just one of the teachers said reading research has no influence on her teaching and in written follow up questions she, who teaches in high, was asked to explain her idea, she replied: “I believe published researches are not very practical in real context in Iran. She mentioned changes and improvement in educational systems in Iran is very slow, so we do not need to update anything just teach the same old traditional method.”

Among teachers who chose ‘it has slight influence on teaching’, the majority of them said “our book and our method are not updated, why we should be updated by reading research.”

In terms of doing research, teachers were asked in the written follow-up questions about this and the examples provided suggested a varied range of activities from giving a presentation at an international conference on ‘How to teach literature in Higher Education’ to investigations of language learning using tests and questionnaires and employing statistical analyses. One teacher who said she ‘sometimes’ did research and who was asked for an example said ‘I haven’t done “real” research as it involves an incredible amount of work and presentation at the end’; what she had done was to contribute to research by providing data ‘for someone's thesis’.
In explaining why they do research, the teachers cited motivations which were primarily personal, pedagogical and professional, with pretty strong emphasis on external motives. Over 96% of teachers doing research said it was a part of a course they were studying during their education. This raises questions about the role which external pressure can play in promoting research engagement.

This study also identified a number of reasons why teachers said they do not read or do research. Lack of enough knowledge and time were the most important factors.

Henson (1996) suggests that teachers’ perceived lack of knowledge about research means they have limited confidence in their ability to do research. Foster (1999, p. 395), in his analysis of teacher research projects funded by the Teacher Training Agency in the UK, also concludes that, due at least partly to limitations in knowledge about doing research, ‘even teachers who are highly motivated find it difficult to produce high quality research.

6.2. The Relationship between Teachers’ Reported Levels of Research Engagement with Their Qualification and Experience

The reported levels of reading research were analyzed in association with both teachers’ qualification and their years of experience. For experience, the relationship was significant but negative. So it is not possible to say more experience teachers engage in research more than those with less experience. There was also a negative significant relationship between how often teachers do research and their experience. Younger L2 teachers engage more in research. It may declare the hopeful change in educational curriculum and teachers’ attitude toward research or it may be the eagerness of younger teachers to have promotion and professional improvement.

The level of doing and reading research were also analyzed in association with teaching highest relevant qualification. For both of them there was strong positive significant relationship. More qualified teachers, reported level of doing and reading research more frequently than those with fewer qualifications. The finding can support this idea that lack of knowledge is one of the major barriers for engaging in research.

Most of teachers who engage in research were teaching English at universities. They reported that engaging in research is very useful for having promotion and professional development. Nearly all high school teachers said they never do research. Most of them believed their job is teaching not researching and they do not have time for doing that. Moreover, many of them said they do not have enough information, and there is nobody to help them.
8. Implications of the Study
The information provided here can have an important awareness-raising function among individuals involved in initiatives promoting teacher research engagement. Moreover, this study shows the inevitable role of educational systems in motivating teachers to be research engaged. So educational authorities should invest significantly in programs of research which investigate these issues, and this will lead to the development of a significant body of evidence which can inform policy on matters pertaining to teachers' research engagement.

This study would be more generalizable if it was possible to have larger sample, a sample of the whole country. But having this opportunity asks for great deal of time. Even now 280 questionnaires were sent and after a lot of persistence, 150 of them returned. For having second phase of data collection the problem got worse. Teachers were unwilling to take part in written-follow up questions. while I am confident that the findings here reflect the beliefs and practices of the teachers investigated, in research situations there is always the risk that respondents might alter their behaviors.

Reference
Borg, S. (2003a). 'Research education' as an objective for teacher learning. In B. Beaven, & S., Borg (Eds.), *The role of research in teacher education* (pp. 41-48). Whitstable, Kent: IATEFL.


Henson KT. (1996). Teachers as researchers,’ Sikula J, Buttery T, Guyton E, eds.


Appendix A

**English language teachers’ views of research**

What does ‘research’ mean to you and what role does it play in your life as a professional English language teacher? These are important questions in our field—especially at a time when in many countries teachers are being encouraged to do research as a form of professional development. This International Survey of English Language Teachers asks you for your views on these issues and will take 15–20 minutes to complete. Participation in this study is voluntary. Thank you for your interest in contributing.

**SECTION 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD QUALITY RESEARCH**

1. Here is a list of characteristics that research may have. Tick **ONE** box for each to give your opinion about how important it is in making a piece of research ‘good’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Unimportant</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. A large number of people are studied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. A large volume of information is collected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Experiments are used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Hypotheses are tested</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Information is analysed statistically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Questionnaires are used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. The researcher is objective</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. The results apply to many ELT contexts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. The results are made public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j. The results give teachers ideas they can use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>k. Variables are controlled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If there are any other characteristics which in your opinion a study must have for it to be called ‘good’ research, please list them here.

**SECTION 2: READING RESEARCH**

1. How frequently do you read published language teaching research? (Tick **ONE**)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*If you chose Rarely or Never go straight to Question 4 in this section.*
2. You said that you read published language teaching research *often* or *sometimes*. Which of the following do you read? (Tick all that apply)

- Books
- Academic journals (e.g. TESOL Quarterly)
- Professional Journals (e.g. ELT Journal)
- Professional Magazines (e.g. ET Professional)
- Newsletters (e.g. IATEFL SIG Newsletters)
- Web-based sources of research
- Other (please specify)

3. To what extent does the research you read influence your teaching? Choose *ONE*.

- It has no influence on what I do in the classroom
- It has a slight influence on what I do in the classroom
- It has a moderate influence on what I do in the classroom
- It has a fairly strong influence on what I do in the classroom
- It has a strong influence on what I do in the classroom

*Now go to Section 5*

4. In Question 1 of this section you said that you read published research *rarely* or *never*. Here are some possible reasons for this. Tick those that are *true for you*.

   a. I am not interested in research
   b. I do not have time
   c. I do not have access to books and journals
   d. I find published research hard to understand
   e. Published research does not give me practical advice for the classroom
   f. Other reasons (please specify)

*SECTION 3: DOING RESEARCH*

1. How frequently do you do research yourself? (Tick *ONE*)

   Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Often

   *If you chose Rarely or Never go straight to Question 3 in this section.*

2. You said you do research *often* or *sometimes*. Below are a number of possible reasons for doing research. Tick those which are *true for you*.

   - I do research ....
   a. As part of a course I am studying on
   b. Because I enjoy it
   c. Because it is good for my professional development
   d. Because it will help me get a promotion
   e. Because my employer expects me to
   f. Because other teachers can learn from the findings of my work
   g. To contribute to the improvement of the school generally
   h. To find better ways of teaching
   i. To solve problems in my teaching
   j. Other reasons (please specify)

   *Now go to Section 6*

3. You said that you do research *rarely* or *never*. Below are a number of possible reasons for not doing research. Tick those which are *true for you*. 
‘I don’t do research because ...

a. I do not know enough about research methods
b. My job is to teach not to do research
c. I do not have time to do research
d. My employer discourages it
e. I am not interested in doing research
f. I need someone to advise me but no one’s available
g. Most of my colleagues do not do research
h. I do not have access to the books and journals I need
i. The learners would not co-operate if I did ‘research in class
j. Other teachers would not co-operate if I asked for their help
k. Other reasons (please specify)

SECTION 4: ABOUT YOURSELF

1. Country where you work:

2. Years of experience as an English language teacher (Tick ONE)

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>5-9</td>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>20-24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Highest relevant qualification to ELT (Tick ONE)

   - Certificate
   - Diploma
   - Bachelor’s
   - Master’s
   - Doctorate
   - Other

4. Type of institution you teach English in most often (Tick ONE)

   - Private
   - State
   - Other

5. Is your language school or centre part of a University? (Tick ONE)
   - Yes
   - No

6. The age of the learners you teach most often (Tick ONE)

<p>| | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 or younger</td>
<td>13-19</td>
<td>20-25</td>
<td>26+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. How would you describe your work as an English language teacher? (Tick ONE)
   - I teach English full-time
   - I teach English part-time

This completes the questionnaire. Thank you for taking the time to respond.
Title

The Effect of Task-Based Language Teaching Accompanied by Songs on Iranian EFL Learners’ Learning L2 Grammar and Their Attitudes

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Biodata

Mansoor Tavakoli Ph.D in TEFL from Isfahan University, Iran. He is an associate professor and has taught English in Isfahan University for 17 years. His research interests are language teaching and assessment.

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) accompanied by songs on the acquisition of English grammar among Iranian EFL learners and their attitudes. In order to accomplish the purpose of this study, 75 homogeneous students in terms of their levels in grammar were selected and randomly divided into three groups. The first one received grammar instruction through TBLT in the context of a song. The second one received grammar instruction through TBLT only, and the third (Comparison group) received traditional grammar instruction through the presentation, practice and production procedure. Results of the statistical analysis revealed that both experimental groups performed significantly better on the grammar test than the comparison group. Subjects in the first group meaningfully demonstrated greater gains as a result of the treatment than those in the second and third groups. The results provide empirical evidence in support of the fact that the use of effective teaching strategies as suggested by TBLT accompanied by songs, can reduce, to a great extent, learners' problems in the acquisition and use of L2 grammatical structures. The results of the study also have a number of implications.

Keywords: Context, Grammar, Song, Task, Task-Based language teaching

1. Introduction

Among the major issues raised by classroom Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research is the controversial question of whether and how to include "grammar" in second language
classrooms (Doughty & Williams, 1998). To complete this line of conceptualization in the role of grammar in SLA, Ellis (2006), in a position paper, addresses eight questions regarding what grammar should be taught, if so, when and how. Then he tries to conclude the article by stating his own beliefs regarding teaching grammar, which is based on his understanding of SLA (For further information, see Ellis, 2006).

A moment of speculation over grammar instruction in an EFL context implies that in most cases, the question is not whether grammar should be taught explicitly, but rather how it should be presented. To this end, teaching grammar must be contextualized, (Thornbury, 1999, p. 153) so as to facilitate the learner's comprehension and production of real language.

Moreover, as has already been emphasized that grammar should be taught in context, in this study songs are regarded as potentially being able to provide a good context and optimum situation to enhance learning and teaching of grammar to EFL learners. Taking the issues just mentioned into close consideration, I assume that song is a piece of authentic material that can provide a real communicative context which in the case of learning grammar helps the students to connect meaning and form in relation to the co-text and context of the situation. In the case of grammar instruction, the right choice of song for teaching a particular grammar aspect can facilitate the learning process which leads to better understanding and comprehension. As such, the purpose of the present study was to find out whether TBLT accompanied by songs would affect learning L2 grammar. The following sections will deal with such issues while highlighting the role of TBLT supplied by songs in L2 grammar instruction.

1.1. Task-Based Language Teaching

For more than 40 years the important role of grammatical instruction has been the main issue of SLA research and discussion (Ellis, 2001). There are plenty of research findings about grammar teaching and discussions on various teaching methodologies (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei&Thurrell, 1997; Thornbury, 1997, 1998), which stress the importance of grammar instruction. However, most people would agree that too often they find grammar instruction to be boring. Therefore it has always been the focus of attention to find out learners' interests and to introduce them to books and other texts that relate directly to their interests (e.g. Burke, 2001; Noden, 2001; Weaver, 1998).

As a result of the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s and increasing awareness of the students’ needs to develop their communicative ability, the term task-based language teaching (TBLT) came into widespread use in the field of second language teaching so as to bring about process-oriented
tasks and communicative syllabi (Jeon& Hahn, 2006). The Task-Based Approach (TBA) refers to "an approach/method based on the use of tasks as the core unit of planning and instruction in language teaching…as a logical development of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT)" (Richards & Rodgers 2001 p. 223).

To cast light on TBA, it is necessary to define what ‘task’ means in language teaching. Skehan (1996 p. 20) presented a rather plausible and precise definition of "tasks", “…… tasks generally bear some resemblance to real-life language use. So, task-based instruction takes a fairly strong view of communicative language teaching.” Bygate (2001) offered a core definition of the term task: "A task is an activity which requires learners to use language, with emphasis on meaning, to attain an objective" (p. 11). Similarly, Ellis (2003) defines task as an activity that "requires the participants to function primarily as 'language users' in the sense that they must employ the same kind of communicative process as those involved in real-world activities" (p. 3). According to these definitions, reading a train timetable and deciding which train one should take to get to a certain destination on a given day is an appropriate classroom task (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In fact, tasks have been extensively popularized due to their claimed ability to enhance learners' effective acquisition and communicative use of various grammatical elements in a second or foreign language (Ellis, 2003; Van den Branden, 2006; Willis & Willis, 2007). TBA has provided great opportunities for teachers as practitioners to frame their classroom activities based on meaningful tasks and exercises (Nunan, 2000, 2004; Samuda&Bygate 2008; Zephir 2000).

However, task-based activities are observed to capture different results in so far as different settings are concerned. For instance, Gass, Mackey and Ross-Feldman (2011) investigated “task-based interaction” in classroom and laboratory settings, and their findings came to significant differences between the two situations. By the same token, with the aim to generalize Task-Based Learning (TBL) research in laboratory settings to classroom situations, Robinson (2011), in a position paper, tries to explain a number of proposals for how acquisition processes and theoretical rationales can be motivated by TBL as to guide more research about them. Task-based learning thus resulted in different conclusions concerning classroom contexts and other situations.

As for Task-based language teaching (TBLT), it rejects the assumptions on which mainstream communicative language teaching is based, in particular the PPP paradigm (Klapper, 2003). It has been the subject of much pedagogical research and language syllabus design work in recent years (Bygate, 1999a, 1999b; Dörnyei&Kormos, 2000; Edwards, 2003;
Current views of TBLT hold that "if learners are to acquire language through participating in tasks they need to attend to or notice critical features of the language they use and hear." (Richards & Rodgers 2001 p. 236). The implementation of various tasks in the classroom setting with an emphasis on the effectiveness of "form-focused" tasks and exercises is also claimed (Farsani, Tabakoli&Moinzadeh, 2012; Grim 2008; Littlewood 2004; Richards &Rodgers 2001) to enhance the discovery, acquisition and use of such structures in an ESL/EFL context. For instance, recently, Taking the role of TBLT in EFL context with focus on FonF, farsani et al. (2012) provided an empirical evidence in support of this issue. They specifically focused on the effect of TBLT on Iranian EFL learners’ acquisition and use of ‘Existential constructions’ such as “there is /are”. Their experimental study yielded positive empirical evidence in support of the effect of FonFTask- based instruction on the subjects’ acquisition and use of existential constructions. The use of TBLT in classroom context has, therefore, proved useful as to learning some grammatical points. Now in this study, TBLT is coupled with using songs so as to further examine its effects.

Nevertheless, more traditional, context-reduced approaches to teaching and learning grammar also sought to respond to the question of effective grammar instruction, the famous PPP Model being a notorious example (see Richards & Rodgers 2001 for a review). This model which might turn out to be appealing to many teaching practitioners (Thornbury 1999) instructs the teacher to present grammar to the students, practice the grammar (through decontextualized exercises and individual/choral repetition), and then allow the students to produce the grammar in strict exercises or highly controlled dialogue types. However, as PPP was too behavioristic in nature (Richards & Rodgers 2001) it did not allow for the communicative proficiency of the learner to develop and improve in its highly linear course of instruction. This could even prove unsuccessful when it came to more complex aspects of communicative grammar that were called for in various instances in communication. And since the model is lacking in a firm communicative basis, it could by no means guarantee fluent communicative performance on the part on the part of the learner (Thornbury 1999).

TBLT, on the other hand, has a firm basis in SLA theory which gives it theoretical legitimacy (Ellis 2003; 2006). Focus on Form (FonF, here after) tasks in this method allow concentration on grammatical features while maintaining the highly crucial value of communicative proficiency for the learner (Skehan 1996). Such tasks provide learners with a variety of opportunities to actively manage and learn various structural elements while
carrying out communicative tasks (Willis & Willis 2007). It is this unique aspect of TBLT which makes the language teacher and learner better capable of focusing on particularly difficult and complex facets of grammar.

Moreover, probing into the role of teachers in task-based language education, Van den Branden came to this conclusion that, “In essence, task-based language teaching is no more chaotic than any other approach to language teaching. It replaces the mental order of interventionist approaches ……” (2009 p. 283). Van den Branden’s concluding remarks are useful in the sense that the teacher is considered as a crucial interactional partner in task-based language classrooms, playing the role of “motivator”, “organizer” and “conversational partner and supporter” (p. 284). However, this role of the teacher in task-based grammar instruction is not well proved in some empirical studies. For example, Toth (2011) reviewed a number of studies that investigated whether teacher- and learner-led discourse would be more beneficial to learners in a task-based grammar instruction. Although toth came to conflicting results in this respect, it was concluded that small group learner-led discourse in task-based grammar instruction facilitated L2 development more than teacher-led discourse.

In a seminal paper, Ellis (2009) evaluates both theoretical and empirical criticisms leveled against TBLT so as to postulate its efficiency for use in EFL context alongside traditional methods. Theoretical objections have been made to TBLT, i.e., by “… those teachers and educators who favour a more traditional approach” (Ellis, p. 222). As cited in Ellis (2009, p. 222), the leading figures among the critics are (e.g. Seedhouse, 1999; 2005; Sheen, 1994; 2004; Swan, 2005; &Widdowson, 2003). On the basis of empirical studies, TBLT has also been under criticisms as to its implementation and types of instructional settings. This way people such as Butler (2005), Carless (2004), and Li (1998), among others, raise a number of questions as to whether TBLT is practical in Asian countries, where teachers’ philosophy of teaching is thoroughly different from that underlying TBLT, and where they suffer from limited L2 proficiency and wash-back required for their teaching and learning (see Ellis, 2009). Ellis, therefore, argues that many of these criticisms have originated from the basic misunderstanding of the definition of TBLT and the theoretical justifications that notify TBLT. TBLT, as Ellis believes, is better to go along with traditional approaches rather than as a substitute for them.

Several studies have already been carried out, each focusing on an aspect of language structure, comparing various strategies and tasks for teaching grammar to foreign language learners of English (see Chaudron, Doughty, Kim, Kong, J. Lee, Y-G., Lee, Long, Rivers &Urano, 2005; Farsani, et al. 2012; Flyman-Mattssson 1999; Spada&Lightbown 1993 for
further information). Flyman-Mattsson (1999), among others, argues that FonF has form as its basic target, but uses sentences and interaction to explain and practice form. The interaction, however, is driven towards a specific grammatical phenomenon of difficulty by the teacher. The research on these and other important issues in FonF in TBLT (Celce-Murcia, Dornyei, Thurrell, 1997; Ellis, 2000; Fotos, 1993; Skehan, 1996; Spada&Lightbown, 1993 to cite but a few sources) has raised some key questions regarding their applications in EFL context. These questions have to be answered before one can come to a firm conclusion whether form-focused instruction is beneficial in the acquisition and use of language structures. Thus, the section below will touch upon the role of using songs with TBLT in teaching and learning grammar.

1.2. Songs and Contextual Teaching of grammar

There are many reasons for making music a regular feature of L2 courses. Recent research has shown that adults spend 40-50% of their time listening to audio materials compared to 11-16% of their time reading texts (Iskold, 2004, p. 86). Most classroom music activities focus on lyrics. Murphey (1992) conducted an analysis of the lyrics of a large corpus of pop songs and found that they have several features that help second-language learners: They contain common, short words and many personal pronouns (94% of the songs had a first person, I, referent and are written at about a fifth-grade level); the language is conversational (imperatives and questions made up 25% of the sentences in the corpus); time and place are usually imprecise (except for some folk ballads); the lyrics are often sung at a slower rate than words are spoken with more pauses between utterances; and there is repetition of vocabulary and structures.

Because meaning plays a significant role in teaching grammar, it is essential to present grammar points through contextualization. Songs are the most charming and culturally loaded assets that can effortlessly be used in language classrooms. Songs act as efficient tools for teaching and practicing specific grammatical points. By the help of listening to songs, the grammatical structures become more deeply internalized. Thus, songs provide not only a rewarding resource for structured practice of grammar, but also a proper basis for review. If a song that exemplifies a particular structure is also a good song, it engages the eye, the ear and the tongue simultaneously while also stimulating and moving us; this polymorphic effect makes a song easier to memorize than other things for many students (Celce-Murcia & Hills, 1988, p. 123).
Similarly, Langfit (1994) states that, music is a medium that educators can and should incorporate into their classroom. She suggests that listening to music, singing songs, and discussing song lyrics' structures and meaning can be enjoyable and beneficial ESL activities. Through songs, the teachers can motivate students to write their own poems or songs, according to their ability level. These are only some examples of how much a teacher can do in the classroom through the use of music and songs (Adkins, 1997).

Several authors agree that music helps learners acquire vocabulary, grammar, and the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. When students listen to music and sing songs they are exposed to an enjoyable experience. In essence, music has been shown to be effective in second language acquisition (Jolly, 1975; Jalongo& Bromley, 1984; Martin, 1983). For example, Jolly (1975) conducted a research study on the importance of songs in the second language classroom. Twenty students at the university level were enrolled in a conversation course where songs were used. The songs were selected according to the objectives of the lessons, which included cultural content such as seasons of the year, holydays, and so on. The results indicated that using songs as part of the lessons increased students’ grammar and word retention (Jolly, 1975). Therefore, since there is a scarcity in research regarding the role of song in learning grammar in particular and its combination with TBLT ingeneral, it is not possible to continue the discussion any further in this respect.

2. The present study
This study was a between-groups quasi-experimental design which was aimed to examine the effects of TBLT accompanied with songs on the participants’ achievements in learning L2 grammar and their attitudes. The independent variable was categorical at three levels of TBLT plus using songs, TBLT only, and PPP procedure, and the dependent variable was Some L2 grammar aspects. It was further investigated whether there would be any difference between them in terms of their influences on EFL learners’ perceptions and attitudes. Accordingly, the following research questions were addressed:

1. Does presentation of grammar through task-based language teaching accompanied by songs affect students' learning some L2 grammatical aspects?

2. Does the combination of TBLT and songs for teaching grammar introduced in this study change students' perception of the method effectiveness, self-achievement and the overall language class environment?
3. Method

3.1. Participants

The population from which the participants were selected for this study included Iranian EFL learners whose first language was Persian and have not yet been to an English speaking country. Initially all the students at an English Institute in Iran (N=108), who were studying “Interchange series, Book2” (Richards, 2005) were considered to participate in this study. They were all males whose age ranged between 16 and 18. Of the total number of 108 EFL learners who enrolled for Interchage (Book2), 75 of them whose scores from the previous term (Book1) fell above 80% of the total scores were recognized as homogenous and selected to participate in this study. All the participants were equally distributed in three classrooms with having the same teacher. They were also asked to fill out a biodata questionnaire about their background and the amount of time they generally listened to English songs.

3.2. Materials

For the purpose of this study, some instructional and assessment materials were prepared and used which will be explained and elaborated in the following sections.

3.2.1. Instructional materials

The instructional material that the participants were exposed to was “Interchange, Student’s Book 2” (Jack C. Richards, 2005). The book contains 16 Units. The grammatical structures that were focused in this study were selected from some of the Units of this Book. The target linguistic structures under focus in this study are as follows:

1- Unreal Conditions: Present time (If + past, would/ could + bare infinitive)
2- Present perfect Passive form (have/has been + PP)
3- Past continuous (was/were + ing form)
4- Present perfect continuous (have/has + been + ing form)

The rationale for the selection of these types of structures was twofold: First of all, they cover a range of different linguistic structures which can be found in many intermediate language courses. Secondly, these linguistic items constitute some parts of the curriculum developed for the pre-university course in Iran.

In addition, song selection procedure was according to the guidelines suggested by different researchers and authors such as Pomeroy, Gasser and Waldman, cited in Celce-Murcia &Hilles (1988, p. 118). They provided teachers with six general guidelines for any class which uses songs in its procedures. For the purpose of this study, songs have been
selected from The ESL Song Directory (Carrier, 1994). This book contains an indexed list of more than 350 popular songs to be used for teaching different aspects of language at all levels.

3.2.2. Assessment materials

• The Pre-test and the Post-tests
Since this study was designed to focus on the acquisition of some English grammatical elements by Iranian EFL learners after certain types of instruction (treatment), two parallel tests were constructed to be used in different phases of the study. One of them was used as a pre-test and the other as a post-test. The pre-test was developed as to assess the subjects’ knowledge of grammatical points prior to the treatment so as to make sure that participants were not familiar with the target structures.

In order to measure the learners’ acquisition of grammatical points in question after the treatment, the second parallel test was prepared as the post-test of the experiment. It was given to the subjects to examine the potential effects of the treatment phase of the study on the acquisition of the target forms. More information regarding them will follow:

• The Structure of the Tests
Each of the two parallel tests utilized in this study comprised of 20 multiple-choice items. The target grammatical points were missing in the stem and the subjects were required to complete the sentences by selecting the correct choice. As there were four types of linguistic structures under investigation, for each one five items were constructed.

• The Reliability and Validity of the Tests
Since the pre- and post-tests utilized in this study were teacher-made, the reliability of the test was gauged by parallel form method in a pilot study. The correlation coefficient between the scores obtained was 0.91. So, the square of this index of correlation, i.e., (0.91 ) would yield a reliability of (0.81) for the grammar tests.

Also, these tests enjoy content validity by nature, since they test exclusively grammatical elements taught in the class sessions. However, to judge the content and face validity of the newly developed tests, they were submitted to two university professors, who are experts in language testing, for receiving their judgments regarding the format and the content of those tests. Hence they were deemed qualified as to the purpose of the study.

• The attitude Questionnaire
To test the second research question, a 3-item Likert scale questionnaire was devised. It sought to gauge students' overall perception of the language class as well as their perception of teaching strategies and overall class environment. The students were required to answer
the questionnaire after completion of each chapter (four times during the course). The items in the attitude questionnaire are as follows:

- I think the class was useful and I learned a lot in this class.
- I think the way grammar was taught in the class was very effective and I learned the grammar point very well.
- The class was very interesting and I enjoyed it a lot.

3.3. Procedures

As noted above, from 108 participants who scored 80% of the previous term test of interchange (Book1), 75 of them were selected to participate in the main study. Since random assignment of the participants (for some logistic reasons) was not possible, this study used a quasi-experimental design. So, the participants were selected from three classrooms with the same teacher and the same criterion (mentioned above).

- Administration of the Pre-test

Since this study used a quasi-experimental design, the participants’ knowledge of the target L2 grammar had to be checked for homogeneity prior to the treatment. In order to test the participants’ homogeneity, a pre-test was given to all the three groups to measure their knowledge of grammatical structures under focus. Table 1 shows frequencies of the scores obtained by all the participants in the pre-test.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics on the Pre-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EG1 (TBLT+songs)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>1.369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG2 (TBLT only)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>1.848</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG (PPP)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.48</td>
<td>1.735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>1.658</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of the participants’ mean scores on the pre-test across the three groups. It can be seen in the above table that the mean scores for the three groups are statistically very close (4.96 ≈ 5.00 ≈ 5.48). Although descriptive statistics of the pre-test and associated error-bar clearly shows that the mean score of the groups are almost equal but extra analysis is needed to make sure of the normal distribution of the participants in the groups. For this purpose Levene’s test of homogeneity of variances (Table 3) was performed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene Statistic</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.023</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>.365</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here the resulting p-value of Levene's test is greater than typical critical value of 0.05 (0.365> 0.05), therefore, the assumption of equal variances is not rejected and it is concluded that there is no significant difference between the variances of the groups.

• Treatment

As noted above, the selected 75 homogenous learners were located in three different classes (25 students each). There were two experimental and one comparison groups.

During the treatment phase of the study, participants in all the three classrooms separately attended eight sessions of instruction in which they all worked on the same materials in the book 2 of Interchange. The time for teaching different parts of each chapter of the course book was kept consistent in all groups. For the comparison group, grammar was taught through traditional grammar instruction through presentation, practice and production procedure in the class. The time allotted for grammar instruction for the two experimental groups was filled by storytelling and conversation practices. The whole experiment will be fully described below.

• Treatment for TBLT plus songs Group and TBLT only

The task-based group's treatment was predominantly input-based, meaning that learners spent approximately two third of their time comprehending, elaborating, negotiating audio and written input. The selected songs were the source of input in this study.

Following Willis’s (1996) model, in the pre-task stage, the teacher warmed up the students by activating their background experiences regarding the theme of the song. New words and expressions in the song were also introduced in this stage. The song was played once or twice in this stage for the students to get familiar with its rhythm. In the main task stage of the lesson the students were required to write a paraphrase of the song. For this
purpose every part of the song was discussed and elaborated with the teacher managing and leading the discussions. The written lyrics of the song in this stage were available to the students. The post-task stage concerned language focus. In this stage with a focus-on-form approach (Long, 1991), the meaning of the sentences and phrases of the songs was elaborated for the students. In the following session students’ questions regarding the theme of the song were answered and discussed.

As for the second experimental group in which the focus was only on TBLT, the grammar was taught in the same way as it was done in the TBLT plus song group. That is, the participants all were engaged with task-based activities, negotiating, elaborating and comprehending the written input.

• Treatment for comparison (PPP) Group
The PPP treatment on the other hand, was predominantly output-based (Ellis, 2003). This means that the learners spend approximately two thirds of their time producing written and oral samples of the language. For this group, first the grammatical point was presented explicitly utilizing different simple sentences. Then these points were practiced through structural, situational techniques such as repetition, substitution, transformation and question-and-answer drills. In the last stage students were required to make some sentences of their own according to the newly acquired rule in oral and written forms. They were also required to do some extra exercises for the next session. In the next session the instructor provided a review of the previous lesson and related exercises.

• Administration of the Post-tests
After the treatment, the post-test was administered to measure the learners’ acquisition of the grammatical points in question. For this purpose, the second parallel test, a 20-item multiple-choice test was administered as the post-test of the study to examine the participants’ achievements regarding the target grammatical points as a result of the effects of TBLT and songs.

For scoring the pre-test and the post-tests, every item was graded dichotomously: one point for a correct answer and zero for an incorrect one, and there was no negative point for wrong answers or the items not answered at all. All the correct answers, therefore, added up to a total sum of 20 as there were twenty items in each test.

In order to analyze the obtained data, relevant statistical tests were utilized. To be more specific, these statistical measures include the descriptive statistics, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with a Scheffe post-hoc test. In addition, a percentage analysis was done
on the data obtained on the participants’ attitudes regarding the two types of treatments. They will be fully delineated below.

4. Results

4.1. TBLT plus songs and grammar development
In response to the first research question posed in this study, a null hypothesis was formulated that, presentation of grammar through TBLT accompanied by songs does not affect students' learning of the grammatical aspects. To test this hypothesis, a number of statistical tests were run as follows:

First, A look at the descriptive statistics of the scores obtained from the post-test demonstrate that the subjects in the first experimental group who were taught grammar with a task based approach in the context of a song, achieved a higher mean score than that of those in the second experimental group with the TBLT only and that of those in control group (PPP procedure) with no innovative treatment.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics of the post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EG1 (TBLT+ songs)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13.80</td>
<td>1.979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG2 (TBLT only)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11.32</td>
<td>2.561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPP (Comparison)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.88</td>
<td>2.223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.33</td>
<td>4.011</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is essential to provide further empirical and statistical information for supporting or rejecting the null hypothesis (mentioned above) regarding TBLT groups' success on grammar test over the TBLT only group and PPP comparison group. For this reason, a One-Way ANOVA was run on the results of the post-test, and then the groups were compared to locate the point(s) of significance between and among the groups in the study. The ANOVA table beneath contains within and between group descriptive statistics, F value, and significance for group results on the post-test.

Table 5 ANOVA table depicting between and within group descriptive statistics and significance for the post-test results (p < 0.05)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>820.587</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>410.293</td>
<td>79.824</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>370.080</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>5.140</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1190.667</td>
<td>74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The between groups (combined) test has a value below 0.05 (.000), and therefore a significant value for F (F = 79.824, p< 0.05), indicating that there is a significant relationship between grouping and obtained results on the post-test. As mentioned above, a relatively high
amount of F value (F 79.824) shows that there exists a difference among the groups regarding their scores on post-test. However, power of ANOVA test must be calculated in order to make sure of its effects size and reliability. For this purpose the squared association measure for the post-test results has been calculated (Table 6). It shows that the amount of variation in the results is obviously related to grouping. The value obtained for the squared association is ≈ 0.69 which would be considered a medium effect size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immediate Groups</th>
<th>post-test</th>
<th>Eta</th>
<th>Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>.830</td>
<td>.689</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the ANOVA test indicated significant differences between groups, it was necessary to locate exactly where it fell in our data. For this purpose, Multiple Comparisons among the three groups on the post-test results using Scheffe post hoc tests was run, whose final results are shown in table 7 below. Scheffe post hoc test was preferred among other tests as it can examine all possible linear combinations of group means, not just pairwise comparisons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) Groups (J) Groups</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EG1 (TBLT+songs)</td>
<td>EG2 (TBLT only)</td>
<td>2.480(*)</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CG (PPP)</td>
<td>7.920(*)</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG2 (TBLT only)</td>
<td>EG1 (TBLT+songs)</td>
<td>-2.480(*)</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CG (PPP)</td>
<td>5.440(*)</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG (PPP)</td>
<td>EG1 (TBLT+songs)</td>
<td>-7.920(*)</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EG2 (TBLT only)</td>
<td>-5.440(*)</td>
<td>.641</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

As the first row of the above table shows, subjects in the first experimental group performed significantly better on the post-test than both the second experimental group (with a difference ratio of ≈ 2.5 points), and the comparison group (a greater ratio of ≈ 8 points). Therefore, the null hypothesis regarding the comparison of the results on the post-test between the TBLT with songs group and the other two groups, i.e., TBLT only and PPP groups was rejected.
The second row of the table displays a comparison between the second experimental group and the other two groups. As the mean differences illustrate, the second experimental group have performed more effectively on the test having $\approx 5.5$ points higher mean than the PPP group.

The third row of table 7 further allows a comparison between the comparison group and the two experimental groups, and clearly illustrates the fact that the subjects in the former group did less effectively on the test by a $\approx 8$-point difference in the mean compared with that of the first experimental group, and a $\approx 5.5$-point mean difference compared with that of the second experimental group.

The "Homogeneous Subsets Table" below takes the results of the post hoc tests above and shows them in a more easily interpretable form:

**Table 8 Homogeneous Subsets Table for multiple comparisons on the immediate post-test results**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Subset for alpha = .05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG (PPP)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>5.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG2 (TBLT only)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>11.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG1 (TBLT+songs)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, in the subset columns of a homogeneous subsets table, the factor levels that do not have significantly different effects are displayed in the same column. We have none in the above table (8), thus illustrating and further confirming the outcome of the multiple comparisons table above.

**4.2. TBLT plus songs and participants’ attitudes**

With respect to the second research question, it is hypothesized that, the innovative method of teaching grammar through tasks accompanied by songs introduced in this study does not change students' perception of the method effectiveness, self-achievement and the overall language class environment. To test this hypothesis a Likert-scale questionnaire with three questions were devised; the participants were required to choose from a five-point Likert item which ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The first question was dealt with the usefulness of the class, the second was about the way grammar was presented and how much students gained from it, and finally the third question was gauging how much students enjoyed the class. Let us deal with them in turn:

- Item 1: I think the class was useful and I learned a lot in this class.
Using descriptive statistics via percentage analysis, the first two options (i.e. strongly agree and agree) as positive indications, it can be seen that participants in task-based group have more positive perception toward the usefulness of the class (91 vs. 84) (Table 9.).

**Table 9 Percentage Analysis of the first Item**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not decided</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Total Agree (N=25)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EG1 (N=25)</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG2 (N=25)</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Item 2: I think the way grammar was taught in the class was very effective and I learned the grammar point very well.

Answers provided for the second item revealed that although the obtained percentages are almost the same for the two groups, the participants in TBLT-only group perceived that grammar teaching was effective and they learned it well (91 vs. 87) (Table 10.).

**Table 10 Percentage Analysis of the second Item**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>Not decided</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Total Agree (N=25)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EG1 (N=25)</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG2 (N=25)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Item 3: The class was very interesting and I enjoyed it a lot.

As shown in table (11), it is obvious that perception of the students toward the overall class environment in task-based class is more positive (93 vs. 80). This is probably due to the use of songs in language classroom.

**Table 11 Percentage Analysis of the third Item**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>Not decided</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Total Agree (N=25)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EG1 (N=25)</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG2 (N=25)</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result of the percentage analysis, it can be concluded that the implementation of TBLT plus songs for teaching grammar created a positive attitudes for the subjects as to the method effectiveness, self-achievement and the overall language class environment. The
same was also true with respect to the TBLT-only group in terms of the subjects’ positive perceptions about the two types of instructions.

5. Discussion
In this study an innovative way of grammar instruction in context of task-based language teaching was coupled with English songs and compared with the traditional PPP procedure of grammar instruction which is still the dominant grammar instruction in most of the Iranian English language classrooms. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to try to view the teaching of grammar within the context of a task-based approach and compare it with that of non-communicative, traditional ones which have tried to work on grammatical aspects of a language in a decontextualized manner. Songs are believed to be as pieces of authentic materials that can provide a real communicative context for the learners.

The ANOVA tables in the section above came to significant results for the first experimental group. The findings confirmed that Task-Based Language Teaching and learning, as a useful and modern method accompanied with songs in this study was quite successful in teaching the target grammatical elements of English to the subjects. This finding strongly corresponds to Richards and Rodgers' (2001) point of view that TBLT has been very effective in foreign language teaching classrooms. Hence, it is concluded that the use of tasks plus songs in EFL classrooms is a central component because they provide better contexts for activating learner acquisition processes and promote L2 learning. This is rightly justified by Richards and Rodgers (2001, p. 228) when they suggest that this is because ‘tasks are believed to foster processes of negotiation, modification, rephrasing, and experimentation that are at the heart of second language learning.’

In addition, the present findings are in line with the previous studies which indicate that music and song have a positive effect on the variables studied in language learning (Loewy, 1995, 2004; Macarthur & Trojer, 1985; Medina, 1991; Mora, 2000; Palmer & Kelly, 1992; Richards, 1993). In the same line, Palmer and Kelly (1992) emphasised the role of music in contextualization of language. They believed that students can comprehend words and anticipate new terms when they adjust songs and words with their recognized stress patterns and accents. This way the learners find the opportunity to make a close link between songs and linguistic items so that they can better recall it later (Palmer & Kelly, 1992)

As shown in the second row of Table 7 above, the second experimental group (TBLT-only), also outperformed the PPP group. This finding underscores the fact that TBLT also proved to be more successful than the traditional PPP procedure in effectively teaching the
target grammatical structures to the learners. Also, it is in line with previous studies, which demonstrated the strength of meaningful and contextualized learning and teaching through TBLT and FonF (Chaudron et al. 2005; Farsani, 2012; Flyman-Mattsson 1999; Nunan, 2001; Spada & Lightbown 1993; Willis, 1996).

Nevertheless, although much of the discussion in this section confirm the effectiveness of TBLT plus songs and TBLT only, PPP was not without its effects. As shown in Tables above, the subjects in PPP group were also progressing in terms of the target grammatical knowledge. If it is claimed that in this quasi-experimental study, the implementation of TBLT with songs proved useful for some subjects, this should not allow us to consider it as an alternative to PPP methods; the fact that is also noted by Ellis (2009).

To this end, second/foreign language pedagogy has always been in search of a best "method" to approach language teaching and learning issues (Brown 2000; Ellis, 2009; Richards & Rodgers 2001). One of the main dimensions of the theoretical foundation of such an approach is the way grammar, as a pivotal aspect of language, is supposed to be taught to the learners. Countless teachers subscribed to those methods and tried to apply them to classroom teaching. As soon as new findings indicated the probable weakness of a method, teachers tended to subscribe to a newer one which de-emphasized certain aspects of the previous method and built itself by giving strength to those neglected aspects of that method. This provided a great deal of confusion among teachers and even forced some to ignore developments in methodology, center their teaching around practical classroom issues, and find solutions based on their own classroom experience.

According to what is experienced in this study, I would like to end up the discussion by acknowledging some of Ellis’s beliefs about teaching grammar (put forth in his article, 2009, pp. 101-2) which are as follows:

- The grammar taught should be one that emphasises not just form but also the meanings and uses of different grammatical structures.
- Teachers should endeavour to focus on those grammatical structures that are known to be problematic to learners rather than try to teach the whole grammar.
- A focus-on-forms approach is valid as long as it includes an opportunity for learners to practice behaviour in communicative tasks.
- Use should be made of both input-based and output-based instructional options.
- Corrective feedback is important for learning grammar. It is best conducted using a mixture of implicit and explicit feedback types that are both input based and output based.
As to the second research question which was to tap information on the subjects’ attitudes and perceptions regarding the implementation of (TBLT+songs) and (TBLT-only), almost intriguing results emerged. That is, the subjects in both experimental groups, especially those in the EG1 developed positive attitudes in terms of method effectiveness, self achievement, and overall class environment. Thus, it can be concluded that if teaching grammar is coupled with entertaining activities, students will probably reduce their tensions, and this will in turn increase their capacity for learning.

6. Conclusion
As stated in the discussion section, the subjects in the second experimental group, i.e., the TBLT-only group, did not do as significantly as the (TBLT+songs) group on post-test. This finding revealed the fact that although TBLT in both groups was run in the same way, the subjects in EG1 who used songs were more successful in learning L2 grammar than the other ones. They were also more motivated in terms of their attitudes than those in EG2. Although the subjects in PPP group progressed in some discernible way, their grammatical achievements were not as much as those in the first and second experimental groups.

In the long run, TBLT together with the application of songs in the classroom proved to be useful in this study. The effectiveness of this innovative treatment made students utilize a variety of activities and tasks, which in turn affected their perceptions when informally asked their feelings and attitudes about the implementation of songs in the classroom. The manipulation of TBLT supplied by songs not only improved the subjects’ achievements in learning L2 grammar, but also enhanced their positive attitudes toward such a combination in this study.

There are a number of implications that can possibly be useful for language practitioners and teachers in EFL context. First, Teachers should be informed that in recent years, TBLT has been able to provide a firm and stable foundation for classroom teaching and learning practices. As Ellis (2000, 2003) and Long (1985, 2000) maintain, it is an innovative method which is improving with research and application in language and learning issues. Various kinds of tasks provide teachers and learners with clear and focused activities in classroom situations and support teaching and learning in novel ways.

The results of the study reported here could also influence the use of songs in foreign language classroom practice. Pedagogical activities involving music offer many possibilities for integrating culture, content, and communication during the language-learning process (Siek-Piskozub, 1998).
Materials writers and syllabus designers, like teachers, may benefit from the results of this study through designing and preparing suitable instructional materials and course contents in which specific care and salience is given to contextualized grammatical exercises, and meaningful contextualized tasks around songs. Songs can also become the center of grammar and instruction in course books.

Because the design of the study was quasi-experimental, certain measures had to be taken to control the extraneous variables so as to maximize internal validity. Such consideration naturally caused some limitations which will be discussed briefly in the following lines:

First, because of the design of the study, random assignment of the participants was not necessary. Perhaps, if random assignment were used, the obtained results might have better been generalized in wider contexts. So, Care must be taken not to generalize the results to larger population. Second, TBLT with songs proved to be useful in this study, but there was no systematic way of controlling the subjects in the other groups to see whether they listened to grammar songs outside their classes. In other words, the history factor was not fully controlled. Finally, because of the restrictions at the institute and also to eliminate the effect of age and gender factor, it was necessary to select the participants only among male students with almost the same age.

References


Title

The Relationship between Extroversion/Introversion and Iranian EFL Learners’ Language Learning Strategy Preferences

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Biodata

Amir Hamid Forough Ameri MA in TEFL. His research interests include psycholinguistics, learner variables, and testing.

Abstract

This study is an attempt to explore any significant relationships between extroversion/ introversion and the frequency and type of language learning strategies (LLSs) Iranian EFL learners use, and to seek any significant differences between males and females regarding extroversion/introversion and LLS use. One hundred Iranian university students, including males and females, who were randomly selected from junior and senior students majoring in English Translation and Literature, participated in this study. Two questionnaires were utilized: Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) to measure extroversion, and the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) to determine the type and frequency of LLSs. The findings revealed that first, there was a significant relationship between extroversion and the frequency of LLS use: the more extroverted the students, the higher their LLS scores. Second, there were significant relationships between extroversion and three types of LLS: the more extroverted the students, the higher their scores for cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies. Third, there were no significant differences between males and females regarding their frequency of LLS use, and finally, there were significant differences between males and females regarding their extroversion, that is, females appeared to be more extroverted than males.

Keywords: Extroversion, Introversion, Language learning strategies (LLSs), Eysenck personality questionnaire (EPQ), Strategy inventory for language learning (SILL)
1. Introduction

As Skehan (1991) noted, the study of language learning strategies (LLSs), has experienced an "explosion of activity" in recent years (p. 285). The reason behind this fact might be increased understanding of "the mediating role of learning strategies" in language learning (Ellis, 1994, p. 529). Learning strategies have often been studied in relation to several other variables that affect them such as gender, achievement, motivation, culture, learning styles, and personality type factors. In 1994, Ellis classified individual learner differences affecting strategy choice in terms of "(1) attitudes, (2) affective states, and (3) general factors" (p. 540). Among such general factors as age, sex, and personality type, "it is intuitively appealing to hypothesize a close relationship between personality types and strategy choice" (Ellis, 1994, p. 542).

Learning strategies are among individual-difference variables that play a significant role in foreign or second language learning (Skehan, 1989). According to Chamot and Kupper (as cited in Purdie & Oliver, 1999), it appears that all language learners use LLSs of some type, but the frequency and type of LLS they use vary among different learners.

Purdie and Oliver (1999) have asserted that there has been little research in the literature devoted to the potential relationship between affective factors and strategy selection. To the extent of the current researcher's knowledge, a few published studies have been conducted to explore the relationship between learners' personality traits and their LLS preferences (Ehrman, 1990; Ehrman & Oxford, 1989, 1990; Tamada, 1996), and only one study has been carried out to investigate the relationship between extroversion/introversion and learners' LLS preferences (Wakamoto, 2000). In addition, to the best knowledge of this researcher, no such research has been carried out in Iran, which is English as a foreign language (EFL) context.

Even the research that has investigated the relationship between personality type (including several personality traits) and learners' LLS choices has not yielded consistent and definite results. So, the present study aims at finding any significant relationships between one specific personality trait, namely extroversion/introversion and the type and frequency of learners' LLS choices.

In particular, the purpose of the present study is to seek answers to the following four research questions:

Primary Research Questions
1. Are there any significant relationships between extroversion/introversion and the frequency of LLSs that learners use?
2. Are there any significant relationships between extroversion/introversion and the type of LLS that learners use?

Secondary Research Questions

3. Are there any significant differences between males and females regarding the frequency of LLSs they use?

4. Are there any significant differences between males and females regarding extroversion/introversion?

Ever since the early days of its existence, the field of psychology has been concerned with two different objectives: (a) to understand the general principles of the human mind and (b) to explore the uniqueness of the human mind (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 1). The latter direction has formed an independent subdiscipline within the field that has traditionally been called differential psychology but recently referred to as "individual difference research." Pervin and John (as cited in Dörnyei, 2005) defined personality as those characteristics of the person that represent consistent patterns of feeling, thinking, and behaving. In Eysenck's (1967) theory on which the present study is based, there are three main dimensions or traits that together build an individual's affective aspect or personality type: extroversion/introversion, neurotic/stable, and psychotic/normal.

1.1. Extroversion/introversion

There have been various definitions of extroversion used by researchers. According to Burruss and Kaenzig (1999) the introvert’s main focus is "within his/her head, in the internal world of ideas and concepts," whereas, the extrovert’s primary focus is "on the external world of people and activities" (p. 1). According to Brown (2000), extroversion "is the extent to which a person has a deep-seated need to receive ego enhancement, self-esteem and a sense of wholeness from other people," but introversion "is the extent to which a person derives a sense of wholeness and fulfillment apart from a reflection of this self from other people" (p. 155).

In fact, these two terms are two extreme points of the continuum of a single personality trait. When we talk of the extent of extroversion, in another way we talk of the extent of introversion; that is, learners who show high degrees of extroversion are those who show low degrees of introversion and vice versa. In the present research, the degree of extroversion/introversion is defined by the learners’ answers to 21 yes/no questions related to this trait on the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) developed by Eysenck (1967). Examples of such questions are as follows:

1. Are you a talkative person?
2. Are you rather lively?
3. Do you enjoy meeting new people?
4. Can you usually let yourself go and enjoy yourself at a lively party?
5. Do you usually take the initiative in making new friends?
6. Can you easily get some life into a rather dull party?

1.2. Language Learning Strategies

Second language teachers could benefit from assessing their students’ LLSs, because such assessment leads to greater understanding of their students' strategy preferences and of their possible biases. Indeed, the first step concerning LLSs is to identify students' strategies through different methods and techniques such as observations, interviews, think-aloud procedures, note-taking, diaries or journals, and self-report surveys. In this study, we used two questionnaires as self-report surveys to collect written data on LLS use systematically.

Definition of LLSs. Since the 1970s, LLSs have become the focus of attention among scholars within the field of second/foreign language learning and teaching. The term learning strategies has been extensively defined by many researchers in the field. Rubin (1975) provided a very broad definition of learning strategies as "the techniques or devices which a learner may use to acquire knowledge" (p. 43). In 1978, Bialystok (as cited in Tamada, 1996) defined LLSs as "optional means for exploiting available information to improve competence in a second language" (p. 71).

Later on, more comprehensive definitions were proposed. In 1990, O'Malley and Chamot defined LLSs as "the special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn or retain new information" (p. 1). In the same year, Oxford proposed her detailed definition of LLSs as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, and more transferable to new situations" (p. 8). Learning strategies that have been studied in this research are those which appear on the SILL (version 7.0, ESL/EFL student version) devised by Oxford (1990).

Taxonomy of LLSs. Much research has been devoted to classifying learning strategies. Tarone (1980) classified strategies, depending on a learner's purpose to use them, into communication strategies and production strategies. She suggested that the key difference between them is that production strategies are not used for the primary purpose of negotiating meaning, but communication strategies are used for that purpose.

In 1981, Rubin identified two kinds of LLSs: direct and indirect. She divided the direct strategies into six types, including clarification/verification, monitoring, memorization,
guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning, and practice, and the indirect ones into two types, including creating opportunities for practice and production tricks.

Another typology of LLS which is "perhaps the most comprehensive classification of learning strategies to date" (Ellis, 1994, p. 539) has been developed by Oxford (1990). She considers the development of communicative competence as the major aim of LLSs that involve interaction among learners. In Oxford's (1990) framework of LLS, strategies are divided into two main classes, direct and indirect. The former includes "strategies that directly involve the target language and require mental processing of the language" (Oxford, 1990, p. 37), whereas, the latter "provide indirect support for language learning through focusing, planning, evaluating, and seeking opportunities" (Oxford, 1990, p.151). In this taxonomy, direct strategies consist of three groups (memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies) and indirect strategies consist of three groups (metacognitive, affective, and social strategies). In this taxonomy, sixty-two strategies are defined and classified under six major categories.

2. Review of the Related Literature
Right from its introduction into second language (L2) research in the late 1970s, the concept of LLS has been studied so extensively by different researchers that MacIntyre (1994, as cited in Dörnyei, 2005) stated that "one of the most fertile areas of research in language learning in recent years is the topic of language learning strategies" (p. 167).

In the Iranian context, Nazari (2004) investigated successful EFL learners’ LLSs. His sample consisted of 35 successful English learners. Among this group of proficient English learners, he found a specific pattern of strategy use related to different language skills. He stated that the learners applied some learning behaviors consistently more than the other behaviors, and he regarded those frequently used learning behaviors as effective learning strategies.

A few lines of research have been conducted to investigate the relationship between language learners’ personality type and their strategy choices. For instance, Ehrman and Oxford (1989) reported on an investigation into the effects of learners’ personality type on adult LLSs at the Foreign Service Institute in the USA. They concluded that the relationship between personality type and LLS use, as measured by Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), was not straightforward. One year later, Ehrman and Oxford used the MBTI to conduct another study to find a relationship between personality type and strategy choices. Seventy-
nine EFL learners at the Foreign Service Institute in the USA participated in this study. They discovered that learners of different Myers-Briggs types used different strategies. For example, they found that extroverts (E) were comfortable with social strategies and used them easily, but introverts (I) were not interested at all in using these strategies. This time, however, Ehrman and Oxford (1990) concluded that personality type had a strong influence on the way learners used LLSs.

Another study conducted to investigate the relationship between learners’ personality type and their LLS use was carried out by Ehrman (1990) who used MBTI to measure overall personality type of teachers and students at the Foreign Service Institute in the USA. In her research, "the relationships between individual traits and reported strategy use were puzzling in some cases" (Ellis, 1994, p. 542). She found, for example, that introverts were greater users of communication strategies than extroverts, whereas extroverts were found to be better at basic interpersonal communication skills than introverts. Her findings were in line with those reported by Ehrman and Oxford (1989) but in contrast to those reported by Ehrman and Oxford (1990).

Yet another study conducted to investigate the relationship between learners' personality factors and their choices of LLSs was carried out by Tamada (1996) in Japan. Tamada studied 24 third year college students who were ESL learners in England. Data on LLSs choice and use were collected using Oxford's SILL (version 7.0, 1990) and a mixture of yes/no and open-ended questions were used to ask them about their background information such as name, age, sex, their personality ("sociable" or "not sociable"), motivation, and so forth. Tamada found that Japanese learners' sex, integrative and instrumental motivation affected choice of strategies significantly, but their major, personality, and proficiency did not.

However, none of the above-mentioned studies has directly investigated the relationship between extroversion/introversion as well as gender and the frequency and type of LLS that EFL learners used. Wakamoto (2000) conducted one such study (the only one the current researcher found) on Japanese students to discover if and how LLSs differ between extroverts and introverts. To determine this, he administered two tests to the students. One was the MBTI to specify learners' personality type including extroversion, and the other one was the SILL to determine their LLS preferences. The results of the analysis indicated that of the six major strategy categories, extroverts showed a strong tendency to use the functional practice strategies and social affective strategies, whereas introverts showed no such tendency to use any of the LLS types.
Some research has been conducted to find EFL learners' pattern of LLS choices. One such study is that of Riazi and Rahimi (2005). They investigated Iranian EFL learners' perceived use of LLSs overall, the six strategy categories (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social) as well as the 50 individual strategies appearing in Oxford's (1990) SILL. Participants were 220 female and male English major university students. Results of the study showed that Iranian EFL learners were medium strategy users overall and used metacognitive strategies with a high frequency; cognitive, compensation, and affective strategies with a medium frequency; and memory and social strategies with a low frequency.

As Sunderland (1992) stated, "there may be gender (or even sex) differences in language learning styles and strategies" (p. 87). Lee and Oxford (2008) stated that women are different from men in LLS use, with women generally using more strategies than men.

Not much research into the relationship between gender and LLS choice has been carried out so far. Some researchers, however, have pointed out a significant relationship between gender and LLS choice. For example, Politzer (as cited in Tamada, 1996) studied learning strategies of 90 university students in the United States, and found that female students used social strategies significantly more than male students.

Oxford and Nyikos (1989) investigated 1200 university students and showed that female students used four of 10 strategies more often than male students did. In addition, they reported that females used formal rule-based practical strategies, conversational strategies, and input strategies more frequently.

In summary, as noted before, only a few lines of research have been conducted to investigate the relationship between language learners’ personality type and their LLS preferences, and only one study has been carried out to investigate the relationship between extroversion/introversion and learners' LLS preferences (Wakamoto, 2000). Ehrman and Oxford (1990) concluded that personality type had a strong influence on the way learners used LLSs; whereas, Ehrman and Oxford (1989) and Ehrman (1990) concluded that the relationship between personality type and LLS use was not definite and straightforward, and Tamada (1996) found that personality did not affect choice of strategies significantly. Finally, Wakamoto (2000) found that extroversion had some effect on two LLS categories (functional practice strategies and social affective strategies). Moreover, not much research into the relationship between gender and LLS choice has been carried out so far, and the results of such research are not conclusive.
Therefore, the purpose of the present study is to investigate any significant relationships between one specific personality trait, namely extroversion/introversion as well as gender and the type and frequency of learners' LLS choices in Iran, which is an EFL context.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

One hundred Iranian EFL students studying at the foreign-language departments of two universities took part in this study. These students, including males and females, were randomly selected from among junior and senior students majoring in English Translation and English Literature. The rationale for employing random sampling was that in this procedure "all members of the population have an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample" (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 1972, p. 162).

The rationale for selecting junior and senior students was the fact that they were likely to be relatively more familiar with their emotions and personality types and could probably describe them more accurately than any other lower-level university students, and that they might report their own preferences for different types of LLS better.

3.2 Instrumentation

To obtain the required data on the variables of extroversion/introversion and LLS, two questionnaires were utilized: EPQ was used to measure extroversion, and SILL to determine the type and frequency of LLSs that subjects used.

The SILL is a questionnaire developed by Oxford (1990) to determine learners' patterns of LLS use. This instrument has been used extensively to collect data on large numbers of ESL/ EFL learners (Oxford, 1990; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995). The SILL is a standardized measure with versions for students of a variety of languages, and as such can be used to collect and analyze information about large numbers of language learners. It has also been used in studies that correlate strategy use with variables such as learning styles, gender, proficiency level, and culture (Green & Oxford, 1995; Oxford & Burry-Stock, 1995).

The 50-item SILL (version 7.0, ESL/EFL student version) devised by Oxford (1990) consists of two major categories of strategies, direct and indirect ones. The direct strategies consist of three subcategories (memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies) and the indirect strategies consist of three subcategories (metacognitive, affective, and social strategies).
1. Memory strategies (nine items: 1-9): These strategies are defined by Oxford and Crookall (1989) as "techniques specifically tailored to help the learner store new information in memory and retrieve it later" (p. 404). Examples of these strategies given by Oxford (1990) are Creating mental linkages (e.g., item 5 of the SILL: "I use rhymes to remember new English words") and employing action (e.g., item 7: "I physically act out new English words").

2. Cognitive strategies (14 items: 10-23): Oxford and Crookall (1989) defined these strategies as "skills that involve manipulation and transformation of language in some direct way such as reasoning, analysis, note-taking, formal practice with structures and sounds, etc" (p. 404). Examples of these strategies given by Oxford (1990) are repeating (item 10: "I say or write new English words several times") and summarizing (item 23: "I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English").

3. Compensation strategies (six items: 24-29): According to Oxford (1990), these strategies "enable learners to use the new language for either comprehension or production despite limitations in knowledge" (p. 47). Examples of these strategies given by Oxford (1990) are guessing (item 24: "to understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses") and coining words (item 26: "I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English").

4. Metacognitive strategies (nine items: 30-38): These strategies are defined as "behaviors used for centering, arranging, planning, and evaluating one’s learning" (Oxford & Crookall, 1989, p. 44). These are strategies which involve thinking about the learning process (item 38: "I think about my progress in learning English") and planning for learning (item 34: "I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English").

5. Affective strategies (six items: 39-44): Oxford and Crookall (1989) defined these strategies as "techniques like self-reinforcement and positive self-talk, which help learners gain better control over their emotions, attitudes and motivations related to the language learning" (p. 404). These strategies include lowering your anxiety (item 39: "I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English") and encouraging yourself (item 40: "I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake") (Oxford, 1990, p.140).

6. Social strategies (six items: 45-50): According to Oxford (1990) "learning a language involves other people" (p. 144). She states that language is a form of social behavior that involves communication with others to learn it effectively. Examples of these
strategies are *asking for correction* (item 46: "I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk") and *cooperating with peers* (item 47: "I practice English with other students").

The choices were given numerical values that showed the extent of the subjects’ preferences for the items of the questionnaire, on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*never or almost never true of me*) to 5 (*always or almost always true of me*). Students’ responses on the questionnaire were coded and analyzed to identify the learners' type and frequency of LLS use. More specifically, students' responses were coded zero to four, that is, each response to the first choice (*never or almost never true of me*) was coded zero; each response to the second choice was coded one, and so forth. According to this coding system, if a student chose the first choice (*never or almost never true of me*) for all the 50 items, the sum of scores for that student would be zero, and if the fifth choice (*always or almost always true of me*) were chosen for all the 50 items, the sum of scores for that student would be 200. This leads to the potential range of 0-200. Table 2 shows the potential ranges of all six categories of LLS.

According to Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995), SILL has been extensively checked for reliability and validity in multiple ways. For instance, using Cronbach's alpha, Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) reported its internal reliability as ranging from 0.89 to 0.98 in a variety of studies. They stated that "with ESL/EFL SILL, Cronbach alphas have been 0.94 using the Chinese translation with a sample of 590 Taiwanese university EFL learners" (p. 6). Furthermore, Riazi and Rahimi (2005) reported the test-retest reliability of SILL to be 0.78.

Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) pointed out that content validity of the SILL was 0.99 through classificatory agreement between two strategy experts who matched the SILL items with strategies in the comprehensive LLS taxonomy.

A Persian translation of SILL was used in the present study. In order to determine its possible ambiguities, it was piloted with 30 EFL students who were randomly selected from two universities in Iran. After the students had answered the questionnaires, the present researcher asked them about the 50 items on the SILL, and a few problematic and ambiguous translations were identified and modified. Using Cronbach’s alpha formula, the reliability of this questionnaire was determined by the present researcher to be 0.80 in the pilot study before the main research and 0.89 in the main study.

The Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) devised by Eysenck (1967), which consists of 90 items, measures three personality factors, namely extroversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism. All items are of dichotomous yes/no type. According to the scoring key, 21
items that were related to extroversion/introversion were isolated and given to the participants. Examples of such questions are as follows:

1. Do you tend to keep in the background on social occasions?
2. Do you like mixing with people?
3. Do you like plenty of bustle and excitement around you?
4. Are you mostly quiet when you are with other people?
5. Do other people think of you as being very lively?
6. Can you get a party going?

The cut-off point for this questionnaire is 11. Those who get 11 and above on this scale are considered extroverts and those whose scores are below 11 are considered introverts. The maximum extroversion score on this scale is 21 and the minimum is zero.

This questionnaire is a standard questionnaire with high validity and reliability. Eysenck and Eysenck (1975, as cited in Pazouki, 2005) investigated the reliability of the questionnaire with a sample of 257 subjects. The test-retest reliability of the questionnaire for extroversion was 0.89. If we consider the consistency reliability (or alpha coefficient), the reliability is satisfactory, being 0.84 for females and 0.85 for males (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1975, as cited in Pazouki, 2005). Moreover, Nithya and Sheela (2005) reported the test-retest reliability of this questionnaire as ranging from 0.89 to 0.94.

This questionnaire was piloted with 30 EFL students who were randomly selected from two universities in Iran, and its reliability was found to be 0.81 using Cronbach’s alpha. Its reliability was calculated to be 0.85 in the main study.

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

The present study was carried out during class time. Because the participants in this study were English Translation and Literature students, none of them was familiar with such notions as LLS and extroversion, which are only taught to English Language Teaching (ELT) students. Due to these reasons, the researcher spent about five to 10 minutes explaining those concepts before distributing the questionnaires. The researcher also spoke to the students about the purpose of this study.

To conduct this study, EPQ and SILL were distributed among the participants simultaneously; then the students were given the necessary instructions as how to answer each questionnaire. In order to avoid the possible negative effect of either of the questionnaires on the other, they were told that they could choose to answer either of them first. The two questionnaires were stapled together (half of the questionnaires were stapled in
different order from the other half) and given to the students as one set so that the researcher could be able to match the scores later.

It is worth noting that the researcher did not ask the students to write their names on either of the questionnaires. With regard to both questionnaires, the subjects were assured that the results of the study would be used only for investigation purposes, and that there would be no right or wrong answers. Moreover, the subjects’ participation was voluntary and all of them had the right to leave the study.

3.4. Data Analysis Procedures

After collecting the necessary raw data from EPQ and SILL, descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to find answers to the four research questions. With regard to the first two research questions, Spearman correlation analysis was utilized to seek any meaningful relations between the variables of extroversion/introversion and the frequency and type of LLSs learners used. The rationale behind applying Spearman correlation analysis was that the collected data in the present study did not meet the normal distribution assumption, and that the data were ranked on an ordinal scale. Concerning the last two research questions, independent sample \( t \)-test was used to find any significant differences between males and females regarding the frequency of LLS and extroversion.

3.5. Design of the Study

As mentioned earlier, the present research study was carried out quantitatively as the students' responses to both EPQ and SILL were coded (they were given numerical values), and then were analyzed statistically. This research is fundamental as its findings might add new significant information to the available theoretical body of knowledge related to the field of this study, namely learner variables. The present study was carried out cross-sectionally, that is, at a specific period of time at two universities in Iran.

The method of this research was analytical survey investigating and analyzing possible correlations between two specific variables, namely extroversion/introversion and learners' LLS preferences. The present researcher did not have any "control over the selection and manipulation" of the variables and "what has already happened" to the students before participating in the study (Hatch & Farhady, 1981, p. 26). In addition, the present researcher aimed only at finding any possible relationships between the independent (extroversion/introversion), moderator (gender), and dependent (learners' LLS preferences) variables. Therefore, the design of this study is ex post facto.
4. Results and discussion
4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Gender. The analysis of the collected data showed that 21 out of 100 students were male and 79 were female.

Learners’ language learning strategies. As 100 students answered 50 items on the SILL, there were 5000 responses in total. The third choice (somewhat true of me) was selected the most frequently ($f = 1274$). In other words, 25% of the students’ responses fell within a medium strategy use level. In addition, about 40% of the students’ responses, usually true of me and always or almost always true of me, were above the medium level, whereas about 35% of the students’ responses were below the medium level, that is never or almost never true of me and usually not true of me (see Table 1).

The results of the descriptive statistics showed that the mean strategy use by the participants was $2.08$ ($SD = 0.49$), indicating that they were medium strategy users overall. This finding of the study with respect to the overall mean of strategy use is in line with the results obtained in other EFL contexts including ‘Noguchi (1991) in Japan, Yang (1994) in Taiwan, Oh (1992) and Park (1997) in Korea, and Wharton (2000) in Singapore which all found that the EFL learners used strategies at a medium level’ (Riazi & Rahimi, 2005, p. 112).

To compare the frequency of different types of LLS use, and thus to determine the most and least preferred LLS types, first, the mean of scores for each sub-construct of LLS has been taken for each student, and then the average of these means across 100 participants was computed for each LLS category. The results of these calculations showed that metacognitive strategies were the most commonly used ($M = 2.63$), which is then followed by cognitive strategies ($M = 2.15$), social strategies ($M = 2.10$), compensation strategies ($M = 2.06$), affective strategies ($M = 1.73$), and lastly memory strategies ($M = 1.64$). Therefore, the most preferred strategy category was metacognitive strategies ($M = 2.63$), whereas the least preferred ones were memory strategies ($M = 1.64$) and affective strategies ($M = 1.73$). According to the coding system used in the present study, a score of 2 (somewhat true of me) indicates the medium level of strategy use. The mean scores for cognitive strategies ($M = 2.15$), social strategies ($M = 2.10$), and compensation strategies ($M = 2.06$) are above 2 indicating that Iranian students are medium users of these three LLS types. In contrast, the mean scores for memory strategies ($M = 1.64$) and affective strategies ($M = 1.73$) are below 2 implying that Iranian students are low users of these two LLS categories.
In Riazi and Rahimi’s (2005) study, metacognitive category was reported to be used "at a high frequency as the most frequently used strategy category," (p. 122) which is consistent with the findings of the present study. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics concerning the students' LLS preferences.

The reason why metacognitive strategies were the most frequently used ones by the Iranian EFL learners might be the fact that "Iran is an EFL context and language learners do not have much exposure to the target language to pick it up unconsciously. In fact, due to the lack of enough exposure to the target language, they hardly have any chance to unconsciously pick up the target language" (Riazi & Rahimi, 2005, p. 113). They can compensate for this deficiency through conscious attention to language learning process. Furthermore, as Riazi and Rahimi (2005) noted in most English classes, schools, universities, or even language institutes, "a lot of emphasis is put on explaining about the language and making the learners conscious of the process of learning even in cases where the communicative approach is adopted" (p. 114).

According to Riazi and Rahimi (2005), the difference between traditional rote memorization strategies that Asian learners were reported to use in the past and the specific memory techniques reported in SILL might be the main cause of the low frequency of using memory strategies. In addition, as mentioned above, two strategy categories, that is affective and memory strategies were not reported by the subjects to be used as frequently as others were. This might be owing to such factors as lack of enough exposure to English, and the cultural background of Iranian learners.

The standard deviations (SDs) of the six groups of LLS, as shown in Table 2, indicated that the dispersion of students’ scores around the means of each LLS category increased as moving from memory strategies (items: 1-9) with the lowest standard deviation of 0.53 to social strategies (items: 45-50) with the highest standard deviation of 0.85. Therefore, as "a smaller standard deviation indicates that the group is more homogeneous in terms of a particular behavior," (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 260) it can be concluded that the participants were most homogeneous regarding the use of memory strategies and least homogeneous concerning the use of social strategies.

**Extroversion/Introversion.** To describe the variable of extroversion/introversion, the obtained scores were divided into two classes, extroversion and introversion. Overall, most of the students were extroverted (see Table 3).
4.2. Analysis of the Relationship between Extroversion/Introversion and Learners’ Frequency of LLS

In this study, an alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests. The analysis of the collected data showed that there was a significant relationship between extroversion/introversion and the students’ frequency of LLS use, \( r_s(98) = 0.213, p = .03 \).

This implies that in the process of language learning extroverted students use LLSs more frequently than the introverted students do, and that extroversion, among other factors, has had some kind of effect on the students’ frequency of LLS use.

4.3. Analysis of the Relationship between Extroversion/Introversion and Learners’ Type of LLS

**Analysis 1.** There was no significant relationship between extroversion/introversion and the students' memory strategies, \( r_s(98) = .034, p = .74 \).

**Analysis 2.** There was a significant relationship between extroversion/introversion and the students' cognitive strategies, \( r_s(98) = .240, p = .02 \).

**Analysis 3.** There was no significant relationship between extroversion/introversion and the students' compensation strategies, \( r_s(98) = .076, p = .45 \).

**Analysis 4.** There was a significant relationship between extroversion/introversion and the students' metacognitive strategies, \( r_s(98) = .292, p = .003 \).

**Analysis 5.** There was no significant relationship between extroversion/introversion and the students' affective strategies, \( r_s(98) = .081, p = .42 \).

**Analysis 6.** There was a significant relationship between extroversion/introversion and the students' social strategies, \( r_s(98) = .201, p = .04 \). Table 4 presents Spearman correlation coefficients between extroversion/introversion and six strategy types.

The above analyses revealed that there was a significant relationship between extroversion/introversion and three types of LLS that students used: the more extroverted the students, the higher their scores on cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies. This finding implies that more extroverted students use the above-mentioned types of strategies more than the other types (memory, affective, and compensation).

As mentioned before, Ehrman and Oxford (1990) used MBTI to study 79 EFL learners’ LLSs at the Foreign Service Institute. They also found that extroverts were comfortable with social strategies, but introverts were not interested at all in using these strategies.

Wakamoto (2000) also reported that the results of his study indicated that of the six major strategy categories, extroverts showed a strong tendency to use the functional practice
strategies and social affective strategies, whereas introverts showed no such tendency to use any of the LLS types.

4.4. Analysis of the Difference between Males and Females Regarding the Frequency of LLS

As the sample sizes for the two groups of males and females were not comparable (i.e., 79 females and only 21 males), equality of variances between the two groups was checked. Levene’s Test value was 0.082, \( p = .77 \). As the obtained \( p \) value was above the significance level of \( \alpha = .05 \), it can be concluded that variances between the two groups of males and females were not significantly different.

An independent sample \( t \)-test was applied to compare the means of LLS use in two groups of males and females. There was no significant difference between the two groups regarding their LLS use, \( t(98) = 0.96, p = .34 \) (see Table 5). This finding is consistent with the results reported by Vandergrift (as cited in Chamot, 2004), whereas it is in contrast with the study carried out by Wharton (as cited in Chamot, 2004) who found that males used more strategies than females.

4.5. Analysis of the Difference between Males and Females Regarding Extroversion/Introversion

As mentioned before, the sample sizes for the two groups of males and females were not equal, thus equality of variances between the two groups was checked. Levene’s Test value was 2.48, \( p = .12 \). As the obtained \( p \) value was above the significance level of \( \alpha = .05 \), it can be concluded that variances between the two groups of males and females were not significantly different.

An independent sample \( t \)-test was applied to compare the means of extroversion/introversion in the two groups of males and females. There was a significant difference between the two groups regarding their extroversion, \( t(98) = 2.96, p = .004 \) (see Table 6). This finding indicated that females were more extroverted than males.

5. Conclusion

The findings of this study revealed the following: First, there was a significant relationship between extroversion/introversion and the frequency of students’ LLS use; that is, the more extroverted the students, the higher their scores of LLS. Second, there was a significant relationship between extroversion/introversion and the type of LLSs that the students used: the more extroverted the students, the higher their scores of cognitive, metacognitive, and
social strategies. Third, there were no significant differences between males and females regarding the frequency of their LLS use. Finally, there were significant differences between males and females regarding their extroversion/introversion; that is, females were more extroverted than males.

5.1. Implications for Teaching

These conclusions have some implications. First, English language teachers need to become more aware of different personality traits such as extroversion/introversion and learning strategies through appropriate teacher training courses. Then, teachers can help their students by designing instruction that meets the needs of individuals with different personality types and by teaching students how to improve their learning strategies accordingly.

For instance, teachers might try to determine the personality type of their students with regard to extroversion/introversion before starting their language classes, so that they can categorize their students according to extroversion/introversion and teach them in different classes. To this end, they can use different methods such as questionnaires, interviews, or observations. By so doing, teachers can teach their students more efficiently as they can consider the typical personality type of the students in each class. It should be noted, however, that as all students need to learn to use all strategies, teachers should teach the six LLS types to their students regardless of being extroverted or introverted. On the other hand, teachers should put more emphasis on those LLS types that each class uses less often. More introverted students can be trained to use cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies, whereas more extroverted students can be taught to utilize memory, affective, and compensation strategies more frequently. Teachers might finally decide to adopt appropriate teaching methods or, if not possible due to different needs of students, make use of a wide variety of instructional tasks in the class in order to meet the needs of learners with varying degrees of extroversion and different genders.

Secondly, English language teachers could (a) familiarize their students with such concepts as individual differences, personality traits including extroversion, and learning strategies; (b) raise their awareness about what their personality type is (whether they are more or less extroverted); and (c) help them choose and utilize appropriate LLSs accordingly.

Lastly, according to the findings of this study, (a) females were more extroverted than males and more extroverted students used learning strategies more frequently, and (b) more extroverted students used cognitive, metacognitive, and social strategies more than the other types, namely memory, affective, and compensation strategies. So, females, who were more extroverted than males, used these three types of LLS more than the other ones. Therefore,
teachers should attempt to teach their male students to use different types of LLS more often, and their female students, who use memory, affective, and compensation strategies less frequently than the other types, to use these three types of LLS more frequently.

5.2. Suggestions for Further Research
As mentioned earlier, in Eysenck's (1967) theory, there are three main dimensions that together build an individual's personality type: extroversion/introversion, neurotic/stable, and psychotic/normal. It is recommended that further research be undertaken to investigate possible relationships between the other two dimensions (neurotic/stable and psychotic/normal) and the frequency and type of LLS that EFL learners use. Moreover, there is a need for more comprehensive research on a wide range of variables affecting LLSs employed by Iranian EFL learners such as cultural background, beliefs, learning style, motivation, and attitude.

References


Yang, N-D. (1994). An investigation of Taiwanese college students’ use of English learning strategies. Research report, National Taiwan University, Taiwan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1 Frequency Distribution of the Students’ LLS Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SILL choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Never or almost never true of me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Usually not true of me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Somewhat true of me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Usually true of me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Always or almost always true of me</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<table>
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<th>Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of the Students’ LLS Preferences</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LLS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning strategies (50 items)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memory (9 items)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cognitive (14 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation (6 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive (9 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective (6 items)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social (6 items)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Table 3 Frequency Distribution and Descriptive Statistics of the Students’ Extroversion/Introversion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality trait</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Potential range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introversion</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extroversion</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>4.84</td>
<td>0-21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
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</table>

### Table 4 Spearman Correlation Coefficients Between Extroversion/Introversion and Strategy Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy types</th>
<th>rs</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Significant relationship</th>
<th>Type of relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>.034</td>
<td>.74*</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>.240</td>
<td>.02*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.45*</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>.292</td>
<td>.003*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.42*</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>.201</td>
<td>.04*</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

### Table 5 T-test Statistics to Compare the Means of LLS Use Between Males and Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language learning strategies</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>0.34*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

### Table 6 T-test Statistics to Compare the Means of Extroversion/Introversion Between Males and Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personality trait of extroversion/introversion</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.38</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>13.77</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>.004*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
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Title

The Fundamental Features of EFL/ESL Textbooks’ Blurb

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Abstract

Blurbs are informative devices extremely useful for pre-use textbook evaluation and give an immediate gist of the textbooks features and content. They provide both the learners and teachers with the required information on a series and its components. Unfortunately there is a lack of an extensive literature regarding the blurbs and their specific structural characteristics. This descriptive study aims at filling the gap by providing a detailed explanation of the composing parts of a blurb. To achieve this objective, eight series were subtly compared and it is contended that there exist an intriguing general blurb’s format containing several obligatory and optional parts.

Keywords: EFL/ESL, textbooks, series, Blurb, CEFR, ISBN, bar code

1. Introduction

Walking through a bookshop, you will be faced with a plethora of EFL/ESL series and textbooks. The front cover and its design would be amongst the first things you would be attracted to, the moment you pick up a textbook, unless you are looking for a specific series. Turning over the leaves of the book, you could touch the pages while having a glance at the
graphical and non-graphical representations, till you reach the back cover. A little would be achieved through eye measurement. Here, the usually ignored back cover, say blurb, will provide you with the required information as regards textbook selection. A prerequisite of making decision on a textbook is having the vital information regarding its author(s), key features and components which accompany you through the learning process.

This study aims at investigating the structure and advantages of EFL/ESL textbook’s blurb. To achieve this goal, eight different series of textbooks are considered to provide a handful of information.

2. Method

In this descriptive study eight EFL/ESL series including: Interchange (third edition), Top Notch, Four Corners, Touchstone, American Headway, English Result, Passages, ILI series (Prepared by Iran Language Institute intended for Iranian EFL learners) and American File, are selected among the available options. A detailed analysis of the blurs, revealed their varying format with all their obligatory and optional containments. A comparison of the cited blurs led us to design a general pattern of blurb writing for EFL/ESL series. The following figure illustrates a general design of blurb and all its components.

![Blurb's design](image)

**Figure 1: Blurb’s design**

2.1. Title

The first and the foremost important feature of a series or textbook is its title. It is supposed to be unforgettable, expressive and in line with the addressed objectives of the textbook. In
most cases, the EFL series’ titles are composed of either one or two words. As an obligatory component it is always placed at the upper side of the cover, in fact, it could be considered as the first part of the blurb’s structure. In the cases where the title is made of a single word it would be printed in bold letters of different fonts and if the textbook or series is an edited version, the edition number, in normal letters, will come either next to or below the main title.

In the cases where the title is composed of two or more words, it would be printed in two different modes. In the first mode, the words are all printed in bold letters either with or without space. Such as TOUCHSTONE, Top Notch, on the other hand, the more influential words could be printed in bold font along with others in normal letters e.g. English Result.

2.2. Catchphrase
An optional part of the textbook’s blurb which usually comes immediately following the title is referred to as catchphrase or slogan. Catchphrases are short, influencing phrases which are easy to remember and usually used in advertisements. In the case of EFL textbooks the aim is to motivate the learners and ensure them of their selection. A catchphrase is printed below the title to emphasize the capability of the textbook and/or represent its main objective in brief. Among the aforementioned series four of them contained a catchphrase which is a considerable number. Read the following examples:

American Headway: THE WORLD’S MOST TRUSTED ENGLISH COURSE
English Result: Takes students from how to to can do in every lesson.

American Headway's catchphrase is an example of a type which has a mere motivating function though in this case noting is mentioned about the course objective. It ensured the learners of their selection and suggests the series as the world’s most trusted among the available options. English result on the other hand has taken advantage of an intriguing catchphrase which claims to shift from language usage to language use and produce communicative learners ready for native-like interaction. Along with the title, playing the role of the subject this predicator could form a complete sentence i.e. English Result takes students from how to to can do in every lesson. Not to say it is merely attractive to motivate the learners it will provide them with the main objectives of the course. If the textbook contains a slogan it would be composed of a single phrase. In some cases the whole phrase is
printed in capital letters and smaller fonts comparing to the title, still in others only the first letter of the phrase is printed in capital.

2.3. Series Introduction

Series introduction is an effective component of blurbs, the review of which will provide the learners with the required information regarding the course and its leading objectives. The following points are usually included in the series introduction:

1. **Course levels**, e.g. Top Notch is a dynamic 6-level course.

2. **Intended learners**, e.g. Interchange third edition is the world’s most successful English series for adults and young adults learners.

3. **Approaches and methodologies**, e.g. a rock-solid learner-centered approach.

4. **Aims and objectives**, e.g. international communication, in some cases in addition to the general or main course objectives the units’ objective is also included, e.g. each unit includes up-to-date content and more opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills.

5. **Edition**, if the textbook is an edited version it would definitely mentioned in introduction, e.g. Interchange third edition is a fully revised edition of new Interchange.

Series introduction is an obligatory component of blurb which usually comes after the title and does not exceed one paragraph. It is usually printed following the normal sentence writing rules. Together with the key features, introduction will makes the learners able to conduct an effective pre-use textbook evaluation.

2.4. Course level introduction

Another optional part included in some textbook’s blurbs is devoted to the introduction of the specific course of the series besides the general series introduction. For this reason we have included two sections for introduction, one which is present in all the series introductions and the other which gives specific information on the present textbook is referred to as course level introduction. If we look at Intro Interchange’s blurb, for instance, we could find a part started with a bold phrase, **Interchange Third Edition Intro**, immediately following the series introduction which aims at providing specific information regarding the mentioned course in a way that it is presented as being designed for beginners and for learners reading a thorough review of the basic grammar, function, and vocabulary.

2.5. Key Features

An indispensible part observed in almost all the English series blurb is referred to as key features. In this part all the pivotal features of the textbook are presented in short phrases following each other to provide us with the gist of textbook’s content. In some textbooks the
key feature is divided into two separate parts, say, key student’s book features and key workbook features which is optional. Several features are mentioned in this part; however, the following are the most frequent ones:

- **Syllabus**, e.g. a proven multi skills syllabus
- **Topics**, e.g. contemporary real world topics
- **Content Sections**, e.g. a new self-study listening section
- **Type of Activities**, e.g. task based listening activities
- **Components**, e.g. self-study CD-ROM with video provides valuable opportunities for interactive practice and self-testing
- **Lesson Features**, e.g. grammar in communicative context
- **Aims**, e.g. the focus of accuracy and fluency

If the series is revised, the new feature added to the textbook could be found in the short phrases of the key features. The workbook key features is also of practical use in proposing a brief explanation of the workbook content and the type of exercises and activities predicted for the learners further language practice.

2.6. Components

The student’s books are not the only things included in EFL/ESL series but they are accompanied by other supplementary materials. A perfect partner to the student’s book is the workbook which is either tightly linked to the student’s book or available in split edition. Workbook contains exercises and provides the learners with additional practice and reinforcement of language skills. In almost all the blurbs the components accompanying the textbook are introduced. Except for the aforementioned workbook, the followings are the supplementary materials more or less included in the complete series package with each contributing to specific aspect of learning process:

1. **Class audio program and take home CD-ROM**: They include a variety of exciting interactive activities. In the contexts such as Iranian EFL learning situation where on the one hand, language learning is restricted to the limited hours of classroom instruction and on the other hand, the teachers are not natives, they could serve as a model for pronunciation and speaking practice. They are beneficial for self-study and to use in class.

2. **Teacher’s edition**: It could serve as a lesson planner. It provides the novice teachers with additional helps and several clues as how to conduct the classroom and useful suggestion for how to teach each section.
3. **Assessment package**: It usually includes photocopiable unit achievement test which assess listening, vocabulary, grammar, reading and writing, as well as a review test and additional cumulative assessment. In some cases the package is even equipped with a complete placement test.

4. **Video programs**: They include entertaining videos that reintroduces language with English speakers from around the world. Video programs are usually packaged with activities worksheet and a booklet containing video script and teaching suggestions.

   In the blurb’s design, components are usually placed below the key features and in some cases they are printed in a separate box with a different color to highlight the materials accompanied the textbook. Look at the following figure:

   ![Components](image)

   **Figure3**: taken from Top Notch’s blurb

   Among the selected series Top Notch has mentioned the components in a distinguishing way. First of all they are mentioned under the title, components. In addition to citing the package component extra information regarding some of them is provided and connected with an arrow to some parts.

   **2.7. The Author(s)**

   An optional part which is usually included in the blurb’s design is the author(s) citation. In this part the author is introduced or at least his or her name is mentioned. Usually if the series is composed by a single author, there would be a full introduced and the information is presented regarding his academic background and teaching experience. In cases where there are more than one author, either they are introduced by their full names or their names followed by a brief information, still in few cases their pictures are also included. There are cases where the authors are only introduced in the front cover and the textbook itself instead of blurb, especially when the series is co-authored by the several members of an institute. The place where the author introduction is embebbed in the blurb varies in different series. Jack
C. Richards is introduced in Interchange series below the component and under the title, the author; however, in Top Notch series the authors’ full names, Joan Saslow and Allen Ascher, is cited in the same line below the main title.

2.8. Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)

The lowest part of the blurb is devoted to one optional and three obligatory components. The optional part is referred to as CEFR. It is in fact a guideline to describe achievement of the learners of foreign languages across Europe and increasingly other countries, e.g. Colombia. Its main aim is to provide a method of learning, teaching and assessing which applies in all languages in Europe. CEFR divides learners into three broad divisions which could be divided into six levels:

- **A** basic user: A1, A2
- **B** Independent user: B1, B2
- **C** Proficient user: C1, C2

This component is usually absent in the textbook’s blurb but if it is included, it shows all the levels of the course and the level which would be passed by using the present textbook would be highlighted.

![Common European Framework of Reference](image)

**Figure 4: Four Corners 4’ CEFR**

This CEFR is present in all the series’ textbooks to show all the course levels and the level related to the present textbook is highlighted i.e. the present textbook is Four Corners 4 and the related level is B1+.

2.9. Companion website

Among the lower components of the blurb, website is of utmost significance. It provides numerous additional resources for students and teachers. This no-cost, high benefit feature includes opportunities for further practice of language and content.

2.10. Publisher

Different textbooks are published by different publishers. The most well known publishers of EFL/ESL series are **Oxford university press**, **Cambridge university press** and **Longman**.
The publisher’s logo is printed in almost all the series’ blurbs. In the case of Cambridge university press the logo, website, ISBN and bar code are all included in one box.

![Cambridge University Press Logo and ISBN and Bar Code](image)

**Figure 5: Four Corners’ publisher, ISBN, barcode, website**

2.11. International Standard Book Number (ISBN) and Bar Code

ISBN is an obligatory part of the blurb which could be defined as a unique numeric commercial book identifier based upon the 9-digit standard book numbering (SBN) code created by Gordon Foster. It is accompanied by an international article number (EAN) bar code which are used as the product identification numbers. An EAN-13 bar code is a thirteen digit bar coding standard which is a superset of the original twelve digits Universal Product Code (UPC) system developed in the United States. They are used worldwide for marking products often sold at retail point of sale.

![ISBN, Bar Code](image)

**Figure 6: ISBN, bar code**

All the components mentioned above are more or less found in series blurbs and the only difference is in the place they are printed, in other words the varied format of the blurbs is due to the fact that they place different components in different parts of the cover. But some blurbs include features which completely distinguish their format from the normal blurb format. In some blurbs for instance the image of all the textbooks included in the series are printed on one side of the blurb and the one in hand is highlighted in some way or identified based on the CEFR.
On the other hand some textbook blurbs may introduce textbook partners such as storybooks or dictionaries which could serve as a companion for the learners. Another point which must be posed is related to cover design. If the cover including the front cover and blurb is designed by a specific company, its name would be printed in small fonts at the lowest part of the blurb. Interchange cover, for instance, is designed by Adventure house, NYC.

3. Conclusion
As it was mentioned this paper aimed at providing a detailed illustration of the structure of an EFL/ESL textbook’s blurbs intended for adults and young adults. The study was conducted on eight different EFL/ESL series and their blurbs were investigated in advance. Due to the fact that textbook’s blurbs are of varying formats, it was a challenging task, say, seemed impossible to derive a general structure from amongst the available series; however, throughout the study try has been made to investigate the formats of the blurbs. To achieve this goal the series blurbs were compared and their obligatory and optional parts were overemphasized. Finally it is concluded that though varied in format, there exist a general structure based on which blurbs are prepared.
References


Title

The Representation of a Presidential Speech: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract

One of the main functions of critical discourse analysis (CDA) is to chain linguistic categories to ideological functions. The way social actors are ideologically and grammatically represented, and the interaction between ideology and discourse are taken into account in the realm of critical discourse analysis. The present study set out to critically analyze Palestinian and Israelis representation in George W. Bush's political discourse. The present study employed the analytical framework developed by Van Leeuwen (1996) in order to
investigate the passive and active representations of these two communities. Besides the analytical framework, the study also benefited from the political discourse analysis (PDA) meticulously developed by Van Dijk (1998). The quantitative analysis of data indicated that there were significant differences between Israeli and Palestinian activation and beneficialisation in terms of distribution. Ideologically speaking, the results also suggested that the discourse reflected the Palestinians as harshly invading victimizers and incapable (of setting up their state) actors, whereas the same discourse represented Israeli actors as the hopeless victimized and as important allies for the Palestinians, who help them improve the political and economical stability of their state.

Keywords: Discourse analysis, Critical discourse analysis (CDA), Role allocation, Social actor representation

1. Introduction

1.1. Discourse Analysis
Discourse refers to human relationship through the spoken and written channels, gestures, signs, pictures, films, or music. According to Brown and Yule (1983), every discourse fragment involves a topic or theme which unifies the dynamic process of discourse. In other words, discourse is defined as "language in use" which fulfills "human affairs". For some other discourse experts like Van Leeuwen (2008), the conception of discourse is the "recontextualized social practice" controlled by some specific social conventions. Therefore, discourse fragments in different channels with specific functions build a maze for discourse analysts to explore for the various aspects of discourse. This general conceptualization of discourse analysis has come to be known as the main stream discourse analysis among discourse analysts. The other intriguing branch of discourse analysis is a critical one which will be more elaborated in the following paragraph.

1.2. Critical Discourse Analysis
With the advent of critical discourse analysis, a variety of sciences such as anthropology, philosophy, and sociology took chance to widen the realm of their considerations. In fact, critical discourse analysis (CDA) makes a bridge between language use and these sciences. Specifically speaking, critical discourse analysis is what Renkema (2004, p. 283) delineated as a notion which "pays attention to power relations and ideology, which are precipitated in discourse, and force the reader or listener to perceive reality in a specific, biased way." Ideology is what critical discourse analysts try to dig out from roughly syntactical part of
discourses. Fairclough (1995, p. 73) regards language as "a material form of ideology." For some other scholars (Althusser, 1971; Pecheux, 1982), ideology is not the product of mind, rather a physically tangible part of language. Regarding the notion of ideology in critical discourse analysis, Fairclough (1992, p.87) describes it as “significations/ constructions of reality which are built into various dimensions of the forms/ meanings of discursive practices and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination.”

Therefore, language is pointed as a cultivated field for planting ideology which is sometimes abused by power exertion. Political speeches, as the right exemplifications of language abuse, are used to accomplish the intended gains. As Fairclough (1989, p. 52) artistically portraits the political speeches, political figures exploit “the power to disguise power.” The importance as well as multi-functionality of political discourse in politicians’ speech has received a great deal of attention from CDA analysts (Fairclough, 2000; Charteris-Black, 2005; Collins, 2002; Elshtain, 2003; Bhatia, 2009).

According to Van Dijk (1998), critical discourse analysis displays how the abuse of social power and inequality are enacted in the political or social environments. In other words, critical discourse analysis is ingratiating itself more to the heart of the researchers of these sciences than linguists. The reason ratifying such a claim is that linguists are more concerned with the way language works while critical discourse analysts take care of the way language is used in the social contexts.

Regarding critical discourse analysis, some scholars like Van Dijk (1997) excoriated the use of critical discourse analysis and replaced it with critical discourse studies (CDS). Moreover, there are some analysts who are advocating critical discourse analysis. Accordingly, Bloor and Bloor (2007) proposed three crucial objectives of critical discourse analysis as follows:

1. to analyze discourse practices that reflect or construct social problems
2. to investigate how ideologies can become frozen in language and find ways to break the ice
3. to increase awareness of how to apply these objectives to specific cases of injustice, prejudice, and misuse of power.

These scholars also went a long way to evoke some theoretical objectives of critical discourse analysis. These objectives are represented below:

1. to demonstrate the significance of language in the social relations of power
2. to investigate how meaning is created in context
3. to investigate the role of speaker/writers’ purpose and authorial stance in the construction of discourse

2. Literature Review

The notion of critical discourse analysis has become orthodoxy receiving great deal of contribution from scholars: racial literacy (Rogers and Mosley, 2008; Case and Hemmings, 2005; Trainor, 2005), function of speech (Biria and Mohammadi, 2012; Capone, 2010; Suleiman and O’Connell, 2008), media discourse (Lihua, 2012; Buck and Liu, 2010; Jiang, 2010), and critical thinking (Hashemi and Ghanizadeh, 2012; Cots, 2006; Rogers et al., 2005). Adampa (1999) investigated the representations and actions of female victims and male accomplices in the physical onslaughts. Adampa utilized Van Leeuwen’s frameworks for the representations of social actors and their actions and Halliday’s transitivity model. The investigation was carried out through the articles of three newspapers: The Times, The Sun, and The Daily Mail. The papers elucidated that male maltreaters were absent from the texts and the victimization was represented as the individual event rather than as a means of control employed by male actors to dominate females. The passive sentences and structures would help obscure the agents of assaults (male subjects).

Huang (2008) also adopted Van Leeuwen's (1996) critical discourse analysis framework to show how the social actors were represented in the New Year’s editorials (1949-2006) in People’s Daily. The investigation intended to describe social relations across time in the People’s Republic of China. The results of the study suggested that Chinese society was extremely proceeding from "antagonism to harmony." In other words, due to the influence of international community, Chinese political and social contexts revealed a penchant for democratization.

Reyes-Rodriguez (2008) made an analysis of the U.S. presidents' speeches to perceive their intentions through their lexical choices. These speeches were mostly oriented toward war against Afghanistan and Iraq. The results of the analysis showed that the presidents' use of passivation of the several facets in discourse served to decrease "the gap between the positions of different social actors." Exploiting the device of passivation might help legitimize the intention of initiating war against Iraq and Afghanistan.

The way social actors are represented is also influenced by means of the kind of strategy language users utilize in their speeches. Hence, the type of strategy to a great degree can specify the way social actors are represented. Investigating the strategies language users
employ to represent social actors, Flowerdew, Li, and Tran (2002) carried out a study in the realm of racism. The discourse strategies involved in the Hong Kong newspapers articles dealing with immigrants' arrival were considered. They developed a framework for discriminatory discourse strategies for analyzing racism regarding the representation of social actors.

3. Analytical Framework

In order to provide the ideological significance of national representation in political discourse, this study adopted a comprehensive viable framework by Van Leeuwen (1996). The analytical framework has been exploited in a variety of studies. Farrelly (2009) used that to analyze democracy interpretation in the New Labour's general election manifestoes in the UK. Van Leeuwen is not the only framework regarding role allocation. Reisigl and Wodak (2001) also have developed a consistent framework for social actors' representation. The present study was not planned to use the whole framework. Instead, it concentrated on the two following notions in Van Leeuwen's model: activation and passivation. To be more specific, this investigation was supposed to portray the passive and active roles of national actors in the political discourse of the American president George W. Bush.

These two concepts are the main branches of the framework which are usually known as "role allocation" in the model. Activation takes place when social actors possess an energetic and vigorous role in an activity. Conversely the process through which social actors undergo an activity is reputed as passivation in critical discourse analysis. Activation can be actualized by grammatical participant roles (agent), prepositional circumstance like "by and from", premodification and postmodification, and possessivivation. Passivation is divided into two main branches: subjected and beneficialised. On the one hand, subjected social actors often emerged as the objects of clauses in discourse fragments. On the other hand, beneficialised social actors commonly benefit from the activity.

4. Purpose of the study and research question

The present study intended to deal with the representation of social actors based on the framework elaborated above. The central objective of the study was to reveal exact Palestinian and Israeli representations in the political discourse of the American president, George W. Bush. The study underwent a contrastive analysis (CA) to inspect the bias in representing these two communities in the political discourse. The research question to which
the paper was attempting to provide a response was as follows: how were Palestinian and Israeli actors represented in George W. Bush's political discourse?

The present study had a practical significance whereby analysts and students exposed to American political discourses, specifically George W. Bush's, could easily find out the ideological significance of representations of Palestinian and Israeli actors. This study could pave the way for political analysts as well as discourse specialists to inspect the political bias in the American political speeches. It was also feasible to shed light on the intricate relationship between the power and the nation representation in political discourses. In fact, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is capable of depicting the abuse of nation actors in the political texts.

5. Methodology

The study used George W. Bush's speech about Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The speech was presented on June 24, 2002. It is available on the internet website http://www.mideastweb.org. In this speech the president called for establishment of a Palestinian state following a democratic reform. It was one of the controversial and historic speeches delivered by President George W. Bush regarding the conflict between Palestinian and Israeli nations.

5.1. Procedure of Data Collection and Analysis

Based on the model designed by Van Leeuwen, the representations of two nations were collected in the political discourses of the president. The study also required a unit of measurement in order to make sure the consistency of the study. T-unit is what makes such an aim achievable. Renkema (2004) defines T-unit as a "terminable unit." That is, T-unit can be regarded as "a main or independent clause with all its modifiers and subordinate clauses." For example, the following sentences consist of two T-units: *Today, the Palestinian people lack effective courts of law and have no means to defend and vindicate their rights.* The sentence *Today, the Palestinian people lack effective courts of law* is one T-unit and the other part *and have no means to defend and vindicate their rights* is the other T-unit. The passivation and activation of Palestinian and Israeli actors would be taken into account. Then, the frequency of their occurrences was used to display a quantitative analysis of the representations. After that, the qualitative discussion would show the ideological intention (prejudice) behind the way these two communities were represented. To accomplish such an aim, the president Bush's speech was analyzed according to political discourse analysis.
(PDA), elaborated comprehensively by Van Dijk (1998), as a sub-branch of critical discourse analysis (CDA). It should be pointed out that, as Van Dijk (1998) puts it, critical discourse analysis (CDA) itself is not a "unitary" framework for analyzing discourse fragments. Therefore, different types of critical discourse analysis were used to deal with the diversity of discourse fragments. For example, conversational discourses are analyzed to some degree differently from newspaper discourses.

Regarding nation representations which are closely related to the notion of power, the political purposes concealed in the discourses would be investigated. To be more specific, political discourse analysis sets out to find the "strategies that aim at the concealment of social power relations (Van Dijk, 1993, p. 250). Furthermore, the frequency of the usage of these representations could, of course, reinforce their critical analysis. Qualitative results beside the quantitative ones could, to a large extent, shed light on the bias toward one nation represented in different ways from the other one.

6. Result

The ways roles are allocated to different social actors seem crucial in the ideological orientation of addressers. Passive and active roles of social actors are two ways of representations applied in the present study. As presented in figure 1, in the president's speech, the Palestinian people had the largest portion of representation in terms of passivation and activation. It was so because the audience of the speech was the Palestinian community. However, the study revealed that they were more passivated and activated, the way the community was represented in the president's discourse displayed an immense difference with the way that the Israeli nation was represented.

![Figure 1](image_url)  

**Figure 1** the frequency of Israeli and Palestinian representations in terms of activation and passivation
In addition, as shown in Table 1, chi-square $\chi^2$ technique at the level of .05 manifested that there were significant differences in the frequency of activated and beneficialised representations between the Israeli and the Palestinian groups (activation: 10.667, $p<.05$; beneficialisation: 9.875, $p<.05$). However, there was not a significant difference between Israeli and Palestinian nation in terms of subjection (subjection: 3.240, $p>.05$).

Table 1

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<th></th>
<th>Activation</th>
<th>Subjected</th>
<th>Beneficialisation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi square</td>
<td>10.667</td>
<td>3.240</td>
<td>9.875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance</td>
<td>.001*</td>
<td>.072</td>
<td>.007*</td>
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Note. Symbol (*) shows the significant result

6.1. Representation of Palestinian Nation

As displayed in Table 2, in the president's discourse, the active representation of the Palestinian nation had larger portion than the passivation. The active representation of the Palestinian helped the president distort perception of the audience regarding the sources of actions and events leading to the plight of the Palestinian state. The active sentences like [the Palestinian people live in economic stagnation; the Palestinian people lack effective courts of law and have no means to defend and vindicate their rights; In the situation the Palestinian people will grow more and more miserable] paved the way for the speaker to dramatize the situation rather than activate the addressees' mind for some questions like: Who is the agent of the Palestinian economic stagnation or misery? Since the Palestinian people were actively represented in the discourse most of the time, the speech receivers were oriented toward the present misfortune stemmed from their own actions rather than the Israeli occupation. That is why, according to Table 2, the Palestinian groups were enormously activated in the president's talk (for activation, see Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.33).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nation</th>
<th>Activated</th>
<th>Subjected</th>
<th>Beneficialised</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palestine</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>63.49</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.46</td>
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</table>

In the president's speech, nearly the same degree of subjected and beneficialised allocations burst out in terms of passively representing the Palestinian (Table 2). Regarding some examples displaying the way the nation was passively subjected and beneficialised, an intentional purpose could be elicited from the text of speech. In the following distinctive parts of the discourse [And the United States, along with others in the international community will help the Palestinians organize and monitor fair; The United States, the international donor
community and the World Bank stand ready to work with Palestinians on a major project of economic reform and development; The United States and members of the international community stand ready to work with Palestinian leaders to establish finance], the Palestinian nation was represented passively. Accordingly, using passive representation in the discourse, the lecturer was empowered to exclude the Palestinian from sendees' attention (for passivation, see Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.33). In fact, the addressees' attention was directed toward the utterance that if there should be any change, it was not the Palestinians who could bring change in their condition nor did any other Arabic nations, but it was the western countries that were able to change the Palestinian torment. That the developed countries like Israel and the western communities were represented as the agents and the Palestinian as the patient was portrayed in such an example [the United States, along with our partners in the developed world, will increase our humanitarian assistance to relieve Palestinian suffering]. It could be pointed out that the way the Palestinian nation was treated by the president's discourse here was a kind of Colonialism kindness.

6.2. Representation of Israeli Nation

In the entire text of the speech, the Israeli nation was activated, beneficialised, and subjected. Comparing these three ways of representing social actors (Table 1), activation had the highest portion. Even when the Israeli nation appeared in the active representation [Israel will continue to defend herself, I can understand the deep anger and anguish of the Israeli people, and you've lived too long with fear and funerals] it was actually passivated since the verbs implied processes which were intrinsically passive even though they were grammatically active. For example, you've lived too long with fear and funerals was equal to the sentence you are suffered with fear and funerals [have = suffer/receive/ undergo]. The first example [Israel will continue to defend herself] also tried to make addressees be aware that it was the Israel who received invasion from the Palestinian and not vice versa. Such transformations illuminated that sometime the grammatical agent and subject could be sociologically patient and affected. As Van Leeuwen (2008) puts it:

There is no neat fit between sociological and linguistic categories, and if critical discourse analysis, e.g., in investigating agency, ties itself too closely to specific linguistic operations or categories, many relevant instances of agency might be overlooked. (p.24)

| Table 3 The frequency of representations of Israeli nation in the president's speech |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|-------|
| Nation                              | Activated | Subjected  | Beneficialised | total |
| frequency                           | %         | frequency  | %          |       |

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However, a very little portion of speech was devoted to Israeli passivation; it was more subjected than benefitized. Regarding benefitized representation, the Israeli community was receiving negative benefit from the actions they underwent. In addition, the Israeli nation was subjected as the grammatical objects in active constructions like [Arab states will be expected to build closer ties of diplomacy and commerce with Israel, I challenge Israel to take concrete steps to support the emergence of a viable, credible Palestinian state, as it comes to terms with Israel]. Not only did these examples illustrate the Israeli people as Arabic and Palestinian allies but also they ideologically force readers or listeners to look at Israeli people's crucial role in reconstructing the Palestinian state. Paradoxically speaking, however these sentences grammatically seemed to represent the Israeli passively, they ideologically represent them actively. For example, the sentence [I challenge Israel to take concrete steps to support the emergence of a viable, credible Palestinian state] could be transformed in this way that Israel should take concrete steps to support the emergence of a viable, credible Palestinian state. Regarding Van Leeuwen (2008) in analyzing the representation of social actors, analysts should draw on "sociosemantic inventory rather than linguistic categories like the category of transitivity." Generally speaking, it could be asserted that grammatical representations of the Israeli were not in harmony with their intentionally ideological representations.

7. Discussion and conclusion

Roles that are allocated to social actors to play in representations are significant in the works of myriad of critical analysts (Fowler, 1991; Fowler et al., 1979; Kress and Hodge, 1979; Van Dijk, 1991). The present study investigated the active and passive representations of Israeli and Palestinian actors in George W. Bush's political discourse. The results revealed that Palestinian actors were more actively and passively represented than the Israeli counterparts. There was significant difference between Israeli and Palestinian representations in terms of activation and beneficialisation.

Active representations of Palestinian people implied that they were the real agents of all misfortune and agony in their own country. As they were passively represented, it could be suggested that Palestinian people themselves were not capable of build their own country; instead, it was the developed countries which should lay the foundation for them. In addition, regarding the way the Israeli people were actively represented, it could be inferred
that although they were grammatically active, they were sociosemantically passive. In fact, they were represented as the invaded rather than the invaders. Passive representations of Israeli actors had two forms. First, they were regarded as the receivers of desolation in terms of beneficialised representation. Moreover, regarding subjection, they were represented as the crucial partner beside western countries in establishing Palestinian state. In other words, they were ideologically activated.

In sum, this study sought to promote a hermeneutic circle whereby the relation between a text and the situation of its production can be more discussed. That is, the political situation of the president was supposed to determine the pragmatic structure of speech. Flowerdew (1999, p.1094) maintains that “there are systematic relationships between linguistic forms and meaning.” Therefore, it is evident that some implications are more plausible than other. As the outcomes of the present study were not conclusively definitive by virtue of its small sample; nevertheless, it is hoped that the study has contributed into the genre of political discourse.

The present study also suggests further research in terms of analyzing Palestinian and Israeli actors based on the other parts of Van Leeuwen's framework such as exclusion, genericization and specification, assimilation, association, and dissociation. Other studies can also contrastively analyze the role allocation or maybe other branches of the framework in the political discourses of different political figures. Moreover, the visual representations of these two communities make additional studies possible in the future.

Reference


Title
Focus on Form and its Role on Grammar Instruction

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Abstract
Many scholars, EFL learners and practitioners are aware of the fact that how difficult it is to internalize metalinguistic input in a classroom environment. Some of them apply explicit, deductive approach with a great emphasis on accuracy while others apply implicit, inductive approach with emphasis on fluency where the purpose is to use grammar for communication (Flor Mellado de Bromley, 2005). Findings of the meaning focus, communicative instruction have shown that when instruction is only meaning focused; commands of certain linguistic features remain flawed (Candelier, 1986; Doughty & Williams, 1998). Simard and Wong (2004) believe that "language awareness" or developing a students' capacity to reflect metalinguistically on language, is more useful to students than the extreme emphasis on meaning. These dissatisfactions resulted on studies supporting a combination of both meaning and form-focused instruction which includes: focus on form instruction (Doughty & Williams, 1998; Long, 1991). This article aimed to serve as the background for a reformulation of the role of grammar in language teaching and conclude by suggesting ways and some activities which are
presented in previous researches, in which the evolution of grammar teaching can contribute to the EFL context.

**Keywords:** Focus on Form, Focus on Forms, Focus on Meaning, Natural approach

1. Introduction

This part of the article briefly explains the researches for and against grammar instruction.

1.1. Researches against Formal Grammar Instruction

Before the 70s no one challenged the necessity of formal grammar teaching; however in the 2nd half of the 20th century many different views were developed (Chen, 1998).

1.1.1. Krashen and Terrel's Natural Approach

One of the biggest challenges against grammar based approach was proposed by Krashen and Terrel (1983) in their influential "Natural approach". They do not reject the idea that the learners need to acquire a great deal of grammar but they believe that grammar has a peripheral role in language program and the students can acquire more grammar only if the course focuses on communication and the learners are provided with sufficient comprehensible, meaningful input (Krashen & Terrel, 1983).

Krashen and Terrel (1983) believe that grammar instruction should be avoided in classroom simply because it takes time away from acquisition activities, and it should be restricted to the situations where it does not interfere with communication. The use of grammar texts could be recommended outside of the classroom where the students could benefit from those explanations. For error correction, followers of natural approach believe that it should be avoided because it raises the students' affection filters.

1.1.2. Krashen's 'Comprehensible Input' hypothesis

According to Krashen's acquisition/learning hypothesis, individuals may acquire second language or may learn it. Those who pick up the rules of language subconsciously as they take part in communication acquire a second language whereas language learning is the result of learning rules of language consciously in classroom situations (Chastain, 1988).

He also proposed that the goal of instruction is not to produce native-like speakers but to help them take advantage of the natural input available to them. Therefore according to Krashen (1985), to acquire the grammar of a language, it is only enough to understand the language in which grammar is contained. He believed that language should be acquired through natural exposure, not learned through formal language instruction, because it does not aid in spontaneous production of language.
Then Krashen (1985) introduced his comprehensible input hypothesis which deals with how individuals internalize and acquire language. Based on this hypothesis, if input is understood and there is enough of it, the necessary grammar is automatically provided. According to Krashen (1985), the availability of input which is comprehensible (i.e. i+1 or what is slightly beyond the learners' current level of language proficiency) is the only necessary and sufficient condition for language learning to take place.

His input hypothesis rests on the assumption that language acquisition consists mainly of adding rules to the interlanguage. He believes that positive evidence in the input, motivating particular structure, could stimulate the acquisition of that structure. According to Krashen (1985), to initiate change, the learner must compare it with the incoming data, suggesting that a new rule is required and if a mismatch is noticed, the new rule will become a candidate for acquisition. The adoption of the new form depends on whether it turns up in the input again, and if it is not confirmed by further input, it will be discarded. This idea depends mainly on the learner being able to detect gaps between the current interlanguage system and the input.

But Krashen's hypothesis, despite its appeal, did not go unopposed. The basic argument is that no matter how much correction learners receive, the complete set of evidence for building up a native-like grammar with all its complexities is not available in the input. It had been mentioned that those learners who do not have the advantage of learning instruction, though fluent, developed wild grammars and produced untargeted-like output (White, Spada, Lightbown, & Ranta, 1991).

1.2. Researches Supporting Language Instruction

One of the critics of Krashen’s approach is Gregg (1984), he believes that the way that at first we learn a new rule and through some practice we acquire it seems a better and a more obvious way of learning.

Also White (1987) has some doubts on Krashen's input hypothesis model. He believes that Krashen is misguided in claiming that the input should be comprehensible, as provided by care-taker speech, teacher talk, foreigner talk and some other forms of simplified input. He thinks input should be detailed and explicit.

Higgs (1985) claims that a successful foreign language user is the one who possesses and combines all the communicative elements of the linguistic system, He believes the learners' ability in expressing themselves in the target language is depended to the use of the grammatical rules, in other words, knowing a language and its grammar are inseparable.
Celce-Murcia (1992), draws a different picture from Krashen's model, and believes that any formal grammar instruction can be more successful if it is discourse-based and context-based rather than sentence-based and context-free. Also considering some factors as, the learner's age, proficiency level and objectives in learning a foreign or second language, educational background seems to be effective in the matter of when and how to teach grammar.

"The teaching of grammar as the processing of rules for the expression of communicative intent with particular language forms is likely to play an important role in development of communicative competence" (Garret, 1986, cited in Ozkan, 2005, p.32), also it is worth mentioning that grammar is to be seen as a component of speaking, listening, reading and writing rather than as a separate skill (Ramirez, 1995).

Comeau (1987) suggests that a combination of traditional activities as fill-in answers, completions, transformations with interactive exercises can help the instruction to be more meaningful, and communicative.

Supporting Comeau's idea, Fotos (1994) recommends formal instruction in a communicative framework, focusing on how language awareness can be beneficial to language acquisition. Also Klapper and Rees (2003) in this regard state that grammar instruction can be more effective when Focus on Form is strengthened with meaning based classroom instruction.

Larsen-freeman (1995) also concurs with the teaching of grammatical features. Finally Ellis (2002) states that learning a language in a natural setting, without formal instruction does not guarantee the acquisition of grammatical competence.

Another attempt for effective way of instruction refers to Reber (1976) and Ellis (1991) that makes a distinction between implicit and explicit teaching. Reber (1976) found out that simple materials can be learned with explicit teaching while complex ones cannot. Ellis (1991) states that the learners who were taught explicitly can come with the rules easier but cannot judge the items after instruction; this is vice versa in implicit instruction.

The other division of instruction was proposed by Van Patten and Cadierno (1993): interpretive vs. practice. They did the study on learners of Spanish at university level; they have been training about Spanish word-order rules. The result showed that the interpretation type works were efficient since they include both noticing the presence of specific feature and comprehending its meaning in the target language. On the other hand practice only emphasized developing implicit knowledge of rules.

1.2.1. Teachability hypothesis
The first reason for renewed interest in L2 grammar instruction is evidence that second language learners go through developmental sequences when they are learning a language. According to Pienemann (1984) teachability hypothesis, some of the developmental sequences are fixed series of overlapping stages, each characterized by the relative frequency of interlanguage structures, which learners have to go through on the way to mastery of the target language system. These sequences cannot be influenced by instruction while other forms can benefit from instruction any time they are taught. Based on this hypothesis, it is possible to affect sequences of development through instruction.

1.2.2. Input processing theory
One of the well known theories in 2nd language acquisition is input processing theory (Van Patten, 1996). This theory stresses the importance of manipulating input in the process of students' interlanguage development. The relevance of this theory to grammar is that as students' interlanguage development can be readily influenced by manipulating input, pushing learners to consciously attend to specific grammatical features.

1.2.3. Noticing hypothesis
Schmidt and Frota (1986) proposed the idea of "noticing the gap", in which the learner finds out the differences between his interlanguage and the target form. For Schmidt (1990), conscious attention to the input in the process of second language learning is necessary. He believes that learners should have momentary episodes of noticing in which focal attention is given to the input. Also he claims that rule understanding although not necessary can be facilitative.

The fact that learners do not utilize the input to which they are exposed to lead Schmidt (1990) to suggest that conscious awareness of a previously unlearned L2 form or what he calls 'noticing' is a necessary condition for language learning to occur. Schmidt's noticing hypothesis runs counter to Krashen's 'comprehensible input' as it claims that "intake is the part of the input that the learner notices" (Schmidt, 1990, p.139). According to this approach the attention should be given to specific grammar to internalize it through some consciousness raising activities (Schmidt, 1990).

Schmidt (1994) identifies four dimensions to the concept of consciousness: intention, attention, awareness, and control. Intention refers to the deliberateness on the part of the learner to attend to the stimulus. Attention, basically, refers to the detection of a stimulus. The third dimension is awareness, the learners' knowledge or subjective experience of detecting a stimulus. And the last one, control, refers to the extent to which the language
learners output is controlled, requiring considerable mental processing effort, or spontaneous, requiring little mental processing effort.

Tomlin and Villa defined awareness as "a particular state of mind in which an individual has undergone a specific subjective experience of some cognitive content of external stimulus" (1994, p. 193). They disagree with Schmidt on the necessity of awareness in learning. They believed that conscious awareness or what Schmidt (1990) called "noticing" may not play an important role as other attentional functions.

According to Tomlin and Villa (1994, p.190), attention incorporates three main functions:

1. **Alertness**, that is, "the overall readiness to deal with incoming stimuli or data,"

2. **Orientation** which refers to "the direction of attentional resources to a certain type of stimuli," and

3. **Detection** which is "the cognitive registration of the stimuli."

According to them, detection, being closest to awareness, is crucial for further processing of information to take place and ultimately necessary for acquisition to operate. Their model is largely based on Ponser's research.

**1.2.4. Ponser's Model from Cognitive Neuroscience**

Ponser and Dehaene (2000) have proposed three separate yet interactive networks of attention: the orienting network, the altering network and the executive control network.

The first network is an involuntary part that works largely unconsciously, for example if there is an on and off red flash your eyes involuntarily are drawn toward it.

The second one works voluntarily and involuntarily and its duty is to keep us alert to react to the incoming stimuli.

The third network deals with the goal direction behaviors as: target detection, error detection, conflict resolution, and inhibition of automatic responses.

The first two networks are developed in infancy but the third one continues its development through childhood and adolescence, and it is susceptible to individual's conscious control.

Their research also suggests that environment and genetics are two important factors in one's attentional capacity. This idea sheds light on individual's variation in attention and how some changes in the environment can mediate the attention process.

Robinson (1995) defined noticing as "detection plus rehearsal in short term memory before encoding in long term memory"(p. 296). According to Robinson, noticing is identified
with what is both detected and further activated. He also viewed awareness as critical to noticing, claiming that no learning can take place without awareness at the level of noticing.

Skehan (1998) states that a degree of awareness is important before material can be incorporated into a developing inter language system.

In Willis (2000, p.11), noticing involves "isolating particular words and phrases, discovering what they mean and noting how they are used."

Also many SLA investigators (Ellis, 2002; Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2001; Fotos, 1993) came to agreement with Schmidt that "noticing" is the first step for learning to take place.

Schmidt (1990) believes that these following aspects are influent in "noticing" the input:

- **Frequency**: according to Schmidt (1990) if an item is frequently used in the input its chance of being noticed is increased.
- **Perceptual salience**: when the prominence of an item in the input is increased its chance to be noticed is increased, too. (Skehan, 1998).
- **Skill level**: According to Schmidt (1990), it refers to the learners' ability to routinize previously met structure and to be able to attend to both meaning and form in the second language processing.
- **Task demands**: it refers to the way a task requires learners to notice particular features that are necessary to carry out the task (Schmidt, 1990).

The level of the difficulty of the task is determining in this regard as Robinson (2001, a), claims that complex tasks can create attention demands that can affect accuracy, fluency or complexity of the learners' speech.

Robinson (2001, b) asserts that the attention capacity can be exceeded during complex tasks. He continues tasks which require reasoning and reference to many elements, are more attention demanding rather than those which require a single activity and draw upon prior knowledge.

- **Comparing**: Ellis (1997) points out that only when the learners recognize that the new language features are at variance with the interlanguage will those items become part of their developing interlanguage system. So the learners should compare the observed input with the typical output based on their existing interlanguage system.
- **Language Instruction**: instruction provides structured, differentiated input that assists noticing by focusing attention on and enhancing awareness of
language features (Skehan, 1999; cited in Schmidt, 1990). Schmidt (1990) proposed that since paying attention is necessary for learning an item, language instruction can increase the noticing ability.

Ellis (1998), states that it is through formal instruction that the learners become aware of a particular grammatical feature, and form explicit representation of what they are taught. It means that once the learners become aware of a particular feature through formal instruction they continue noticing it in other subsequent communicative input. Both Schmidt and Ellis emphasize on learners being exposed to a communicative input with a particular form in order for noticing to take place.

"From what is said it is assumed that noticing involves activities where special attention is given to the language input in order to reflect on its use, understand and internalize the language use, and arrive to generalization" (Flor Mellado de Bromley, 2005, p.5).

2. Focus on Form or Focus on Meaning

Long (1991) in his highly influential paper drew a distinction between Focus on Form which is attention to form in a meaning based context and Focus on Forms in which instruction of L2 occurs outside of a meaning-based context. In fact in this type of instruction he insists that the primary focus should be always on meaning and the attention to form also can be included if there is a communicative need for it.

Originally Focus on Form has been defined more proactive rather than reactive; in which attention to form happens spontaneously while the learners are engaged in a meaningful communicative activity and it is not planned. However in the subsequent development the researchers (Doughty, 2001; Doughty & Williams, 1998; Spada, 1997) have adopted the term "Focus on Form" for both proactive and reactive pedagogical strategies.

This section offers a review over Focus on Forms, Focus on Meaning and Focus on Form.

2.1. Focus on Forms Instruction

It aims at teaching/ learning specific grammatical features. It is so similar to traditional grammar teaching whose aim is to teach the language form in isolation. It involves the pre selection of particular forms based on the syllabus and the intensive and systematic treatments of those structures, and the presentation of those structures are sequential (Long, 1991; Long & Robinson, 1998; Ellis, Basturkmen & Loewen, 2002).

In this kind of instruction, the teacher or the syllabus designer required to break the language into its components: words, collocations, grammar rules, phonemes, stress,
intonation, etc. considering the fact that it does not involve the learners in real communicative tasks, we cannot consider it as a communicative approach (Poole, 2005). Because of this fact, lack of development of fluency is one of the problems of such approach (Seedhouse, 1997).

2.2. **Focus on Meaning Instruction**

According to Long (1991) and Long and Robinson (1998), Focus on Meaning is a communicative approach to language teaching which spends little or no time on discreet points of the language. The main purpose of the approach is to emphasize meaning over form, fluency over accuracy and using the language in real-life situations.

The basic philosophy behind Focus on Meaning is that, the learners can learn the language in a best way by using it as a medium of communication. It says that language instruction is organized based on purposes behind that and the learners should learn language performances that are necessary to meet those purposes, so learners are able to acquire the language without any instructional interventions (Spada, 1997).

The result shows that this approach is not good for the high levels of linguistic knowledge and the learners often have difficulties even with the basic structures of the language. The other reason maybe is because of teachers not correcting or commenting the inaccurate interlanguage of the learners (Seedhouse, 1997).

2.3. **Focus on Form Instruction**

Long (1991) and long and Robinson (1998) introduced the notion of Focus on form instruction which on one hand highlights the significance of communicative language use and on the other hand emphasizes the overt study of problematic areas of L2.

The emphasis on formal instruction and Schmidt's "noticing" hypothesis made Long (1991) and Long and Robinson (1998) to feel that when learners have difficulty in language production or encounter a problem, it is the responsibility of their teachers to correct them and supply them with appropriate forms, and this became an introduction for emergence of a new approach: Focus on Form.

According to Long (1991) and Long and Robinson (1998), FonF tries to maintain a balance between Focus on Forms and Focus on Meaning by motivating teachers and learners to attend on form when necessary, yet in a communicative classroom environment. It emphasizes fluency and meaning as well as accuracy. Along with instruction, Focus on Form aims to help the students to use the language in a real-world communication.

The importance of focusing on form is based on three main principals about second language acquisition:
1. Learners acquire new linguistic forms as the result of attending to form in contexts where the primary concern is with the message rather than the language.

2. Learners frequently face a problem in producing linguistic forms in communication as they have a limited information-processing capacity.

3. They benefit from the opportunities that arise in communication to give focal attention to language forms (Ellis, Basturkmen, Loewen, 2001).

3. **How to Maintain a Focus on Form**

   Focus on Form can be accomplished by providing the learners the chances to negotiate topics which are meaningful to them. Teachers should help the learners by reducing their own role in correction and scaffolding of learners' utterances, to manage the interactions (Seedhouse, 1997).

   They can apply Focus on form in their classrooms by using the principals of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) when they want to design the activities or assessment. Small size classrooms are better candidates for such instruction as the teacher has time to work with the learners individually and the students can have more peer interactions (Poole, 2005).

3.1. **Types of Focus on Form Instructions:**

   - **Explicit Focus on Form:** in this type "the aim is to direct learners' attention and to exploit pedagogical grammar in this regard"(Doughty & Williams, 1998, p.232).

   - **Implicit Focus on Form:** in this type "the aim is to attract learners' attention and to avoid metalinguistic discussion, always minimizing any interpretation to communication of meaning" Input Enhancement and Input Flooding are two types on implicit Focus on Form (Doughty & Williams, 1998, p.232).

   - **Planned Focus on Form:** in this type the specific form is enriched but the learners are not aware of that and the focus is on meaning (Norris, 2001).

   - **Incidental Focus on Form:** it involves the use of communicative tasks which are designed to elicit the use of a general rather specific forms. The forms are focused on in the process of communication (Ellis, Basturkmen, Loewen, 2002). It has two kinds: preemptive and reactive.

     **Preemptive Focus on Form:** the teacher or learner takes a form and initiates the attention on it even though no difficulty or production error has arisen.
Reactive Focus on Form: negative feedback is provided by the teacher in response to learners actual or perceived errors (Norris, 2001).

Both reactive and preemptive Focus on Form instructions are divided to two main categories: conversational and didactic:

**Conversational Focus on Form:** it involves the attention to form arisen as the result of communication problem.

**Didactic Focus on Form:** it involves an error treatment which consists of a pedagogic "time-out" from meaning–focused communication (Ellis, Basturkmen, & Loewen, 2002).

Doughty and Williams (1998) have developed a continuum which in one end has explicit, rule-based and obtrusive strategies such as consciousness-raising and garden path and on the other end unobtrusive, example-based and incidental strategies such as input flooding and input enhancement.

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Title

A Comparison of Test Anxiety of EFL Learners at High School and Language Institute

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Abstract

This study aims at comparing the test anxiety of female EFL learners at high school with their counterparts at language institute, to investigate whether the test anxiety of them is related to their overall achievement scores or not, to determine what test anxiety producing factors affect them, what anxiety symptoms are most prevalent among them, and how they can be alleviated according to their opinions. The 30 non-random conveniently selected participants completed a questionnaire comprising of background information, a test anxiety scale adopted from Sarason’s Test Anxiety Scale (1984, cited in Ayden, Fatih, & Savaş, 2008), and some survey questions which were analyzed statistically and descriptively. The findings of this study revealed that EFL learners at high school are more test anxious in comparison to EFL learners at language institute. Second, the test anxiety of EFL learners was not correlated much with their overall achievement scores. Third, the most prevalent test anxiety producing factors among the students were found to be fear of negative evaluation, low proficiency, negative comments of the teachers before and after the exam to name a few among many other found factors. Fourth, test anxiety influences on many aspects of the students' performance (e.g. resulting in lower self-esteem, low concentration and ineffective proficiency), preventing them from complete transformation of their actual knowledge. Finally, believing in God, well-preparedness for the exams, and reviewing the materials before the exams can significantly alleviate the students' test anxiety according to their opinions.
1. Introduction

Test-taking has always been a part of every student’s life. From the time young elementary students enter their first grade classrooms, till the time they successfully graduate from their high school, they will take over one thousand tests. The same story happens for EFL learners at language institutes. For many students, test-taking can be frightening, confusing, nerve-wracking or all of them.

One of the factors intervening proper test taking is test anxiety. Test anxiety is a psychological condition in which a person feels anxiety before, during, or after a test or other assessment to the extent that this anxiety causes poor performance or prevents normal learning on the part of learners (cited in Rastegar, Akbarzeh, & Heidari, 2010). Test anxiety prevents the proper functioning of memory and reasoning. Anxious students claim that they "freeze" or "blank" during test taking and so they are unable to provide their information on tests properly. Highly test-anxious students perform well below their low-anxiety classmates. Test anxiety is not only associated with poor test-taking skills but with poor study patterns, which will result in low self-confidence and self-esteem. If test anxiety be left untreated, it will continue in adulthood and it will even influence on career choices and quality of life. Much of the EFL learners at high school or language institute are more afraid of tests than they were of ghosts during their childhood.

During the past twenty years, a significant increase has been occurred in the number of studies on anxiety in the L2 domain. This increase is attributable to the considerable advances in the theory and measurement of L2-related anxiety since the mid-1980s. The role played by foreign or second language learning anxiety is an issue which has been the center of attention of language investigators for a long time. As early as in the 1970s, a period noticeable for an increase of research focusing on the learner and anxiety among other individual learner differences anticipated to affect language learning success, foreign or second language learning anxiety started to be examined as a potential factor influencing L2 achievement (Dörnyei, 2005).

The focus of the second language acquisition research saw a shift from the external factors for which instructors are responsible, to the internal factors of second language learners, such as age, attribute, learning, motivation, learning strategy, and language anxiety. Large number
of research has investigated the relationship between second language learning and language anxiety.

So test anxiety as it is the focus of this study is a serious impairment and it is the most prevalent handicap in schools and language institutes today. The purpose of this study is to deal with the debilitative test anxiety and its effects on the performance of EFL learners at high school and language institute, to determine what reasons can be responsible for EFL learner's test anxiety, and how it can be alleviated according to students' opinions.

2. Review of the Related Literature

Foreign language test anxiety is a pervasive phenomenon especially among the second/foreign language learning population. It is vital to approach this conceptually complex phenomenon from diverse perspectives. The contradictory findings reported in the literature on foreign language test anxiety are all indicative of the inherent complexity of the trait. Some of the most important studies carried out in this respect along with some factors reported to influence on test anxiety are reviewed below.

Chastain (1975) found a negative correlation between test anxiety and greater success concluding that low test anxiety was related to greater success.

The related literature on test anxiety in EFL learners indicate that the factors influencing on students’ performance in language tests are perceptions of test validity, time limit, test techniques, test format, length, testing environment and clarity of test instructions.

In addition to the above-mentioned anxiety producing factors, learners’ capacity, task difficulty, the fear of getting bad grades, and lack of preparation for a test are the other factors that make learners worried. Similarly, learners with high levels of anxiety have less control of attention (as cited in Rastegar et al., 2010).

Horwitz (1986) tried to validate the foreign language (FL) test anxiety. The results of her study showed that about 25% of the variance in the final grades was due to the FL anxiety. The results of data analyses suggested that there might be a strong correlation between FL anxiety and language proficiency.

MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) examined the relationship between language anxiety and other types of anxiety. Consequently, it was found that FL anxiety was distinct from general anxiety. In their view, this could account for the poor relationship between general anxiety and L2 proficiency. Furthermore, a relationship between performance, FL anxiety scales, and state anxiety was discovered. On the other hand, no correlations were found between
production measures and scales of test anxiety, audience sensitivity, trait anxiety and other types of anxiety.

Madsen (in Young, 1999) investigated the effects of anxiety on ESL tests and as a result discovered that high anxiety producing tests were considered as less valid by students. Also, the significant factor which was found to increase test anxiety and hence decrease performance was time limit.

Dalkilic (2001, cited in Ayden, Fatih, & Savaş, 2008) carried out research on the anxiety level of Turkish EFL learners, focusing on the relationship between anxiety and achievement. Subsequently, inappropriate test technique was found to be as one of the test anxiety provoking factors in foreign language learning.

Jackson (2001) pointed that the results obtained from the research conducted indicated that the test validity may affect test anxiety significantly and hence it acts as a barrier to the satisfactory performance on tests.

Zhang (2001) examined the variability in the language anxiety of two ESL groups from the Republic of China. The results of this study suggested that this variability could be attributed to factors such as age of the learners, learning experiences and other socio-economic variables.

Abu-Rabia (2004) examined the relationship between FL anxiety and language achievement using 67 seventh-grade students as the participants of the study. The results of data analyses revealed a negative relationship between anxiety and FL achievement. Also, gender and teachers' attitudes were found as the only significant predictors of FL anxiety.

Ohata (2005) found that learners sometimes felt pressured to think that they had to organize their ideas in a short period of time. Most of the participants in his study indicated that they were afraid of test taking due to test-taking situations which make them worried about the negative consequences of getting a bad grade.

Koralp (2005) found that EFL learners experienced some English language learning anxiety on two anxiety level measures, fear of negative evaluation and test anxiety, which were also positively correlated.

Tomoko et al. (2009) investigated the relationship of classroom anxiety, intrinsic motivation, and gender in the Japanese EFL context. First-year students enrolled in EFL classes at a large private university in Japan as the participants of this study completed the foreign language class anxiety scale (FLCAS) which was intended to measure the anxiety of the above-mentioned group in their language classes. The results of this study revealed that there were no noticeable differences in FLCA among male and female.
In sum, previous research has indicated that test anxiety in EFL learning correlates negatively with test performance, success, and test scores for which many factors are responsible such as inappropriate test technique, being fearful about the negative consequences of getting a bad grade, test format, language proficiency, perceptions of test validity, time limit, test techniques, test length, testing environment and clarity of test instructions among many other significant factors. The present study sets out to contribute to the body of the literature by addressing the following research questions:

1-Is there any significant difference between the test anxiety of EFL learners at high school where GTM is being applied and at language institute in which communicative approach is being used?

2-Is there any relationship between the test anxiety of EFL learners and their proficiency level?

3-What reasons are responsible for the test anxiety of EFL learners?

4-What symptoms can be seen most prevalent for the test anxiety of EFL learners?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

This study was conducted with 30 female EFL learners with the same level of proficiency at high school and language institute. The participants who were between the ages of 15 to 25, were chosen according to convenience nonrandom sampling. 15 of them were selected from the first term of the Elementary level from Bu-Ali Sina English language Institute, Yazd, Iran and the other 15 participants were chosen from the first grade of Bahadori high school which is located in the same city. The reason for selecting these students was that the EFL learners at the preliminary level of the language institute are at the same low level of English proficiency with their high school EFL counterparts. These two groups were compared together to see what reasons are responsible for the test anxiety of EFL learners in general and particularly what differences exist in terms of the test anxiety between the above-mentioned groups.

3.2. Instrumentation

To investigate the students’ anxiety in English language classrooms and to gather both quantitative and qualitative data, a triangulation of three instruments was adopted: a background questionnaire, a test anxiety scale adapted from the validated and expanded Sarason’s Test Anxiety Scale (1984, as cited in Ayden, et al., 2008) and a survey. The
background questionnaire obtained demographic data about the participants such as students’ age, gender, overall achievement scores, and year at language institute or school. Also, the test anxiety scale which was in Likert type (always=5, usually=4, sometimes=3, rarely=2, never=1) contained 22 multiple-choice items aimed at measuring the degree of test anxiety. Lastly, the four essay questions investigated whether or not the students felt test anxiety, what reasons they saw responsible for their test anxiety, what the effects of tests anxiety were, and how they thought it could be alleviated (see Appendix). All of the preceding data collection instruments were translated in to Persian in order to be comprehensible enough for the low level EFL learners at language institute and school.

3.3. Procedure
This study was conducted in the third week of the first level of language institute in the winter term, 1391. From the first-grade high school students, the data was collected in the second week of the second term after the first final exams of the year 1390-1391. Both groups of the students first started with providing demographic information for the background questionnaire. Second, they answered the 22 multiple-choice items of the test anxiety scale which aimed at measuring the degree of their test anxiety in Likert type scale (always=5, usually=4, sometimes=3, rarely=2, never=1). Finally, they provided complete answers for the four survey type questions.

3.4. Data analysis
The data combined through this study was analyzed through several steps: first, the reliability coefficient of TAS was found in Alpha (Cronbach) model. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient was .89 for the present study indicating a very good internal consistency reliability between the items. Second, the background information containing the variables of age, overall achievement scores, and level of subjects at school or language institute were converted into ordinal data in order to be entered into the SPSS software for further analysis. Then, the ordinal questionnaire type of data ranging from 1(never) to 5(always) were entered in to the software. Also, the descriptive data consisting of the mean, the standard deviations and the standard error of means was found to gain the test anxiety level and the homogeneity of the sample group. An independent sample T-test was used to find any significant differences between the test anxiety of the EFL learners at high school and language institute. Then, a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient and significant levels were computed to find any relationships between the overall achievement scores and the test anxiety level. Finally, the answers to the four survey type questions were classified descriptively according to the most common answers.
4. Results

The reliability coefficient of TAS was found in Alpha (Cronbach) model. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient was .89 for the present study indicating a very good internal consistency reliability between the items.

The descriptive statistics found for the results of the TAS including the number of participants, the minimum and the maximum anxiety ratings, the mean and the standard deviation is presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having anxiety during tests</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1.223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assuming that other students' performance is</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>better</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not being relaxed and self-confident for tests</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having irrelevant thoughts during tests</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>1.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being worried at the thought of tests</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having thought of failure during exams</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being worried after tests</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not being self-confident with good grades</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td>1.245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having thought of better performance after tests</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions influencing negatively on performance during tests</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1.223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgetting things during tests</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being worried when studying for tests</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>1.129</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An independent sample T-test used to find any differences in terms of the test anxiety of EFL learners at high school and language institute indicated that there is a significant difference in terms of the test anxiety between EFL learners at high school (M= 1.14, SD=.36) and EFL learners at language institute M=1.5, SD = .51; t (23.27) =2.11, p=0.4 (two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean differences=.35, 95% CI:.007 to .7) was ( eta squared=0.13 ) indicating a large difference. The results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 2 An Independent Samples T-test Between Different Groups of EFL learner**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results showed that 36% of EFL learners at language institute were test anxious and 77% were not while 63% of EFL learners at high school were test anxious and 22% were not indicating that high school students are more test anxious in comparison to language institute students. Figure 1 presents the results visually.

The relationship between overall achievement scores and test anxiety level was investigated using a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. There was a small, positive correlation between the two variables, $r = .14, n=24, p>.0005$, showing that the higher overall achievement scores do not contribute so much to eliminating the test anxiety of EFL learners at high school or language institute (see Table 3).

**Table 3 Correlations of Test Anxiety and Proficiency of EFL Learners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>proficiency of EFL learners</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>test anxious</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>proficiency of EFL learners</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>.514</td>
<td>.514</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>test anxious</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>.514</td>
<td>.514</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the students mentioned, they usually had test anxiety. The EFL learners at high school or language institute sometimes think that the other students’ performance in tests is better and hence they are not relaxed and confident for their tests. A large percent of the students (5.54%) indicated that during the English tests, they will have irrelevant thoughts. They are worried even at the thought of the tests. The students feel anxious when they study for a test. In addition, before and after tests, they feel not confident and relaxed and assume that they would do better after tests. According to 5.72% of the students, tests affect their performance negatively and make them forget what they know. Test also bothers them and they cannot be sure if they will succeed or not. During the tests, they sometimes believe that they will fail. They will confuse the course content that they had studied and they usually feel pressured by the time limits. The highest percent of students (6.22%) indicated that if they do not have a test, they will study more. They feel troubled when they are prepared well and feel cramped before a test. Surprisingly, good grades do not make them confident and they are still worried about their English exam results (5.35%). A large percent of the students (5.85%) indicated that when they receive low grades, they will study less. As a final point, the following figure (Figure 2) illustrates the test anxiety level of EFL learners.

**Figure 2 Test Anxiety Level of EFL Learners**
According to the answers compiled from the survey questions, test anxiety is closely related to the low proficiency and achievement of students, subjective scoring by EFL teachers, difficult course content, parental expectations, and time limitations. Students often complain about using tests for authority and punishment, and lack of enough information before and after the test administration. In addition, the first test application of a new teacher is another reason that provokes test anxiety. The lack of preparation for the tests, inefficient or inappropriate test preparation, and negative comments before, after and during tests by teachers is other reasons that make the learners anxious. The fear of negative evaluation and previous unsuccessful test experiences are other reasons that make the students feel anxious. Beside these, some participants state that they do not like to be compared to other students by test scores. For them, one of the main reasons that cause test anxiety is lack of content validity. They make complaints about inappropriate test techniques and numbers of items. Some students claim that designing the questions from difficult to easy and a negative atmosphere in testing environment can contribute to test anxiety.

Participants in this study stated that the most prominent physical problems of the test anxiety for them are low concentration and having butterflies in their stomach. Some students suffered from headache, stomachache, and dizzy before, after and during the test administrations. In this sense, the test anxiety prevents them from transferring their real knowledge in their EFL exams. In other words, the test anxiety is a barrier to study efficiently, achieve good grades, and use the knowledge effectively.

Students’ answers to the last survey question “How it can be alleviated according to your opinion?” indicate that the key factor in reducing test anxiety is believing in God, starting the exams in God's name, reviewing the materials before the exams, well-preparedness for the exams, and increasing one's self-confidence. Some of the students stated that the EFL teachers' role in reducing their test anxiety is very prominent. Teachers should not place the exams as a means of comparison, punishment or authority. They should help the students relax before the EFL exams by providing a comfortable and free of anxiety environment. In addition, some students believed that eating habits are very important in reducing test anxiety. They indicated that eating chocolate, a glass of milk, or some fruits can be very helpful.

5. Conclusion and discussion

As a result of this study, the following results were found: First, the Iranian female EFL learners at high school or language institute generally have a high level of test anxiety. In
particular, high school students have a higher level of test anxiety in comparison to EFL learners at language institute. Second, the findings of this study indicated that the variable of formal achievement scores is not correlated with test anxiety. Also, some test anxiety producing factors were found. To name some of them, we can mention low proficiency of the learners, negative comments of teachers before and after test applications, test invalidity, fear of negative evaluation, previous unsuccessful experiences on tests, time limitations and pressure, inappropriate number of questions, difficult course contents, parental expectations, inappropriate exam situations, and being compared based on the exams' grades. Third, the test anxiety in EFL classes causes some physical and psychological problems, such as dizzy, stomachache, low concentration, headache, and depression. Finally, according to the EFL learners being under the study, the key factors in reducing the test anxiety are believing in God, starting the exams in God's name, reviewing the materials before the exam, well-preparedness for the exam, and increasing one's self-confidence. EFL teachers' role in reducing the students' test anxiety is very significant according to some students. Teachers should not place the exams a means of comparison, punishment or authority. They should help the students relax before the EFL exams by providing a comfortable and free of anxiety environment. In addition, some students believe that eating habits are very important in reducing test anxiety. Eating chocolate, a glass of milk, or some fruits can be very helpful in their opinion.

Depending on the results of the study, some recommendations can be made for EFL teachers: First, EFL teachers should be aware of their test validity. They should use objective scoring methods and should not compare the students based on their test scores in order to prevent test anxiety on the part of their EFL learners. As Alcala in 2002 (cited in Ayden et al., 2008) advises, the use of one, two or three examiners is too subjective and hence it can inhibit the students’ well performance. On the other hand, the use of more than three examiners can be very helpful for the inter-rater reliability of test scores and prevention of the test anxiety of learners. Creating a low-anxiety classroom environment is very essential for both EFL learning and testing. Teachers should use appropriate techniques and sufficient number of questions for their tests. They should not consider test scores as a means of punishment or authority. In addition, they should avoid negative comments before and after the tests because they may affect the learners’ confidence and concentration negatively. The EFL high school teachers should take into consideration that that their students are more test anxious in comparison to EFL learners at language institute and also they may or may not
favor learning English. So, there is a strong need to specifically take the anxiety producing factors for these students more in to account and hence try to prevent them.

Some limitations of the research should be taken into consideration: First of all, this study was limited to the elementary EFL learners at Bu-Ali Sina Language Institute and first-grade high school students of Bahadori high school, Yazd, Iran. Second, the results which were just obtained from female EFL learners may not be applicable for the male ones. Also, some subject background variables other than the grade, age, and formal achievement scores of the learners which were considered in the present study, may illustrate the issue more clearly. To conclude, further research can be done on male EFL learners or a comparison of both male and female EFL learners at high school and language institute. There is also a gap left here in that some other variables such as gender and parents' education can be taken into consideration in other research.

While the present study suffers from some limitations like any other investigations, its results can be very helpful in giving some insights in general to other researchers in the field of EFL teaching methodology and in particular to EFL teachers not only at English language institutes and high schools but also at other EFL learning contexts. It may also raise the awareness of the EFL high school teachers that their students are very anxious about learning English and taking English tests. Hence they may use the results of the present investigation to review and reconsider their instructional materials and syllabus designs in order to reduce their students' test anxiety as efficiently as possible.

References


**Appendix**

Name: ..........................                   Gender: male/female      level at school/institute: ............

Last grade at school/institute: ................................. Age: .................................

Part A: Dear students read the following questions and put the corresponding number in front of each statement.

(Always=5, usually=4, sometimes=3, rarely=2, never=1)

1-I worry while I am taking a test.

2-While taking a test, I am thinking that other students are better than I am.

3-When I know that I will take a test, I do not feel confident and relaxed.

4-During the test, I am thinking unrelated things about the class.

5-I feel worried when I learned that I would take a test.

6-During the test, I think I will fail.
7-After the test, I feel worried.
8-I cannot feel confident even if I have good grades.
9-After the test, I feel I would do better.
10-During the test, my emotions affect my performance negatively.
11-During the test, I forget what I know.
12-I feel worried when I study for a test.
13-The more I work, the more confused I get.
14-During the test, I cannot be sure if I will succeed.
15-Tests bother me much.
16-I feel pressured by time limits during test.
17-When I have bad grades, I study less.
18-I would learn more if I should not have tests.
19-Tests affect my performance negatively.
20-I worry even when I am prepared well.
21-I worry when I am not prepared well.
22-I feel crammed before an exam.

Part B: Answer the following questions completely.
1-Do you feel test anxiety or not? Yes/NO
2-What are the reasons for your test anxiety?
3-What are the effects of your test anxiety?
4-How it can be alleviated according to your opinion?
Title

The Implicit Instruction of Grammar via Pictures: A Technique to Improve Writing and Speaking Abilities of Iranian Elementary EFL Learners

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Abstract

This paper reports findings from an experimental study of the effect of implicit instruction of grammar via specially-designed pictures on the writing and speaking abilities of elementary EFL learners. It was conducted on 66 participants in two second grade classes —one as the control group and one as the experimental group—in a junior high school in Mashhad, Iran. During the school year, the control group received the traditional instruction whereas the experimental group was taught through the employment of the special pictures. The results of the pretests and posttests, analyzed through the employment of both matched and independent t-tests, revealed that the experimental subjects got significantly higher mean scores in both their speaking and writing achievement tests. The findings of this study may help the school teachers to enhance their students’ ability in speaking and writing, the two areas which are often neglected in the Iranian school ELT curriculum.

Keywords: implicit grammar instruction, picture, writing, speaking

1. Introduction
An important component of a language class which does not seem to have received much attention in the body of research in ELT is to provide education which is entertaining to the learners. The entertaining education, according to Thekes (2011), occurs when students feel involved and motivated as they acquire a new part of language and involves providing students with appropriate stimuli and making the language class interesting to them. Holliday (1994), also, refers to such education as a learning festival which entails active and stress-free participation of the students in the enjoyable learning activity.

The entertaining education becomes of particular importance when the subject being taught is grammar. The reason is that grammar teaching, which commonly involves constant explanation of decontextualized grammatical rules, is usually associated with boring minutes in the classroom and brings about lack of interest and demotivation on the part of the students (Thekes, 2011; Vágó, 2007; Xiao-Yun, 2010).

As evident in the above-mentioned arguments, these problems are mainly attributed to the traditional explicit instruction of grammar. Hence, the solution seems to be implicit grammar instruction. The implicit approach to grammar teaching was promoted by appearance of the direct way at the turn of the last century which resulted in a shift in how grammar teaching and language acquisition is looked at (Bárdos 2005). The term implicit learning, coined by Reber (1967), describes a situation where a person acquires some knowledge without explicit intention of learning, without awareness of the learning process and without knowledge of what has been learned. In grammar teaching, Krashen (1987) is perhaps one of the most well-known proponents of implicit instruction. Questioning the extensive use of conscious grammatical rules and tedious drills and rote learning, he called for implicit teaching of grammar through comprehensible input.

One remarkable way to facilitate implicit grammar teaching, make it entertaining, and turn it into a learning festival, to use Holliday’s (1994) term, could be the use of pictures. In this regard, a number of TEFL professionals have acknowledged that the presentation and explanation of grammar accompanied by visuals will be more comprehensible (Bárdos, 2000; Mumford, 2008; Scarcella & Oxford, 1992; Ur, 1991; Wright, Betteridge & Buckby, 2009). This way pictures could act as the necessary stimuli Thekes (2011) calls for in order to engage and motivate the learners.

Bárdos (2000) asserts that visualization plays the role of a medium through which the teacher can pass the grammar knowledge to the learners. According to him, the importance of visualization lies in the fact that it has both a motivating effect and the capacity for creating associations. Mumford (2008) highlights the use of pictures as a powerful source in the
elicitation process that involves the teacher’s prompting and encouraging the learners to create meaningful acts of speech. Similarly, Ur (1991:7) points out that seeing something at issue, through the use of pictures, facilitates thinking. Finally, Scarcella and Oxford (1992) state that simultaneous implementation of linguistic elements and pictures enhances the comprehension of the grammar point. They, further, suggest the provision of stimulating and motivating visuals to foster grammar development.

On the grounds of the presented arguments in favor of the implicit instruction of grammar via pictures, the present study seeks to utilize this technique, as a CLT technique in the traditional atmosphere of ELT in the Iranian school system, and examine its possible effect on the speaking and writing abilities of the elementary learners.

1. 2. Iranian formal system of education

The educational system in Iran is a conservative centralized system with “a one-size-fits-all policy” (Pishghadam & Mirzaee, 2008, p. 103). This policy is evident in the exertion of the prescribed textbooks all over the country, the administration of national tests, and demanding full conformity from teachers in an attempt to unify their instructions and, hence, the students from all around the country. Therefore, the system gains itself the control over not only the input, through the prescribed curriculum, but the output, through the national testing scheme (Ostovar-Namaghi, 2006).

English teaching in this system in all levels seems to pivot around one central policy, i.e., developing and enhancing the reading skill at the expense of the other three skills. Such trend of English instruction is implemented via two factors: textbooks, and exams.

Textbooks, according to Sheldon (1988, p. 237), “represent the visible heart of any ELT program”. The above-mentioned central policy can be clearly observed in the Iranian English textbooks (Allami, Jalilifar, Hashemian, & Shooshtari, 2009; Ghorbani, 2009; Hosseini 2007; Jahangard, 2007; Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006). That is, the materials which are primarily aimed at developing the reading ability constitute a big share of these books. The listening skill, on the other hand, is hardly ever addressed and one can rarely find exercises particularly designed to enhance the listening ability. The productive ability, i.e., speaking and writing skills, is taken into account peripherally through isolated sentence production activities in a decontextualized and sterile milieu of communication. Moreover, alongside the reading skill which constitutes the first priority in the design of the books, a large portion of the lessons is devoted to the explicitly stated grammatical rules and various grammar drills as well as long lists of vocabulary and their poor contextualization (Jahangard, 2007).
Regarding the incomprehensiveness of the textbooks, one might argue that, still, it is the duty of the teachers to strike a balance between creative instruction and being a slave to their texts (Garinger, 2002). However, there is another problem which impedes the teachers’ freedom to do so and that involves the second factor.

The other factor guaranteeing the implementation of the educational system’s policies is an external pressure in the form of the administration of national examinations. The importance of such exams lies in the great negative washback effect they produce (Ghorbani, 2011; Jahangard, 2007; Ostovar-Namaghi, 2006). That is, by focusing basically on grammar, vocabulary, and reading, such exams, in practice, promote a trend of English instruction in the formal system of education which puts a premium on these areas of language knowledge and disregards the other skills which are equally important. So, due to the common view which considers high score equal to high achievement, the grade pressure from students and parents gains the upperhand and leads the way for the process of English instruction in schools. This situation leaves teachers no choice but to surrender, mostly despite their will and standards of teaching, to the strong negative washback effect of such exams and shape their teaching practices based on the demands of these exams and, hence, act as pure implementers of the prescribed initiatives.

That is why the common method of English instruction in schools is the grammar-translation method with all its emphasis on the explicit instruction of grammatical rules, reading, translation, use of L1 as the medium of instruction, linguistic accuracy of form and structure, and memorization of long lists of vocabulary (Ghorbani, 2009). Not surprisingly, the product of such instruction is remarkably incompetent in oral communicative skills and productive ability (Farhady, Jafarpoor, & Birjandi, 1994; Hosseini, 2007; Kamyab, 2008).

In the macro level, this weakness of ELT in the formal education system has been repeatedly acknowledged and reported by teachers and experts who called for a change in the policy making and a paradigm shift toward more communicative methods of instruction and revision of the textbooks accordingly (Allami, Jalilifar, Hashemian, & Shooshtari, 2009; Farhady, 2000; Ghorbani, 2009; Rahimi, 1996; Rashidi, 1995; Razmjoo & Nouhi, 2011; Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006; Talebinezhad & Aliakbari, 2002; Yarmohammadi, 2000;). In the micro level, however, little research has been carried out in this regard proposing feasible solutions which can be actually implemented by the teachers in their local contexts in order to improve the status quo.

As an example of such research, Ghahremani-Ghajar and Mirhosseini (2005), investigated how dialogue journal writing, as a kind of written conversation, may provide an opportunity...
to bring critical pedagogy and foreign language education together in a productive way in the context of a critical literacy practice. Based on the results, writing dialogue journals as a language education activity in EFL pedagogy may empower learners and provide them with opportunities to express their ‘voice’. It further revealed that dialogue journal writing led to gains in critical self-reflective EFL writing ability.

Also, Khatib, Derakhshan, and Rezaei (2011) highlighted the significant role literature can play in enhancing learners' language development, cultural awareness, pragmatic awareness, emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and motivation. In their study, they proposed a new model called "Whole Literary Involvement" to be adopted in junior high schools and high schools in Iran which provides teachers with a procedure of how to utilize and integrate literature in their classes capitalizing upon task-based approach.

In the same vein, Ghorbani (2011) proposed a new technique in phonetic instruction aimed at improving the listening skill. In his study, he experimentally showed how phonetic instruction followed by the learners’ checking of their pronunciation by the use of phonemic transcription would enhance Iranian students’ listening ability. Based on the results, the proposed technique significantly facilitated the listening ability of the students.

In line with these studies, the researchers believe that some innovative techniques and supplementary materials need to be proposed in order to compensate for the shortcomings of ELT in the Iranian system of education. Accordingly, with the aim of proposing a useful technique in grammar instruction, this paper examined whether the use of specially-designed pictures for the implicit instruction of grammar would improve students’ writing and speaking skills.

2. Purpose of the Study

The present study sets itself the goal to shed some light on the following research questions:

1) Does implementing pictures for the implicit teaching of grammar have any effect on learners' writing?
2) Does implementing pictures for the implicit teaching of grammar have any effect on learners' speaking?
3) Is there any relationship between the two productive abilities, i.e. writing and speaking, of the learners?

These questions were then formulated into the following null hypothesis:

HO1: Implicit instruction of grammar through pictures has no effect on learners' writing.
HO2: Implicit instruction of grammar through pictures has no effect on learners' speaking.
HO3: There is no relationship between the writing and speaking abilities of the learners.

3. Method

3.1. Participants and Setting
This study was conducted on 66 female junior high school students. They consisted of two second grade classes (one as the experimental group and one as the control group), each having 33 students. Since random assignment was not possible, the nonequivalent group, pretest-posttest design was employed in this study. That is, subjects were tested in existing groups.

To enhance the homogeneity of the participants, the students who attended English classes outside school were not included; thus, any exposure to formal instruction of English other than that of school was controlled for.

3.2. Instrumentation
Two similar tests of writing were designed by the researchers and were employed one in pretesting to ensure the homogeneity of the groups at the very beginning of the course and the other in posttesting to observe the differences between the groups, i.e. the effect of the treatment. KR20 was used to measure the reliability coefficient of the tests, which was found to be $r = .85$ and $.89$. The pretest and posttest were similar but the focus in the pretest was what students had studied the previous year whereas the post test was an achievement test of what students had learned in the current school year.

The other instrument used in this study was two similar sets of questions (each consisting of 10 items) designed by the researchers to be used in the interviews. The pretest interviews were conducted in the beginning of the course to ascertain that both groups were initially on a par as far as their speaking was concerned. And the posttest interviews were held at the end of the course to measure the gain of the students in their speaking.

3.3 Procedure
The study was conducted in the school year 2011-2012, in Rahmat Junior High School in Mashhad, Iran. Two second grade classes of which one of the researchers was the teacher were chosen as the experimental and control groups. As mentioned earlier, in the beginning of the course, the pretest of writing was administered and also the pretest interviews were held in order to make sure both groups are similar regarding their writing and speaking abilities. Based on the curriculum, English classes were held two sessions a week. During the
sessions involving grammar instruction, the control group received the traditional explicit instruction through the explanation of the grammatical rules in L1 and doing the exercises in the textbook while the experimental group was taught implicitly via the use of pictures.

The set of pictures had been designed and prepared by the researchers before the course started. It consisted of 10 pages (one for each lesson of the textbook), each containing a number of pictures associating with the grammar presented in the given lesson. For instance, for lesson 5 presenting imperative structure, there were 5 pictures: the first picture showed two students in the classroom, one writing his name on the blackboard and the other writing on the wall, with a red cross on his hand; the other was a picture of a library with two girls, one studying at a desk and the other taking a book out with her, with a red cross on her hand; and so on. As another example, the page for lesson 6, presenting simple present tense, contained 10 pictures illustrating the boy character’s (Ali) routine activities: one showing his bedroom with him in the bed waking up and the clock on the wall showing 6 o’clock, the other showing him having breakfast with his family with the clock showing 6:30, and so on (see Appendix).

The process of grammar instruction involved first distributing the pictures associating with the focal lesson to the students and making some examples about the pictures by the teacher. Then students were asked to make sentences (orally) about the pictures and then about themselves and their friends. Finally, as their homework, they were supposed to write down their sentences and bring them the next session to be corrected by the teacher. This way, by the end of the course, students had a booklet of grammatical pictures with a number of sentences about them.

At the end of the course, the writing and speaking posttests were administered to measure the final achievements of the learners. Like the pretest, the posttest of writing was corrected on a scale from zero to 20 by two raters. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed both in pretest and posttest stage to determine the inter-rater reliability of the two sets of scores on subjects’ writings which ranged from .91 to .85. As with the pretest interviews, the posttest interviews were tape-recorded and scored on a scale from zero to 20. In the process of scoring the interviews, mainly the two factors of accuracy and fluency were attended to. To determine inter-rater reliability, ten oral recordings were randomly selected from the data. A trained rater and one of the researchers scored the data using the aforementioned measures. Inter-rater reliability was determined by looking at the percentage of agreement between the raters. Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient for the scores of the two coders was 0.83. At the end, a Pearson Product Moment correlation was
conducted to check for the possible relationship between the writing and speaking abilities of the learners.

4. Results and discussion

The two research questions addressed the effect of the implicit instruction of grammar via pictures on the learners’ writing and speaking abilities. The descriptive statistics for the achieved results presented in Table 1 summarize the performance of the two groups on the writing and speaking tests at the pre-test stage and post stage.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for the achieved results on the writing and speaking tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Dependant variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. error mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>16.15</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post test</td>
<td>17.12</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>15.36</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post test</td>
<td>16.75</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>16.03</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post test</td>
<td>19.30</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>0.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>15.30</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post test</td>
<td>18.81</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to the research questions, a series of t-tests were carried out on each dependent variable. First, regarding the achieved results on the writing tests, two independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the performances of the experimental and control groups on the pretests and post tests.

Table 2: Independent sample t-test on the experimental and control pretest and posttest writing scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean Differences</th>
<th>Std. error</th>
<th>t observed</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2 tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Control-Experimental</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post test</td>
<td>Control-Experimental</td>
<td>-2.18</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>-8.69</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in Table 2, the difference between the experimental and control group writing scores was insignificant at the pretest stage, i.e., the significance value (.68) was greater than the critical value (0.05). In other words, the two groups were homogeneous at the start in terms of their writing abilities. At the post test stage, however, the experimental group outperformed the control group since there was a significant difference between the experimental and control group scores. This is evident from the fact that the significance value (0.00) was smaller than the critical value (0.05). It can be concluded that implicit
instruction of grammar via pictures has had positive impact on the experimental group's writings. Hence, the first null hypothesis (implicit instruction of grammar through pictures has no effect on learners' writing) is rejected and it can be claimed that subjects' writing abilities improved through implicit instruction of grammar via pictures.

**Table 3**: Dependent Sample t-test for the writing performance of experimental group at pretest and post-test stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
<th>Std. error</th>
<th>t observed</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>Pretest-post test</td>
<td>-3.27</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>-12.66</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, to see the gains in the writing ability of the experimental group separately, a two-tailed matched t-test was run on the experimental group (Table 3). A comparison of the significance value (0.00) and the critical value (0.05) reveals that there was a statistically significant difference between the pretest and post-test means of the experimental subjects. Thus, it can be claimed that the students' writing ability in experimental group improved significantly from pretest to post test. This result strengthens the evidence to reject the HO1 and to conclude that the described instructional technique has had positive impact on the writings ability of the students.

The results of the speaking tests were also analyzed applying the same procedure used for the writing test results. That is, first, two independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the speaking performances of the experimental and control groups at post-test and pretest stages. Then, a two-tailed matched t-test was run on the experimental group to compare its performance in the pretest and post-test stages.

**Table 4**: Independent sample t-test on the experimental and control pretest and posttest speaking scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean Differences</th>
<th>Std. error</th>
<th>t observed</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2 tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Control-Experimental</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>0.35</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post test</td>
<td>Control-Experimental</td>
<td>-2.06</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>-6.59</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 4, there was no statistically significant difference between the experimental and control group speaking scores at the pre-test stage as indicated by the significance value (.86) which was greater than the critical value (0.05). It means that the two groups were homogeneous at the start regarding their speaking abilities. At the post test stage, on the other hand, the performance of experimental group was significantly better than that of the control group. This is evident from the fact that the significance value (0.00) was
smaller than the critical value (0.05). The possible explanation for this difference in performance could very well be the impact of implicit instruction of grammar via pictures on improvement of experimental group's speaking ability. Hence, the second null hypothesis (Implicit instruction of grammar through pictures has no effect on learners' speaking) is also rejected.

**Table 5:** Dependent Sample t-test for the speaking performance of experimental group at pretest and post-test stage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>t observed</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>Pretest-post test</td>
<td>-3.51</td>
<td>-11.52</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, to see the gains in the speaking ability of the experimental group separately, a two-tailed matched t-test was run on the experimental group (Table 5). Comparing the significance value (0.00) and the critical value (0.05) reveals that, once again, there was a statistically significant difference between the pretest and post test means of the experimental subjects. This result again gives evidence to reject HO2 and suggests that students' writing abilities in experimental group improved significantly due to the described instructional technique.

Finally, to test the third hypothesis, a Pearson Product Moment correlation was conducted on the post test writing and speaking scores of the experimental group. As indicated in Table 6, the correlation coefficient was found to be $r = .730$ ($p<.01$) which denotes to a pretty strong relationship between the two productive abilities and therefore the third null hypothesis (There is no relationship between the writing and speaking abilities of the learners) is also rejected.

**Table 6:** Pearson Product Moment correlation on the writing and speaking abilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.730**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

To conclude, analyzing the results obtained from the experimental and the control groups with regard to their performances on the writing and speaking tests, deductions can be made
that implicit instruction of grammar via pictures significantly improved both writing and speaking abilities of the learners.

5. Conclusion

Each system of education has its own merits and shortcomings and Iranian educational system is not an exception. With the intention of overcoming the problems and improving the system, a responsible teacher would criticize the educational system, its textbooks, instruction methods, testing schemes, etc. and call for the necessary changes to be made by the authorities (top-down change). This is for sure commendable but not enough; Since the true improvement of the status quo needs more than just having high hopes for the big change to happen. That is, aware autonomous teachers can at the same time make their own contributions to the system and through action research devise and implement simple innovative techniques to foster the education and start the change from their local contexts (bottom-up change).

As mentioned earlier, English in the formal education in Iran is taught through the textbooks which overemphasize the explicit grammatical rules and unilateral development of reading skill and through a method of instruction which is a mixture of boring Audiolingual drills for grammar and grammar-translation method. This trend in ELT can have demotivating effects on the learners (Thekes, 2011, Xiao-Yun, 2010, Vágó, 2007). Such demotivating effect provokes more concern when elementary level students are involved.

The technique proposed in this study, i.e. implicit instruction of grammar via the use of specially-designed pictures, which is devised in reaction to this important problem is believed to have two advantages: first, instruction through visualization provides the necessary stimuli for making the students engaged and motivated, making the learning practice interesting and enjoyable, and hence, providing students with entertaining education which enhances their learning and gives them a sense of accomplishment (Thekes, 2011). Second, by employing pictures as a rich source in the elicitation process – process of eliciting spoken and written speech from the learners – this technique fosters the productive and communicative abilities which are neglected in the curriculum and thus compensates for this shortcoming.

We believe that by devising or implementing facilitative techniques such as the one described in this study, teachers can provoke the necessary bottom-up changes and contribute to the revitalization of English language teaching in Iranian junior high schools.
Acknowledgements
We gratefully acknowledge this research would not have been possible without the help and cooperation of Ms. Fereshte Shahraki, the devoted teacher who, in an attempt to improve English teaching in schools, insightfully devised this technique and first implemented it successfully in her classes.

References


Appendix

Simple present

Ali

[Image of daily activities such as waking up, eating breakfast, going to work, and returning home, with a note on the activity: 7:00 ]
Title

Exploring EFL Teachers' Perceptions, Attitudes and Self-efficacy of doing Task-Based Language Teaching: The Case of Iranian State School Teachers

Author

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Biodata

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Abstract

During the last two decades or so, task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been the subject of a host of research studies; however, quite rarely have researchers addressed such important issues as teachers’ perceptions, attitudes and self-efficacy of doing TBLT in EFL classes. This study was aimed to explore EFL teachers’ perceptions, attitudes and self-efficacy of doing TBLT in Iranian state schools context. The data for this study was collected through a TBLT test and two questionnaires (attitude and self-efficacy) from 115 English teachers randomly selected from 5 different districts in junior and high schools in Isfahan. The overall findings of the survey indicated that the majority of respondents have a minimum level of understanding about TBLT concepts, regardless of teaching levels, sex and experience, and that there exist positive attitude and self-efficacy of doing TBLT in EFL classes. Additionally, some useful implications and recommendation for future research are proposed based on research findings in order to help teachers and teacher trainers to construct and implement TBLT more effectively.

Keywords: Task-based language teaching (TBLT), Teachers’ perceptions, Attitudes, Self-efficacy

1. Introduction
Review of task-based literature indicates that despite its pedagogical benefits surrounding the participatory learning culture, TBLT has not yet been sufficiently researched or proven empirically in terms of its classroom practice in school foreign language learning contexts (Carless, 2004; Jeon & Hahn, 2006). One reason for this may be the negative attitude of the EFL teachers who decide not to use it because they see no benefit in running it. It is also possible that teachers have no information how to implement this approach in their classes. Recent empirical research has shown that what teachers do in classroom is not always consistent with what they should do, or can, be done (Basturkmen, Loewen, & Ellis, 2004; Borg, 2006; Fang, 1996). A number of factors have been suggested to explain the inconsistencies between the way teachers perceive things and the way they act such as contextual constraints, conflicting beliefs and conflict between beliefs and skills. Research into the exact relationship between teacher cognition and teacher actions aims to yield deeper insight into what drives teachers to act in particular way in the classroom. Obviously, this kind of research is highly relevant for pre-service and in-service training.

This leaves us with crucial questions (Van den Branden, 2006): Does TBLT work for teachers and learners in the classroom as well as it does for SLA researchers? Is TBLT compatible with prevailing classroom practices, with teachers’ and learners’ subjective beliefs of what makes good language education? How, for instance, does a teacher who has been using a traditional ‘focus on form’ approach for 20 years react to TBLT? How do teachers react to the idea of no longer having the particulars of grammar spelled out before being confronted with a speaking task?

Furthermore, within the Asia Pacific region, a number of attempts to introduce communicative or task-based approaches have often proven problematic: in South Korea, Hong Kong, Japan, Turkey, Vietnam and Indonesia (Carless, 1999). There is very little research available on how experienced teachers perceive this particular role and their attitude, on whether they are able and willing to put it in to practice and on whether this particular role clashes with other roles teachers have in mind or take it up in their classes. Teachers are frequently required to implement policies of external decision makers (e.g. Ministry of Education). Such authorities may or may not be familiar with the teachers' viewpoints or the specific classroom context in which the proposed policy is to be implemented. If teachers' understanding, attitudes and potentialities are not taken account of, the already challenging nature of implementing something new may be exacerbated. In light of this, the present study investigated Iranian EFL teachers' perceptions, attitude and self-efficacy toward task-based language teaching.
This study therefore intended to address the following research questions:

1. Do junior and high school English teachers have adequate knowledge about TBLT concepts?
2. What is the attitude of junior and high school English teachers toward TBLT?
3. Do junior and high school English teachers who have adequate knowledge of TBLT have enough self-efficacy in planning and implementing TBLT in their classes?

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1 Perceptions and Attitudes toward Methods

Behind any teaching enterprise, there always exist some theoretical assumptions. It’s refers to as guiding lines or principles. Sometimes not even teachers can state them as such explicit foundations. But these principles do work and influence their everyday teaching activity. As Stern (1983, pp. 24-25) maintains, “A language teacher can express his theoretical conviction through classroom activities as much as (or indeed, better than) through the opinions he voices in discussions at professional meetings”.

Rogers (1995) asserts that the decision by an individual within an organization to adopt a particular innovation is rarely independent of other decisions. Authoritative decisions may increase the chance of initial adoption by individuals but may also reduce the chance that the innovation is successfully implemented and routinized.

Teachers’ attitudes received much attention in the literature during the early 1950’s and early 1970’s and, more recently, they have resurfaced as key to understanding what motivates teachers’ actions (Borg, 2006). Among other terms, researchers groups attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions as a set of mental constructs that name, define, and describe the structure and content of mental states thought to drive a person’s actions. They also alludes to the definition offered by anthropologists, social psychologists, and philosophers that considers beliefs as psychological propositions, premises, and other understandings about the world that are felt to be true (ibid.).

Arguing in favor of a social constructivist approach to language learning—both naturalistic and instructed—Williams and Burden (1997) also bring to the forefront the close relationship between beliefs and actions on the part of both teachers and students. They propose that teachers’ actions are highly influenced by their beliefs and assert that “one of the many facets that teachers bring to the teaching-learning process is a view of what education is all about, and this belief, whether implicit or explicit, will influence their actions in the
classroom” (pp. 48-49). The authors propose that an essential stage in the social constructivist approach is for teachers to identify what their beliefs are.

Even though teachers’ belief structures may be extremely resistant to change, Borg (2003) argues that change can indeed occur. In his summary of the research on studies in belief change, the author notes that in-service teachers tend to be more open to change than pre-service teachers. Another catalyst for belief change resides in a constructivist approach where teachers are encouraged to engage in reflective examination of their practices and beliefs (ibid.).

2.2 English Education in Iranian Schools: The Status quo and the Future

Few researchers investigated teaching/learning English in junior and high school states schools. Saadat (1995) found lots of problems with the current systems in Fars province such as: 1) lack of teaching aids, 2) great number of students in classes and 3) bulk of the textbooks. Also, the teachers believed that the second grade of junior high school was too late for the students to start learning English and the time devoted to English in the curriculum was insufficient (ibid.). In another study, Rahimi (1996) found the same problems in the current system in Isfahan: a) the classes are over populated, b) the teacher do not use any educational aids, if any, c) the textbooks suffer from lack of sufficient explanations for new words, non conformity of the contents with students’ mental abilities, the absences of jokes and poems, etc, d) the teachers are not satisfied with their jobs, e) grade 1 of junior high school is not an appropriate time for starting the learning of English, and g) because there are not enough facilities in schools communicative skills can not be developed.

Thus, it seems that these problems caused avoidance of using communicative approaches in state schools. The following Table presents English instruction in state schools:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Amount of instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7-11</td>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>Junior High School (Guidance school)</td>
<td>Grade 1 = 2 hours a week; Grades 2 &amp; 3 = 4 hours a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-17</td>
<td>High School</td>
<td>Grade 1= 3 hours a week; Grades 2 &amp; 3 = 2 hours a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Pre-university</td>
<td>4 hours a week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table presents, English is taught as an obligatory subject in grade one of guidance school and onward. The textbooks taught are designed and prepared by the Ministry of Education. Based on the textbook content, the students are evaluated formatively and summatively.
In brief, EFL instruction in Iranian schools today tends to be teacher-centered, the four skills are often taught primarily separately, and language is not taught as a means of real communication but as an object to be analyzed. However, considering new methods of teaching and particularly communicative language teaching will require a shift in these practices.

2.2.1 Teacher-centered Instruction
First, EFL teaching in English remains largely teacher-centered in Iran even today. “To teach” is often regarded as “to talk” (Eftekhari, 2009). Students assume that learning is to sit passively and listen to teachers' talking. In teacher-centered instruction, even though teachers use English in the classroom, the instruction is one-way, just from teachers to students. No development in real, interactive or two-way communicative competence in English is expected. Teachers dominate the lesson, while students produce almost nothing during the lesson (ibid.). In other words, students are not given chances to create or express their own opinions through the content they are learning. They are mere passive learners like puppets (ibid.). It is a one-way teaching style. Kensaku (2001) described this kind of EFL settings to a 'Fish Bowl', where the fish simply waits to be fed and to have the water changed. In other words, the teacher provides everything for learning, and the students, who are passive learners, just learn what the teacher provides to them.

2.2.2 Teaching of the Four Skills Separately Without a Real Communicative Purpose
A second major characteristic of English teaching in Iran's schools today is that the four skills are taught separately, if taught at all (Alizade, 1991; Veysi, 1991). Moreover, language is taught as an ‘entity’ quite divorced from communication and practical use (ibid.).

In the real world, people do not learn or use language in this way, and such an analytic approach to instruction has been generally rejected by experts. For example, Snow (1997) notes the treatment of the skills such as reading and writing separately discourages efforts to teach language in a holistic and natural way. Also, the teaching of language as an object of analysis and not a means of communication is counter-productive (Clair, 1995). Nevertheless, many English teachers in Iran believe that the way to teach English is through strategies such as repetition, reading out loud, explanations in grammar, translation exercises, answering display questions and pattern practices. In other words, these strategies are introduced for learning of the forms and rules of the language, not for developing communicative competence. Moreover, when Iranian teachers focus on the forms and rules of the language, they usually teach each of the four skills separately (Alizade, 1991; Veysi, 1991).

A typical activity in speaking practice, for example, is that teachers focus on superficial comprehension of the dialogue by asking simple factual questions for which there is one correct
answer rather than on the listener's own interpretation of the dialogue content (Alizade, 1991). That is, instruction does not focus on realistic use of language: the skills are taught separately, and there is little use of language to communicate real meaning.

2.3 Some Reasons for the Status quo

There are probably lots of reasons why Iranian EFL instruction in schools is teacher-centered with a non-communicative approach. Probably, the first is that the main purpose for teaching English still seems to be preparing students for final and college entrance examinations which are remained quite structural and do not assess speaking, listening and writing. Many Iranian English teachers in schools believe that the current method of instruction of English is well suited for this purpose (Eftekhari, 2009). Of course, there are some students who want to develop the practical ability to use English as a tool of communication. Nevertheless, most Iranian English teachers tend to focus on the traditional goal of preparing for the final and college entrance examinations unless the change in examination exerts a positive washback on the current assessment and their methodology as scrutinized by experts who studied the wash back effect of a public examination change on teacher’s perceptions toward their classroom teaching (Andrews, 1994; Bailey, 1999; Cheng, 1999, 2004).

The other reason for the status quo might be that teachers often do not utilize alternate methodologies because of the educational policies and the prescribed textbooks. Thus, Iranian school English teachers follow textbooks very closely, focusing on teaching vocabulary and phrases, grammatical structures, and checking the content by translating each sentence into Persian, all as separate analytical exercises with no real communication purpose. For many teachers, the textbooks are like a bible for teaching English (Eftekhari, 2009). As a result, those teachers generally do not integrate the different parts of a chapter, do not integrate the skills, do not add related material, and do not create their own materials.

2.4 Time for Change

Searching for the aim of the foreign language teaching in Iran, surprisingly, I found no benchmark. Alizade (1991, p. 2) postulated this lack of existing clear goal as the main reason of the problems in the state schools system. Even there is no teachers’ guide book or website for the present books. The future will look brighter, if some changes being made in the Ministry of Education as they promised to devise a new course of study considering developing communicative competence (Education Ministry, 2008). The previous course of study issued in 1986 and implemented up to now gave the following as the main goals at the back cover of guidance school book, although interestingly enough, it was removed in new editions!:
Learning English as a foreign language offers a means of knowledge, a mode of communication, and an instrument of judgment and growth (Birjandi & Soheili, 2004).

Such an aim, naturally, necessitates communicative approaches; however, Razmjoo (2007) found no representation of CLT principals in school text books. Thus the key shift should be toward practical language actively used to communicate real meaning. This goal is made more difficult because of a problem which exists in Iran that is there is no practical need to use foreign language for communication purposes in every day life. In this sense, teachers have to create a temporary space in their classes, where students have to use English for real communication.

A second shift that follows from the first is that the new approaches such as TBLT no longer divide activities into the four language skills. Instead, the new approaches calls for communication activities that integrate the four domains (Ellis, 2008). Language teaching will require the comprehensive use of the four skills in each language activity, because now the emphasis is on development of communicative ability (ibid.). In other words, the new guidelines require teaching the use of the integrated four skills in real life situations in which students can alternately be senders or receivers of information or thoughts.

As for the teaching style to implement this approach, the new approaches refer to the appropriate adaptation of pair-work and group-work in the lessons, while no mention was given to these learning techniques in the traditional approaches. In short, TBLT calls for the shifting of the teaching style from teacher-centered to learner-centered.

All of these goals can be addressed by the use of a particular communicative integrated-skills teaching approach called task-based language teaching (TBLT).

2.5 TBLT in Iran
To my best knowledge, only few studies investigated TBLT in teaching language skills in Iran (Abdorahimzadeh, 1998; Alinejad, 2004; Ansari, 2003; Mohammadi, 2006; Mortazavi, 2009; Najafi, 1996; Razmjoo, 2006; Rezaiyan, 2001; Zare, 2007). Najafi (1996) examined the effectiveness of task-based activities in helping students learn English language structures for a better communication. It is also designed to answer the question which technique to teaching English language structures is more effective: the structural or the task-based techniques. She concluded that the intermediate EFL students learn English language structures better when they are taught through task-based techniques than through structural techniques. Therefore, language teachers are invited to furnish their teaching with the task-based techniques and activities, if they wish to educate more proficient language learners.
In another study, Abdorahimzadeh (1998) investigated a communicative and task-based approach to teaching major courses at the B.A level. In his study, a task-based teaching procedure (TBTP) for teaching major courses was suggested to enhance both learners' role and responsibility in teaching and learning materials and to increase classroom purposeful communication in the second language at the same time. The study assessed and compared the effects of this procedure and two teacher-fronted procedures, non-communicative and communicative, on learners' achievement and improvement over half a semester. The findings indicated that the TBTP was as effective as the other two procedures in bringing about achievement gain in the subject matter content. Furthermore, it was found that this procedure is more effective than the non-communicative, teacher-fronted procedure with regard to learners' progress and improvement over the instruction period. Thus, on the basis of these results, he recommended the TBTP as a way to integrate major course instruction within a communicative and learner-oriented framework to enhance students' language improvement along with progress and achievement in the subject matters of major courses.

Regarding the effect of TBLT on different skills, Ansari (2003) investigated the impact of task-based approach vs. text-based approach on EFL students’ writing skill. She reported that the participants of task-based training performed better in the post test and therefore recommend the application of this methodology for teaching writing. Also, Alinejad (2004) investigated the effect of task-based reading activities and text-based reading activities on the Iranian EFL learners’ reading comprehension. Her findings verified the importance of using task-based instruction as an effective way to achieve a good command of the reading skill.

In relation to teaching grammar, Mohammadi (2006) investigated aspects of the learning of particular structures within a traditional framework of language teaching methods, and then compared and contrasted the results with those obtained under the innovative focus-on-form technique within TBLT. The result indicated that TBLT proved more successful than both traditional approaches and input-enhancement in effectively teaching the target grammatical structures to the learners. Moreover, Mortazavi (2009) investigated the effect of contextualization of language teaching through tasks around song on learning and retentions of grammar. He also found that TBLT is indeed effective for teaching grammar through songs to learners in comparison with traditional approaches.

Regarding practicality of communicative approaches, Razmjoo (2006) explored high school and private institute teachers' attitudes toward CLT within the context of an expanding circle, Iran. Secondly, the study aimed at exploring the extent to which the
teachers of these two domains materialized and substantiated their attitudes. To fulfill the objectives, a questionnaire was distributed among 100 male and female teachers in high schools and private institutes. Also, the textbooks and the tests of the two domains were analyzed. Descriptive and inferential analysis of the data indicated that high school and institute teachers' attitudes toward the CLT are positive, indicating a welcoming atmosphere toward the implementation of CLT. However, among the participants only the teachers of institutes indicated the employment of a semi-CLT type of approach in their classes. In addition, only the institute textbooks represented CLT principles and the high school textbooks were too far from these principles.

In another study, Zare (2007) investigated the attitude of private institute teachers and learners toward task-based language teaching. The purpose of the study was to find out whether TBLT was successful in the classes under study given the fact that students in Iran have rarely been exposed to task-work in the educational system. It also sought to investigate the form that task-work took in these classes and the steps taken to carry out the task-work. To this end, two questionnaires were developed to examine the attitudes of the Iranian EFL learners towards TBLT and one questionnaire was developed to examine the teachers' attitudes in this regard. Also, through non-participant observation, the researcher tried to describe the forms the tasks took and the steps taken in the task-work. The results of the study showed that the Iranian EFL learners and teachers had a positive attitude towards TBLT and welcomed the new experience. The results also indicated that, in comparison with the male students, the female students were more willing to learn English through a task-based approach. Another conclusion was that in the task-based lesson design the students had much time to use the language and the teacher talk was lessened. He suggested that the finding implies that EFL teachers can be hopeful to successfully apply TBLT in their classes even in state schools because the learners adapt themselves to this new approach of language teaching.

However, Rezayin (2001) found lack of consistency between theory and practice in the classrooms. The data in her study revealed that there was a very weak consistency between theory and practice concerning teaching reading comprehension. Another conclusion was that, in teaching reading, ELT teachers still stick to form-based teaching, rather than task-based teaching.

In sum, in all of these studies, they found that task-based language teaching is indeed working in our Iranian context. The findings of these studies suggested that the use of task-oriented techniques gives better results than the use of structural techniques regarding the acquisition of English by the EFL students. Their research also encouraged
language teachers who are reluctant to change their methods and techniques of teaching and those who still stick to the structural and audio-lingual approaches, to try the new ways of teaching foreign languages and to change their viewpoints in favor of the more up to date and useful ones in this field. It is implied that the communicative nature of this approach and maintaining students' direct role in their own learning have provided learners with enough motivation and positive attitude and encouraged them to improve their background knowledge. The teacher was also the main agent who could materialize these pedagogical dimensions in the classroom. As it is the case with learning English as a foreign language, learners' main problems in these studies included lack of enough motivation, negative attitude, and lack of enough opportunity to use the second language communicatively. The TBLT seemed to help learners with all of these aspects within the limits of the classroom environment. It also showed the potentiality of being helpful for other pedagogical issues including bringing about a close teacher-students relation, creating a social climate in class environment, facilitating classmate tutoring, and most importantly providing learners with an independent sense of learning. Thus, it seems that at least we can exploit the mandated text book, and form the background of the central task. One of the intentions in doing so was to demonstrate that a language teacher needs not give up in a material driven or text book driven course (Edwards & Willis, 2005; D. Willis & Willis, 2007).

3. Method
3.1 Participants
The population from which the participants of the study were selected was Iranian guidance and high school English language teachers whose first language is Persian. A total number of 115 experienced male and female EFL English teachers from guidance and high schools in Isfahan districts were selected via stratified random sampling i.e. they were categorized in to 5 groups based on the five educational districts of Isfahan and then out of each stratum, 23 teachers were selected randomly to complete the test and two questionnaires of the study. Table 3.1 presents the demographic information pertained to participants in more detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching level</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guidance school</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>74.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1. Teacher Participants Characteristics (N = 115)
As the above Table shows, the 115 participants were composed of 86 Junior high school teachers (74.8%) and 29 high school teachers (25.2%). All of the participants had at least few years of experience in teaching English as a foreign language. The number of female teachers was 67 (58.3%) and 48 teachers (41.7%) were male. The teachers ranged in age from their twenties to thirties (53.9%), thirties to forties (30.4%), forties to fifties (12.2%) and more than fifty (3.5%). The number of years they had taught English varied, ranging from less than 6 years (43.5%), 6 to 10 years (23.5%), 11 to 19 years (24.3%), and more than 20 years (8.7%). Also, most of the teachers held a BA (73.0%) and only 5.2% of them held an MA degree.

### 3.2 Instrumentation

Three different instruments were employed in the present study: a TBLT test, an attitude questionnaire, and a self-efficacy questionnaire. Each instrument is introduced in detail below.

#### 3.2.1 TBLT Test

One assumption in this study was that teachers might be unaware of the principles of task-based language teaching (TBLT) and therefore because of this might not use the method in their classes. Therefore it was decided to assess teachers’ knowledge about TBLT by devising a TBLT test. Most of state school teachers started their career by entering Teacher Training Centers (TTC). They later continued their education at universities. Since most universities in Iran methodology courses offer Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching (Richard & Rodgers, 2001) and Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching (Larsen-Freeman, 2000), the test of TBLT was developed on the basis of these two books. Fourteen multiple choice items were made based on the sections of Task-based language teaching in the above books. In doing so, I used the available test books for these two books: Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching Across Achievement Tests (Baroudy, 2005b) and
Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching Across Achievement Tests (Baroudy, 2005a). Test items assessed different categories. Table 3.2 presents this categorization:

Table 3.2. Test items and features they assessed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Differences between ‘task’ and ‘exercise’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Underlying principles, aims and advantages and of TBLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The role of teachers and learners in TBLT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Methodology of TBLT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The test was piloted in the pilot study (see 3.3.1) and some items were revised.

3.2.2 The Attitude Questionnaire

As reported in literature review, teachers’ knowledge and attitude affect their classroom behavior. Such attitudes influence what students learn, they may also function as potent determinant of teachers' teaching style. Therefore an effort to understand language teachers' attitudes towards task-based language teaching (TBLT) an attitude questionnaire was developed as part of this study.

The teacher attitude questionnaire was adapted from a pool of other attitude items used by previous researchers (Jarvis & Atsilarat, 2005; Jeon, Hahn, & Data, 2006; Karavas-Doukas, 1996). This was to help finding out teachers’ attitude toward communicative and task based language teaching. This questionnaire included 20 and used a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1(Strongly disagree) to 5(Strongly agree)).

This questionnaire gathered information about teachers’ attitude toward different features of TBLT. Table 3.3 presents items with their counterparts’ category:

Table 3.3 Items and their related category in attitude questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Major principles of doing task-based language teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>“Tasks”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Knowledge transmission, and importance of accuracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Group work, and teachers’ role</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The questionnaire was piloted and some items were revised in the pilot study (see.3.3.1).

3.2.3 The Self-efficacy Questionnaire

As the third instrument it was decided to examine the teachers’ self-efficacy in implementing TBLT method. The assumption was that teachers with high self-efficacy tend to make more effort in teaching, be open to new ideas and more willing to experiment with new methods to better meet the needs of their students. Such teachers are also more likely to exhibit higher levels of planning and organization when dealing with new methodologies. Therefore, in
In order to understand language teachers' self-efficacy of doing task-based language teaching (TBLT) a self-efficacy questionnaire was used as part of this study.

For this study, I adapted the teacher self-efficacy Questionnaire developed by Schwarzer, Schmitz, & Daytner (1999). This questionnaire included 10 items. Table 3.4 shows the self-efficacy ideas explored in this questionnaire.

**Table 3.4. Items and their related category in self-efficacy questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Job accomplishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Skill development on the job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Social interaction with students, parents, and colleagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Coping with job stress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For each of these four domains teachers may hold different self–efficacy expectations. These major areas appear to be of vital importance to successful teaching. In order to make this questionnaire more specific, 7 more items were constructed and added to it (items 31 to 37). In so doing, Bandura’s social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977) was taken into consideration. The theory suggests a certain semantic structure for self–efficacy items. First, the subject should be “I” since the aim is to find out an individual's subjective belief. An item should contain verbs like “can”, or “be able to”, making clear that the item asks for success because of personal competence. Furthermore, items have to contain a barrier since there is no use in asking for self–efficacy expectancies for actions that are not difficult to perform or that might just be routine.

The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). It was revised in the pilot study (see 3.3.1.).

**3.3. Procedures**

**3.3.1 Pilot Study**

The pilot study was conducted in order to (i) measure the time required for completing the test and also the two questionnaires, (ii) clarify the data collection procedures, and (iii) measure the internal consistency of the test and questionnaires. Prior to the pilot study the translation of the questionnaires was assessed by experts, and some items were rephrased. First, the questionnaires were translated into Persian by the researcher. Two Iranian doctoral students at the University of Isfahan checked item-compatibility between their Persian and English versions. The back-translation, a technique used to measure translation quality, found three items to be somewhat different. These items were retranslated by the researcher and then rechecked by the experts. Finally, the content and wording of the questionnaires were re-examined by the thesis committee members.
Fifteen teachers participated in the pilot study. They were Iranian state and private school language teachers, ranging in age from 24 to 33 (10 males and 5 females). It took about 25 minutes for the participants to complete the TBLT test and the two questionnaires (attitude and self-efficacy). Using Cronbach’s alpha, the internal consistency (reliability) of the Test and two questionnaires in the pilot study were estimated. The results indicated reliability indexes of 0.71, 0.84 and 0.86 for the TBLT test, attitude and self-efficacy questionnaires, respectively. After administrating the questionnaire in the main study, the same procedure was followed to assess the reliability of the questionnaire for the whole sample.

On the basis of the results of the pilot study, some items of the test and also the two questionnaires were to be modified. The researcher also decided to place the Likert scales on every page of the questionnaires so that the subjects would not have to flip pages.

The results of the pilot study were also used to reformulate some additional items on the test as well as the two questionnaires. One participant stated that items 7 and 14 were confusing in the TBLT test. Also items 4, 16 and 21 were referred to as being confusing or unclear in the questionnaires. Therefore, a few changes were made in the Persian versions for the ease of understanding and hence convenient completion of the questionnaires.

3.3.2 Main Study

3.3.2.1 Data Collection
Different schools were attended by the researcher in five districts of Isfahan. I invited 86 junior high school and 29 high school English teachers to complete the instruments of the study. For each teacher, I briefly explained the pedagogical goal of the instruments. They first answered the 14 items in the TBLT test and the attitude and the self-efficacy questioners afterwards.

3.3.2.2 Scoring Procedures
As for the scoring of TBLT test, each correct answer was given a single point. All the correct answers added up to a total sum. There was no penalty for the wrong answers or for the items not answered at all.

In scoring the two questionnaires, the Likert-type items, was given numerical values i.e. strongly disagree =1, disagree =2, undecided=3, agree=4, and strongly agree=5. Furthermore, items 3 and 4 in the attitude questionnaire were reverse coded before doing the data analysis because wording of these items were reversed to help prevent response bias. The data were then analyzed using SPSS software version 16 for Windows.
3.3.2.3 Data Analysis
This study addressed three research questions. For question one (Do junior and high school English teachers have adequate knowledge about TBLT concepts?) descriptive statistics and percentage analysis was applied on the data obtained from TBLT test items.

The second research question (What is the attitude of junior and high school English teachers toward TBLT approach?) was addressed using descriptive statistics and percentage analysis on the data collected from attitude questionnaire of those who have adequate knowledge about TBLT concepts.

And finally, to address the third research question (Do junior and high school English teachers who have adequate knowledge of TBLT have enough self-efficacy in planning and implementing TBLT in their classes) descriptive statistics and percentage analysis were conducted on the data gathered from self-efficacy questionnaire of those who have adequate knowledge of TBLT concepts.

3.3.2.4 Reliability and Validity
Using Cronbach’s alpha, the internal consistency (reliability) of the Test and two questionnaires were estimated. This resulted in the indices of 0.74, 0.89, and .90 for the TBLT test, attitude and self-efficacy questionnaires, respectively. Thus reliability indices observed here indicated that the instruments enjoyed reasonable reliability estimates and were therefore appropriate for the purpose of the study.

Regarding validity, the TBLT test and the two questionnaires were examined by 6 faculty members in the department of English at Isfahan and Mashhad universities. The experts suggested that the definition of task-based language teaching should be included in the attitude questionnaire. Also, some of the items were modified based on their suggestions.

4. Result and discussion
4.1 To Address Knowledge about TBLT Concepts
1. Do guidance and high school English teachers have adequate knowledge about TBLT concepts?
In this phase of the study it was decided that the adequate amount of knowledge to be defined as scores which fell above the mean. Thus in order to determine the cut off point score of the TBLT test, the descriptive statistic of the test was calculated. Table 4.1. presents the results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.82</td>
<td>3.278</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1. Descriptive Statistics on TBLT Test
As Table 4.1 shows the mean of the total TBLT test is 6.82, it was therefore decided those who got less than 7 on the test should be considered as failed. Based on this cut of score, the percentage analysis was conducted to address the first research question. Table 4.2. presents the results:

**Table 4.2. Percentage Analysis of TBLT test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td></td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the Table presents, 41.7 percent of teachers showed lack of knowledge in terms of TBLT concepts, the good news however is that 58.28 percent of them did know the basic concepts involved in this methodology.

**4.2. To Address Attitude toward TBLT Approach**

2. What is the attitude of guidance and high school English teachers toward TBLT?

In order to come up with a whole picture, the descriptive statistic of the attitude questionnaire was calculated. In so doing, only the scores of those teachers who got a pass on the TBLT test were calculated. Tables 4.3. shows the mean and the standard deviation of these scores:

**Table 4.3. Descriptive Statistics for the Teachers' Attitude Scores on the Questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>42.00</td>
<td>96.00</td>
<td>78.88</td>
<td>11.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As there were 20 questions in the questionnaire, and on each question the value attached to the choices ranged from 1 to 5, the highest possible score could be 100 (= 20 × 5). According to Table 4.4, the mean of the scores on the questionnaire was 78.88 and the standard deviation 11.80. The mean of the attitude scores on the questionnaire is rather high. This shows that the teachers had a relatively positive attitude towards TBLT.

In order to examine the attitude of teachers to different categories scrutinized in table 3.3, percentage analysis and mean of each category are presented separately. The first classification explored teachers’ ideas about major principles of doing task-based language teaching. Table 4.4. presents the result (Strongly Disagree: SD, Disagree: DS, Neutral: N, Agree: A, Strongly Agree: SA):

**Table 4.4. Percentage Analysis and Mean Percentages of the First Category**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Major principles of doing task-based language teaching</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I have interest in implementing TBLT in the classroom.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>50.7</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Teaching should focus on fluency rather than accuracy.</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Student autonomy can be increased by TBLT techniques.</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>4.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the above table shows, most of teachers had a positive attitude towards implementing this methodology (82.%) (For the convenience of comparison, the five-point scale responses were merged into a three-point simplified scale (strongly disagree & disagree = SA+DC, neutral = N, agree & strongly agree= A+SA). In responses to items which asked for some key concepts of TBLT, the vast majority of respondents convey that teaching should focus on fluency (46%), students autonomy can be increased by TBLT techniques (85%), TBLT pursues development of integrated skills in the classroom (73.1%) and TBLT creates a collaborative learning environment (77.6%).

The second category investigated teachers’ view toward general concept of ‘tasks’.

Table 4.5. Percentage Analysis and Mean Percentages of Teachers’ View toward Concept of Tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Tasks</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Tasks are an effective way of organizing activities for students.</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>4.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Good learning tasks should involve learners in problem solving.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>4.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Choice should be part of learning activities.</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>3.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>When finishing group work, each group should report their results to the class.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the above table shows, most teachers have the conviction that tasks are an effective way of organizing activities for students (79.1%), good learning tasks should involve learners in problem solving (76.1%), choice should be part of learning activities (79.1%) i.e. meaning is primary and when finishing group work, each group should report their results to the class (89.6%) i.e. tasks should have a clear outcome to achieve.

The third category investigated teachers’ view toward knowledge transmission, and importance of accuracy. Table 4.6. presents the result:

Table 4.6. Percentage Analysis and Mean Percentages of Teachers’ View toward the Third Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Knowledge transmission, and importance of accuracy</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Teachers should stand in front of the classroom.</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The teacher should be the centre of the knowledge transmission.</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>2.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The teacher should focus on speaking skill. Grammar and vocabulary are secondary.</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>43.3</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The teacher should use language that has the same speed, same accents, as native speakers.</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the above Table presents, findings of items 3, 4, and 9 show some negative responses. Items 3 and 4, which explored teachers’ beliefs about traditional style of teaching that is standing in front of the class and transmit knowledge to learners, present 55.2% and 34.3% agreement by the teachers, respectively. This may indicates that in EFL classes teachers spend the majority of class time in the center of the class. This naturally makes the teacher the center of attention. Future, item 4 represent transmission model of learning which leads naturally to a teacher-centered classroom in which the learners are passive recipients of input fed into them by the teacher. Language classrooms predicated on this approach are characterized by rote learning, memorization, and repetition. Also, only 40.3% responded positively to Items 9 which stated teacher should use language that has the same speed and accent as native speakers.

Finally, the last category investigated teachers’ view toward group work, and teachers’ role. Table 4.7. presents the result:

**Table 4.7. Percentage Analysis and Mean Percentages of Teachers’ View toward Group Work, and Teachers’ Role**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Group work, and teachers’ role</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>DS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students and teachers should share the responsibility for learning</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The teacher should encourage the students to learn by themselves</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>59.7</td>
<td>4.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The teacher should spend a lot of time on role play/games/group and pair work.</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The teacher is a facilitator helping the students to generate information.</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>The teacher should give students freedom to draw on their knowledge and to be creative.</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>4.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen in the above Table, the vast majority of teachers believed that teachers should (i) share the responsibility for learning (89.6%), (ii) encourage the students to learn by themselves (91.0%), (iii) spend a lot of time on role play/games/group and pair work (88.1%), and (iv) give students freedom to draw on their knowledge and to be creative (85.1%). This indicates that the traditional role of teacher has been changed and Iranian English teachers have a positive view toward their new demanding roles.

To sum up, the results of the data analysis in this phase of the research indicates that EFL teachers in Isfahan’s junior and high schools have a positive attitude toward doing TBLT in their classless.

**4.3. To Address Self-efficacy of doing TBLT**

3. Do guidance and high school English teachers have enough self-efficacy in planning and implementing TBLT in their classes?

To address this question, descriptive statistic on self-efficacy questionnaire of those who passed the test was calculated. Table 4.8. presents the result:
There were 17 items on the teachers’ questionnaire, so the maximum score that they could gain on the questionnaire was 85 (=5 × 17). The mean of their self-efficacy score was 64.00 with a standard deviation of 10.98.

The high mean (64.00) indicates that the teachers feel they have the necessary self-esteem of doing TBLT in their classless. In other words, they have the potential and ability of applying this new methodology in their classes.

In order to fully investigate the expressed self-efficacy of teachers in planning and implementing TBLT in their classes the percentage analysis and mean of each item was calculated. Only teachers’ response to item 21: “I am convinced that I am able to successfully teach all relevant subjects content to even the most difficult students” showed lack of self-efficacy (40.3%) with a mean of 2.99. In all other items more than 57.6 percent of the teachers showed possession of self-efficacy in planning and implementing TBLT with a mean of more than 3.51.

### 4.4. Discussion

It can be argued that the findings of the present study supports the results of the previous studies (Abdorahimzadeh, 1998; Alinejad, 2004; Ansari, 2003; Mohammadi, 2006; Mortazavi, 2009; Najafi, 1996) which implemented TBLT in Iran and came up with successful results in comparison with traditional approaches because possibly they had the adequate amount of knowledge, positive attitude and self-efficacy in applying TBLT in their classes. Further, the results are in line with two previous studies which found positive attitudes in private institute English teachers toward TBLT and communicative approaches in Shiraz (Razmjoo, 2006; Zare, 2007).

Moreover, the findings are in line with other studies done in other Asian EFL context in Korea and China. Jeon & Hahn (2006) found positive attitudes in Korean secondary school English teachers toward TBLT. In another study, Liao (2003) explored secondary school EFL teachers’ attitude toward communicative language teaching and their classroom practice In China and found positive beliefs and attitudes. However it should be mention that, in these two studies, teachers were practically involved in doing TBLT in their classes because of changes in the system of education in Korea and China toward communicative and TBLT methodology.
Finally, the findings are in line with recent empirical research that shown what teachers do in classroom is not always consistent with what they should do, or can, be done (Borg, 2003, 2006; Fang, 1996). Rezaiyan (2001) also found this inconsistency between theory and practice in teaching reading in classrooms. The reason can be rooted in situational constrains that even though teachers have the knowledge, positive attitude and self-efficacy toward new methodologies such as TBLT but in practice the can not do what they preach in their classrooms because of problems in the educational system.

5. Conclusion and pedagogical implications
Considering the result of the present study, reforms in the English language teaching system are necessary in the following areas:

5.1. Teacher Training
It is essential that teachers have in-depth knowledge and understanding of the nature of language and communication as well as the nature of language teaching and learning. Even if teachers hold positive attitudes towards TBLT and have correct knowledge of TBLT concepts, they may not teach communicatively if they are unable to overcome situational constraints. Therefore, teachers also need the ability to identify, understand and overcome relevant situational constraints in their own teaching situations. Shih (1999) suggests some techniques that can be used to overcome situational constraints such as large classes, unmotivated students and inappropriate materials.

Obviously, through systematic and organized in-service teacher training teachers can develop and enhance their knowledge.

5.2. Reforms in the English Language Education System
According to Savignon & Wang (2003) the teacher's task is to understand the many factors involved and respond to them creatively. They need the support of administrators, the community, and learners themselves. Methodologists and teacher-education programs have a responsibility as well.

Without doubt situational constraints associated with the education system in Iran seriously hindered practicing TBLT. Since situational constraints may be beyond teachers' control, a change in the education system is necessary. As Maley (1986, p. 92) concludes:

Unless syllabi, examinations, inspectors, textbooks, etc., reflect the declared desire to change in the direction of a more communicative oriented curriculum, little can
result. Unless words are translated into deeds they are rapidly silted in the dust of inaction.

It is therefore suggested that the educational authorities take some measures to change the grammar-based examinations and reform the text books.

5.3. Change the Grammar-Based Examinations

"Even with teachers' best efforts, communicative teaching becomes unfeasible without a change in assessment" (Wang, 2002, p. 141). While existing tests are being improved, organized efforts should be directed towards developing alternative, more task-based tests guided by contemporary language testing theories. In addition, the format of assessment should not be limited to pencil and paper examination. The use of learner portfolios and the teacher's observation of learner interaction in class are a few examples of many ways to evaluate learner achievement (Wang, 2002, pp. 141-142).

5.4. Reform the Textbooks

According to Riazi (2003, p. 52), “textbooks play a very crucial role in the realm of language teaching and learning and are considered the next important factor in the second/foreign language classroom after the teacher.” Currently guidance and high schools use The Write Pass to English which was written many years ago by Dr. Birjandi and his colleagues. These series of textbooks were published at least 20 years ago without undergoing serious revisions and are in void of cultural points. Razmjoo (2007) found no representation of CLT principals in high school text books. In order to make textbooks more communicative, the textbooks could adhere to communicative principles such as including communicative tasks and incorporating different skills enhancement tasks and strategies. For reform to take place, much work needs to be done. The Ministry of Education, teacher training colleges and schools in Iran will need to work closely together.

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Title

Toward Establishing an Atomistic View Regarding the Interrelatedness of Emotional Intelligence and Learning Styles

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Abstract

The current study is an attempt to further scrutinize the would-be bonds between emotional intelligence and learning styles. To this end, a total of 132 academic EFL freshmen were initially administered two questionnaires, namely Bar-On’s Emotional Quotient Inventory (1997) as well as an idiot-proof version of learning styles questionnaire developed by Chislett and Chapman (2005). Upon the completion of questionnaires by the participants and collection of desired data, several statistical analyses including Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Regression analysis were run. In tandem with the gained upshots, a significant correlation was found to hold between different subscales of EQ and learning styles, except for empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationship.

Key words: Bar-On’s EQ-i, Emotional intelligence, Emotional Quotient, learning styles

1. Introduction

Along with the outburst of more learner-oriented and individualistic approaches to learning and instruction in the last couple of decades, came an unprecedented surge of interest in myriad learner characteristics and personality traits underlying the learning process. Two such learner variables which have long won the attention of manifold pedagogical researchers and educational theoreticians are individuals' unique learning styles as well as their emotional
intelligence. The researchers' mounting interest, in the recent decades, in the way these two learner factors, as well as a multitude of other paramount individual differences, are likely to tamper with various instructional/learning facets has given rise to a renewed outbreak in the domain of psycholinguistic research and scrutiny.

As only by the time one delves into the touchy realm of psycholinguistics does s(he) realize the burdensome nature of the task, the researcher's attempt in the current study might be regarded as a mere stab at touching some unattended facets of the constructs at hand, i.e. emotional intelligence and learning styles, particularly when it comes to the interplay between the two. An ephemeral glance through the literature on emotional intelligence and learning styles, as two well-established individual differences, helps reveal that quite an extensive amount of thought, deliberation and scrutiny has thus far been appropriated to probing diverse perspectives of these two self-contained learner variables.

Nevertheless, it is the go-togetherness between these two factors that might be said to have received scant heed on the part of pedagogues, educational practitioners and psycholinguists. Mainly featuring as a follow-up to the current researcher's previous probe (Alavinia & Ebrahimpour, 2012), the present study seeks to shed more light on the viable linkages between the learners' emotional intelligence and their learning styles. In so doing, an attempt is made in the present scrutiny to cast a more atomistic look over the issue by considering the feasible linkages between the subcomponents of EI and learning styles. To this end, the following research question was formulated and addressed in the current study:

RQ: Is there any significant relationship between different sub-scales of EFL learners’ emotional intelligence and their learning styles?

2. Literature Review

As the principal foundation of the entire discussion put forth in the present study rests upon two focal notions (known as learning styles and emotional intelligence), the researcher's main endeavor in the ensuing section centers around further illumination of the theoretical and empirical particularities germane to these two already-well-substantiated constructs.

2.1 Learning styles

James and Gardner (1995) define learning style as the “complex manner in which, and conditions under which, learners most efficiently and most effectively perceive, process, store, and recall what they are attempting to learn” (p. 20) (cited in Dung & Florea, 2012, p. 172).
Keefe and Ferrell (1990), on the other hand, see learning styles as “the composite of characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment” (p. 59) (cited in Saadi, 2012, p. 10).

Also, as Kinsella (1995, p. 171) avers, the notion of learning styles entails a "value-neutral approach for understanding individual differences among linguistically and culturally diverse students." Now that a laconic delineation of the term has been provided, it's time to cast a fleeting glance at the way different theoreticians and scholars in the field have characterized and categorized the notion.

2.2 Some Popular Learning Styles Theories

Kolb's Learning Styles Theory: Drawing on his own Experiential Learning Theory, which categorizes the learning process into four stages of Concrete Experience (CE), Reflection Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualization (AC) and Active Experimentation (AE), Kolb (1984) differentiates between four distinct types of learners, which he dubs divergers, convergers, assimilators and accommodators. In line with Dörnyei's (2005) delineations provided for each of these four categories of learning styles in Kolb's model, divergers have an inclination toward concrete situations that provide them with the opportunity for generating new ideas in a reflective way, convergers tend to be involved in abstract thinking and problem solving tasks, and are capable of generating novel theories, assimilators are characterized by their propensity for abstract thinking and assimilating the internalized information in a reflective way, and accommodators are best known for their penchant toward concrete, hands-on experimentation.

VAK Theory: Known as the most classical and rudimentary model of learning styles, VAK theory rests upon "the categorization of sensory preferences into 'visual,' 'auditory,' 'kinesthetic,' and sometimes 'tactile' types" (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 139). The way Dörnyei (2005, p. 140) puts it, visual learners "absorb information most effectively if it is provided through the visual channel. Thus, they tend to prefer reading tasks and often use colorful highlighting schemes to make certain information visually more salient." Auditory learners, on the other hand, tend to make use of "auditory input such as lectures or audiotapes" and "like to 'talk the material through' by engaging in discussions and group work". These learners further "benefit from written passages to be read out and they often find that reciting out loud what they want to remember (even telephone numbers or dates) is helpful." Finally, according to him, Kinesthetic learning style involves learning "through complete body experience (e.g.

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body movement)," while tactile style has to do more with "hands-on, touching learning approach."

**Felder-Silverman Learning Style Model (FSLSM):** Developed in 1988, the initial version of Felder and Silverman's model of learning styles encompassed five dimensions, known as information perception, input modality, organization, information processing, and understanding. Yet, through later modification and eradication of the organization dimension from the model, what remained was a four-category theory. Speaking of Felder-Silverman’s (1988) learning style model, Darwesh, Rashad, and Hamada (2011, p. 196) contend, "most other learning style models classify learners in few groups, whereas FSLSM describes the learning style of a learner in more detail, distinguishing between preferences on four dimensions", namely verbal/visual, sequential/global, active/reflective, and sensing/intuitive.

**Ehrman and Leaver's Construct:** The most detailed taxonomy of learning styles is thought to be Ehrman and Leaver's (2003) construct (known as E & L Construct), which is comprised of ten dichotomous categories of learning styles alternatively referred to as 1) field dependent vs. field independent, 2) field sensitive vs. field insensitive, 3) random (non-linear) vs. sequential (linear), 4) global vs. particular, 5) inductive vs. deductive, 6) synthetic vs. analytic, 7) analogue vs. digital, 8) concrete vs. abstract, 9) leveling vs. sharpening, and 10) impulsive vs. reflective (for a detailed explanation of each category see Dörnyei, 2005, pp. 147-151).

**Reid's Synoptic Representation of Learning Styles:** Finally, holding on to the view that "using learning styles can be instrumental in establishing a positive affective environment in the language learning classroom" Joy Reid (1999) provides a synopsis of the varied learning styles proposed by his predecessors via enlisting seven multiple intelligences (verbal/linguistic, musical, logical/mathematical, spatial/visual, bodily/kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal), six perceptual learning styles (visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, group, and individual), as well as field independent/field dependent, analytic/global, and reflective/impulsive learning styles.

### 2.3 Some Recent Empirical Research on Learning Styles

The concept of learning styles might be regarded as a touchy issue to deal with, partly owing to the fact that "the literature on learning styles uses the terms learning style, cognitive style, personality type, sensory preference, modality, and others rather loosely and often interchangeably" (Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford, 2003, p. 314). Yet, as Dörnyei (2005, p. 120) puts it, "There is a considerable body of literature discussing the role of learning styles in
SLA and most of these studies treat the concept as an important, although somewhat underresearched, topic."

An early study on the learning styles preferences of individuals was carried out by Zamanzadeh, Valizadeh, Fathi-Azar and Aminaie (2008) via utilizing Kolb's Learning Styles Inventory in Tabriz Medical University. The findings of the probe undertaken by these researchers pointed to the learners' utmost preference for convergent learning style on Kolb's taxonomy, being followed by assimilator, accommodator, and diverger learning style types. The results of this study further revealed the learners' penchant for learning through exposure to more visual input (cited in Saadi, 2012).

In another study in an ESL context in Malaysia, Mulalic, Mohd Shah and Ahmad (2009) probed the perceptual learning styles of students, and in so doing, they paid due heed to the possible differences induced by gender and ethnicity. As the findings of their study revealed, learners were characterized by a greater propensity toward kinesthetic learning style, as opposed to the other categories, namely visual, auditory and group learning. Further, based on their gained upshots, individual and tactile learning styles were not found to be among the learners' preferred styles.

In their attempt to pinpoint the would-be relationship between individuals' learning styles and their overall academic achievement, Abidin, Rezaee, Abdullah, and Singh (2011) organized an investigation with 317 learners and collected the data using Learning Styles Survey (LSS) instrument which was adopted from Reid’s Perceptual Learning-Style Preference Questionnaire (1987). Their study culminated in claiming the existence of a significant relationship between the learners' preferred learning styles and their academic achievement. The study also revealed that most of the learners enjoyed a combination of different learning styles.

Akplotsyi and Mahdjoubi (2011), on the other hand, were curious to find the effect of learning styles on the learners' engagement in school projects. The main instrument utilized in their study was an adapted and modified version of VAK (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) model – the model used in the current study – and 151 primary school children functioned as the participants of their research. In line with the gained results they argued, "children’s choice and selection of appropriate methods of engagement were informed by their respective learning styles preferences among the three categories" (p. 336). Yet, these researchers found no gender-induced differences between the learners as to their learning styles preferences. In this regard their findings confirmed the upshots gained by Li, Chen, Yang and Liu (2011).
Finally, Tulbure’s (2012) study might be said to enjoy a partially different nature, in that it aimed at gauging the learning styles and teaching strategies of 182 pre-service teachers in relation to their academic achievement. The principal means for gathering data in this study was Kolb’s self-report Learning Styles Inventory and based on the obtained results the researcher came up with partial support for her initial postulation that while comparing students of the two majors concerned in the study (Educational Sciences and Economic Sciences) "certain teaching strategies will lead to some different academic achievement for students having a similar learning style" (p. 401).

2.4 Some Recent Empirical Research on Emotional Intelligence

Though the concept of emotional intelligence has been around for more than two decades, the marriage between this well-established construct and pedagogical enterprise can be still regarded as a recent phenomenon. The focus shift in the domain of emotional intelligence from sheer workplace concerns to more didactic issues has not only conferred a novel, unprecedented status on the field but also brought about more immediate applicability of the research outcomes in furthering the knowledge frontiers. In what follows a succinct account of only a few such pedagogically-oriented research studies is provided. As neither the orientation nor the scope of the current article allows the researcher to provide the readers with an exhaustive list, the main focus in this section will naturally fall on recency and pedagogical relevance of the works reported.

In a probe aimed at finding the would-be go-togetherness between emotional intelligence and pedagogical success, Ghanizadeh and Moafian (2010) disseminated Bar-On’s EQ-i among 89 EFL teachers from a number of English language institutes. Furthermore, to be able to gauge the teachers' performance through the lens of their learners' views, these researchers administered another questionnaire this time to students taught by each teacher. As the findings of the study helped reveal teachers' successful instructional performance significantly correlated with their emotional intelligence level. Additionally, teachers' emotional intelligence was also found to highly correlate with their age and teaching experience.

Yazici, Seyis and Altun (2011), on the other hand, set out for an investigation over the potential impact of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy beliefs on learners' achievement. Taking advantage of a fairly big sample size (407 male and female high school students), the researchers in this study, then, embarked on data collection task via the administration of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy questionnaires. As the results indicated, learners'
academic achievement was found to be bound with their self-efficacy, as well as their age and gender (with females outperforming males in terms of academic success).

In a later study, Alavinia, Bonyadi and Razavi (2012), were after pinpointing the potential correlation between EFL teachers' emotional intelligence and their learners' motivation. To this end, they administered two sets of questionnaires, i.e. Bar-On's (1997) EQ-i and Gardner's (1985) Attitude Motivation Test Battery to 26 institute teachers and 240 students, respectively. Running correlation, regression and t-test analysis, then, the researcher found that a significant amount of correlation exists between the teachers' emotional intelligence and the learners' motivation. Furthermore, in line with the results a significant correlation was also reported to be at work between the sub-scales of both tests.

In another recent scrutiny, Alavinia and Mollahossein (2012) investigated the viable correlation between Iranian academic EFL learners' emotional intelligence and their use of listening metacognitive strategies. A total of 112 TEFL, English literature and translation students took part in the study and completed Bar-On's EQ-i as well as listening metacognitive strategies use questionnaire. Altogether, the findings of the research pointed toward the existence of a significant amount of correlation between the learners' use of listening metacognitive strategies and their emotional intelligence (EQ subscales included) in the study sample.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

A total of 40 male and 92 female EFL students from Urmia state and Azad Universities, Azarabadegan non-profit university (in Urmia) and Naghadeh Azad University took part in the present study. The participants' age ranged between 19 and 22, and they were all TEFL, translation, or literature students.

3.2 Instruments

One of the instruments utilized in the current study was Bar-On's (1997) EQ-i – the domestically standardized version (Samouei, 2003) with 90 questions – which comprised fifteen subscales known as Self-Awareness, Assertiveness, Self-Regard, Self-Actualization, Independence, Empathy, Social Responsibility, Interpersonal Relationship, Reality Testing, Flexibility, Problem Solving, Stress Tolerance, Impulse Control, Optimism, and Happiness. The other instrument, yet, was the so-called VAK learning styles inventory (Chislett & Chapman, 2005), which is a 30-item survey exerted with the purpose of assigning the
respondents to one of three categories of learning styles branded as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic style of learning.

3.3 Procedure
Making use of convenience sampling and recruiting the participants based on availability concerns, the required data were amassed through the administration of the two afore-said questionnaires. Successive to the provision of routine expositions regarding the completion procedure and confidentiality concerns, the data thus gathered were fed into SPSS and through running Pearson product moment correlation and regression analysis the study postulation concerning the possible correlation between the subscales of EQ and learning styles was lent to in-depth scrutiny.

4. Results
The researcher in the current study was mainly concerned with pinpointing the possible significant correlation between different sub-scales of EFL learners’ emotional intelligence and their learning styles. To probe the verity of the researcher's postulation in this regard, use was made of Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The results of correlation analysis revealed that there is a positive relationship between the majority of EQ subscales (12 out of 15) and learning styles. Thus, the participants' learning styles were found to significantly correlate with the subscales of emotional self-awareness \( (r = .331, p < .05) \), assertiveness \( (r = .275, p < .05) \), self-regard \( (r = .457, p < .05) \), self-actualization \( (r = .221, p < .05) \), independence \( (r = .413, p < .05) \), reality testing \( (r = .275, p < .05) \), flexibility \( (r = .384, p < .05) \), problem solving \( (r = .459, p < .05) \), stress tolerance \( (r = .364, p < .05) \), impulse control \( (r = .326, p < .05) \), optimism \( (r = .461, p < .05) \), and happiness \( (r = .291, p < .05) \). In line with the results reported in Table 1, then, only in case of three EQ subscales, i.e. social responsibility, empathy, and interpersonal relationship no significant correlation was gained. Furthermore, optimism was characterized by the highest amount of correlation with learning style.

| Table 1 Correlation between EQ Inventory Subscales and Learning Style |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Emotional Self-Awareness                                      | .00              | .331             |
| Assertiveness                                                  | .00              | .275             |
| Self Regard                                                    | .00              | .457             |

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Next, to investigate which components of EQ might have more predictive power as to EFL learners’ learning styles and how other constructs contribute to this model, a regression analysis was employed. Table 2, ANOVA table of regression, through which the significance of the researcher's considered model is established, sets the ground for running regression analysis, the results of which are reported in Table 3.

Table 3 The ANOVA Table of Regression

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>84.306</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.620</td>
<td>6.338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>101.086</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>.887</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>185.392</td>
<td>129</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, optimism, self-actualization independence, empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relation, reality testing, flexibility, problem solving, stress tolerance, impulse control, self-regard, happiness

b. Dependent Variable: learning style

Table 3 The Results of Regression Analysis for Learners’ EQ and Learning Styles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>-1.477</td>
<td>1.336</td>
<td>-1.106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emotional Self-Awareness</td>
<td>-0.039</td>
<td>0.120</td>
<td>-0.322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>0.162</td>
<td>0.084</td>
<td>1.932</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on regression analysis and Durbin Watson Test results (Tables 3 & 4), the subscales of EQ can be arranged in the following manner in terms of their predictive power: self-regard (.32 %), problem solving (.31 %), interpersonal relation (.28 %), optimism (.27 %), independence (.19 %), assertiveness (.17 %), self-actualization (.12 %), reality testing (.12 %), happiness (.11 %), impulse control (.11 %), flexibility (.05 %), emotional self-awareness (.03 %), stress tolerance (.03 %), empathy (.02 %), and social responsibility (.007 %).

Table 4 R Square Table for EQ Components as the Predictors of Learning Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model Summaryb</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
<th>Durbin-Watson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>dimension0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.674a</td>
<td>.455</td>
<td>.383</td>
<td>.94166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Predictors: (Constant), emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, optimism, self-actualization, independence, empathy, social responsibility, interpersonal relation, reality testing, flexibility, problem solving, stress tolerance, impulse control, self-regard, happiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Dependent Variable: learning style</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The amount of Durbin Watson (1.5 > 2.12 < 2.5), as is shown in Table 4, indicates that the existing correlation is significant. The results altogether reveal that the model containing all constructs of EQ can predict 45 percent of the learners’ learning styles. The R value is .67 which shows the multiple correlation coefficients between learners’ learning styles and the components of the EQ test. In other words, it can be said that about 45% of the variation in learners’ learning style can be explained by taking the components of EQ into account.
5. Discussion

Functioning as a follow-up to the researcher's earlier study (Alavinia & Ebrahimpour, 2012), the current project was mainly targeted toward bringing the purported correlation between learners' emotional intelligence and learning styles under more meticulous scrutiny. In line with the results gained, a significant amount of correlation was reported to hold between different subscales of Bar-On's EQ-i (except social responsibility, empathy and interpersonal relationship) and those of learning styles inventory.

Though the concepts of emotional intelligence and learning styles have received quite an extensive amount of heed on the part of educational researchers, particularly in the recent years, few attempts, if any, have strived to find the correlation between the two. Yet, as reported in the concise literature on the recent probes regarding emotional intelligence, learners' EQ has been found to correlate with and function as a good predictor of several facets of individuals' learning process such as overall pedagogical success (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2010), self-efficacy and academic achievement (Yazici, Seyis & Altun, 2011), motivation (Alavinia, Bonyadi & Razavi, 2012) and use of metacognitive listening strategies (Alavinia & Mollahossein, 2012), among many others. Thus, providing partial support for the previous body of research on the benefits of possessing heightened levels of emotional intelligence for different facets of academic/life success (a few instances of which were reported above), the current study hopes to have been able to further extend the frontiers of the juvenile domain of EQ-oriented studies.

6. Concluding Remarks

As stated earlier, the researcher in the current study was after gauging the feasible relationship between the individuals' learning styles and their performance on distinct subscales of emotional intelligence. As the findings indicated, except for the subscales of social responsibility, empathy and interpersonal relationship, for the rest of EQ subcomponents a strong relationship was found to hold between the learners’ emotional intelligence and their learning styles.

Though partly predetermined in nature, emotional intelligence of learners is said to be prone to modification and betterment (e.g. Goleman, 1995), which, in turn, can bring about dramatic improvements in learners’ educational, academic and non-academic life. Speaking of academic concerns, several gains resulting from the enhancement of individuals' EQ (e.g. Alavinia, 2011) have been documented in the literature on the issue, a few of which were
addressed in the current paper. In view of the manifold upsides attributed to possessing a high level of emotional intelligence, then, it seems logical to look for ways for enhancing this asset in learners.

Furthermore, individuals' learning styles, albeit fixed to a great extent, can serve as a sort of springboard for more efficacious learning, if learners are familiarized with their true learning potentials through more acquaintance with their naturally preferred learning channels. Thus, the findings of the current scrutiny might prove fruitful, at the very least, in sensitizing teachers and other educational stakeholders toward the focal role these two learner factors (EQ & learning styles) can play vis-à-vis learners' overall educational accomplishments. After all, accrediting the findings of the present study might run tantamount to endorsing the dire need for reappraising the crucial role of psychological factors in the process of learning.

References


Title

A Study of the Iranian EFL Students' Errors in the Pronunciation of Ten High-frequency Technology-related English Loan Words

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Biodata

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Abstract

The increasing use of technology in different parts of the world has inevitably led to the borrowing of a sizeable number of English words by many languages, including Farsi. This study was carried out with the aim of determining the extent to which a group of undergraduate Iranian EFL students studying at Sheikhbahaee University could accurately pronounce ten commonly-used technology-associated loan words with regard to two criteria: the placement of word stress and the pronunciation of words’ sounds. To this end, 50 students were randomly drawn from among the foregoing university’s students. Each student was given the chance to pronounce each of the ten loan word in and out of context. The students’ oral performance was recorded and then subjected to quantitative and qualitative analysis. The quantitative analysis revealed that the errors’ frequencies were relatively high with respect to most words and very high with regard to two words. The qualitative analysis, which was done utilizing the literature of contrastive phonetics and pronunciation systems of Farsi and English, helped partly explaining many of the students’ errors and highlighting the need for the devotion of more pedagogical and research attention to the problems confronting Farsi-speakers in the area of the pronunciation of loan words.

Keywords: Technology-related words, Pronunciation errors, Iranian EFL students
1. Introduction
The increasing use of computers and a number of other technological devices has brought about sweeping changes in our lives and dramatically enhanced human’s lives in different spheres, including higher education (Inoue, 2007). According to Peters (2010), language students are among the beneficiaries of recent advances in technology, especially those associated with computers and the Internet; millions of them utilize these technological marvels for their educational purposes.

Kaplan and Baldauf (1997) note that recent technology-associated changes and advances have led to the borrowing of a large number of English words by other languages, including Farsi.

As Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996) point out, most loan words undergo spelling-associated and pronunciation-related changes when absorbed by and incorporated into other languages. Hence, it can be said that EFL learners and students whose mother languages have absorbed English loan words are likely to find it difficult to adhere to the accurate pronunciation of such words. It can further be said that such learners are likely to commit errors while using English loan words.

The available literature illustrates that English loan words pose certain problems for non-native learners and students of English [Swan and Smith (2001), Partington (1998), Bator (2010)]. Further, a number of researchers have focused specifically on the area of pronunciation and have reported that English loan words present non-native learners and students from different linguistic backgrounds with a number of pronunciation-related problems [Viereck, Carstensen and Bald (1986), Daulton (2008), Oksefjel (1999), Perfetti, Rieben and Fayol (1997)]. Due to the increasing use of technology-related loan words in Iran and the limited amount of research attention they have received, there is the need for further research in this area. This study seeks to explore the extent to which one group of Iranian EFL students can accurately pronounce 10 frequently-used technology-associated terms both in and out of context. The placement of primary word stress and the pronunciation of sounds relating to ten technology-related terms constitute the features examined in this study.

2. Methodology
2.1. Participants
A total of 50 EFL students studying TEFL, English Literature and Translation Studies at Sheikhbahaee University participated in this study. Twenty of the students were specializing in TEFL, eighteen in Translation Studies and twelve of them in English Literature. In terms of gender, thirty-nine of the participants were females and eleven of them were males. Apropos of the age of the participants, all of them were between 20 and 27 years of age. With regard to participants’ level of English proficiency, all of them were third-year undergraduate students and, therefore, their proficiency level was fairly high.

2.2. Materials

Two sets of materials were used for collecting the required data in this study. The first set comprised 50 copies of a list of ten frequently-used technology-related terms (see Appendix 1). The second set of materials consisted of 50 copies of a two-page-long passage written by the researcher and edited three times by two professors affiliated with the Islamic Azad University. The passage contained all the ten technology-related words and was four paragraphs long (see Appendix 2).

2.3. Procedures

To elicit the required data from the participants, two separate, but related procedures were implemented. First, each student was given a copy of the list containing the ten technology-associated terms and was asked to enunciate each word on the list. This procedure was conducted with each participant separately and a recording device was used to record the participants’ pronunciation of the words. Second, each participant was given a copy of the passage into which technology-related terms had been embedded and was asked to read the passage aloud one time. Each technology-related word had been used in the passage two times. So, each participant pronounced each of the ten words three times, once while reading it from the list and twice while reading the passage aloud. All the data corresponding to the oral performance of the participants at this stage were recorded by a recording device.

One point which must be noted here is that the recording device used in the study was not shown to the participants and its use by the researcher was not revealed to them. The reason behind this is that, after consulting a number of professors teaching different reading- and speaking-based courses to students, the researcher came to realize that placing the recording device in a place where the participants could clearly see it while performing the required procedures, or providing them with information about its presence in the environment where they performed the
procedures could undermine the validity of the elicited data since it could engender undue anxiety in them and make them speak somewhat unnaturally.

2.4. Data Analysis

For the analysis of the obtained data, first, participants’ recorded performance on the two procedures was listened to three times by the researcher and a two times by a professor of phonetics affiliated with the Islamic Azad University to ascertain if the participants had accurately pronounced each word in and out of context. The analysis criteria used here were the accurate placing of word stress and the accurate pronunciation of sounds corresponding to each technology-related word. The number of errors in participants’ pronunciation of the words was then reported in percentage terms and summarized in tables.

3. Results

The following tables summarize the findings of the study. Detailed explanations of the results as well as their interpretation can be found in the next part of the paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology-associated Words</th>
<th>Frequencies of Stress-placement Errors in Out-of-context Pronunciation of Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Phone</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluetooth</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flash Drive</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIM card</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Point</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[ Table(1). Frequencies of errors made in the placement of word stress in out-of-context pronunciation of words ]

The above table, as indicated earlier, illustrates the frequencies of errors made by the study’s participants with respect to the proper placement of word stress. As the table’s data show, generally speaking, the frequencies of such errors were moderately high, although one word had a very low frequency of stress-placement errors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology-associated Words</th>
<th>Frequencies of Sound-pronunciation Errors in Out-of-context Pronunciation of Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Phone</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As stated earlier, the above table lists the frequencies sound-pronunciation errors made by the study’s participants in out-of-context settings. The noticeable point which the frequencies reveal is that the number of errors relating to out-of-context pronunciations was fairly low. More noticeably, participants made no sound-related errors in pronouncing three of the words.

[ Table(2). Frequencies of errors made in the pronunciation of sounds corresponding to the words in out-of-context pronunciation of words ]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology-associated Words</th>
<th>Frequencies of Stress-placement Errors in the Pronunciation of Words in Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Phone</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluetooth</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flash Drive</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIM card</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power Point</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[ Table(3). Frequencies of errors made in the placement of word stress in the pronunciation of words in context(each word was pronounced two times by each participant) ]

As indicated earlier, the above table presents frequencies of stress-associated participant errors. What makes the data presented in this table different from the data presented in Table(1) is that this table’s data are related to those stress-related errors made by the participants while reading out contextualized technological terms. The table’s data indicate that the frequencies of errors were relatively high, a trend similar to the one Table(1) illustrates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology-associated Words</th>
<th>Frequencies of Sound-pronunciation Errors in the Pronunciation of Words in Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile Phone</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluetooth</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table, as pointed out, lists frequencies of errors made by the study’s participants with respect to the area of sound pronunciation. What makes this table’s data different from those presented in Table(2) is that the data included in this table are related to those participant errors made while reading out the technological words embedded in a text. The figures illustrate that while participants made few errors with respect to the in-context pronunciation of three words and no errors in the pronunciation of another three words, they had a substantial number of errors in their pronouncing three more problematic words. Further, this table’s data reveal the existence of some salient differences between the frequencies of participant errors committed in out-of-context and in-context settings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Errors in Out-of-context Pronunciation of Words</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Errors in the Placement of Word Stress</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors in the Pronunciation of Sounds</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above summary table reveals that the total number of participant errors in the area of stress-placement was appreciably higher than the number of errors they made in the area of sound pronunciation. This point, which deserves attention and analysis from a contrastive analysis perspective, have been taken care of in the next section of the paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Errors in Pronunciation of Words in the Context of a Passage</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Errors in the Placement of Word Stress</td>
<td>648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errors in the Pronunciation of Sounds</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This summary table illustrates that the frequencies of participant errors differed substantially in areas of stress-placement and sound pronunciation. As it shows, the total number of errors in the area of stress-placement was more than two times the
total number of errors made in the area of sound pronunciation. This salient point has been picked over and explained in the next part of the paper.

4. Discussion and Conclusions
As tables (5) and (6), which summarize the results of the study, indicate, participants made more pronunciation-related errors in the area of stress-placement than they did in the area of sound-pronunciation. As table (5) illustrates, errors falling into the latter category were substantially fewer than those falling into the former category in out-of-context settings. Table (6) illustrates a similar trend and shows that errors associated with the placement of word stress were more than two times the number of errors corresponding to the accurate pronunciation of words’ sounds.

To partly explain and interpret these results, highlights of the existing literature on the contrastive analysis of Farsi and English pronunciation systems are of great help. With regard to the area of word stress, as Yarmohammadi’s (1995) detailed contrastive analysis of Farsi and English pronunciation systems reveals, there are outstanding dissimilarities between Farsi and English in many areas of pronunciation, not least in the area of word stress. Yarmohamadi (1995) has explained that one prominent difference between Farsi and English as relates to word stress is that, unlike English, Farsi word stress enjoys “a high degree of predictability” (1995, p. 75). Echoing the same point, Rafiee (2001) has pointed out that in Farsi, word stress is oftentimes assigned to the final syllable of a word. Swan and Smith (2001) have reiterated this point: “Stress in Farsi stress is highly predictable, and generally falls on the final syllable of a word” [(2001, p. 182).] Swan and Smith (2001) have also focused on the pedagogical implications stemming from the predictability of word stress in Farsi in the context of learning English by Farsi-speaking learners and students. According to them, Farsi-speaking learners and students encounter “great difficulty mastering the unpredictable stress of English” and often tend to place stress on the final syllables of English words [(2001, p. 182).]

In regard to the area of pronouncing sounds corresponding to the words, although the number errors committed was substantially lower than that of the area of word stress, the already-existing literature entails a couple of notable points which serve to partially explain the occurrence of a comparatively large number of errors falling into this area and deserve mentioning here.
The first point is that, as Swan and Smith (2001) have said, Farsi and English differ from each other “in their range of sounds” (p. 179). One implication of this is that Farsi-speaking learners and students “have great difficulty in perceiving and articulating the full range of English vowels and diphthongs” (p. 179).

Another point in connection with sound differences between Farsi and English has been referred to by Coelho and Rivers (2004). According to them, speakers of many languages, including Spanish and Farsi, find it difficult to pronounce a number of “individual sounds and combinations of sounds” of the English language (p. 58). One reason for this, according to the foregoing authors is that in Farsi, there are no initial consonant clusters. Swan and Smith (2001) have expatiated on this point by saying: “Consonant clusters do not occur within single syllables in Farsi, and Farsi speakers therefore tend to add a short vowel, either before or in the middle of the various English Clusters (p. 181). Reflecting the same point, Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin (1996) have referred to the insertion of vowels in consonant clusters, especially the ones occurring syllable-initially, as a common phenomenon among speakers of Farsi and a number of other languages.

Juxtaposing the results of the study with the points mentioned above, many of the stress-related and sound-related errors committed by the participants of this study can be better interpreted.

The technology-associated words ‘Bluetooth’ and ‘Flash drive’ were mispronounced many times by the study’s participants. Most of the errors detected in relation to these three words were the ones associated with the insertion of vowels between the consonant clusters of the words. The syllable ‘bl’ in the word ‘bluetooth’ was pronounced /bul/ twenty-three times out of context and forty times in context by the participants.

In a similar vein, the first part of the word ‘flash drive’ was pronounced /felash/ twelve times in out of context and eighteen times in context. Further, the mispronunciation of the final syllable of the word ‘Google’, which was pronounced /gel/ fifty times in out of context and 100 times in context by the participants, can be partly explained invoking the same point.

In the case of the word ‘Twitter’, although the word does not have a consonant cluster, it was observed that the first syllable of the word, viz. ‘Twi-’ was mispronounced many times by the participants through the insertion of a redundant
vowel sound between the word’s two beginning sounds. So, the word in question was
pronounced /twiter/, which clearly represents a case of mispronunciation.

Although the available literature does not give an explanatory clarification of this
type of pronunciation error, it can be speculated that the blending of Farsi and
English pronunciations of the word and the tendency of the participants to ease the
pronunciation of the first syllable of the word are to blame for the insertion of a
redundant vowel in it.

The mispronunciation of the technology-related words ‘Internet’, ‘e-mail’ and ‘SIM
card’, which were mispronounced with regard to word stress placement by the study’s
participants one-hundred, seventy and ninety-four times out of context respectively can
also be partly explained using the above-presented data. As stated earlier, word stress
in Farsi is highly predictable and usually falls on the final syllable of words, whereas
stress in English is anything but predictable and is governed by a wide variety of
complex rules. Therefore, the strikingly high frequencies of word-stress-related errors in
the pronunciation of the word ‘Internet’ can be partly accounted for by invoking
differences in the area of word stress between English and Farsi and perhaps the
tendency of the participants to assign primary stress to the word’s final syllable. The
same holds true of ‘e-mail’ SIM-card, ‘mobile phone’ and ‘Power Point’, all of which
were mispronounced by the participants through the assigning of primary word stress
to their final syllables.

Errors corresponding to the word ‘computer’, which was mispronounced 37 times
out of context and 68 times in context, can be partly explained by invoking another
concept called ‘spelling pronunciation’. A clear definition of the foregoing term has
been offered by Gelderen(2006). According to him, 'spelling pronunciation' refers to "a
phenomenon where speakers pronounce words as they are spelled"(p.17). To link the
above-mentioned concept to the mispronunciation of the word 'computer', the words of
Swan and Smith can be invoked.

According to Swan and Smith(2001), Farsi spelling is “more or less phonetic” and
largely represents the way words are spelled(p. 182). Therefore, Farsi-speaking learners
“tend to associate particular letters with particular sounds” (p.182). In the case of the
word ‘computer’, the tendency to pronounce the letter ‘o’ as ‘a’ (아) is partly to blame
for the mispronunciation of the word. Another point the invoking of which helps
account for this error is that, as Swan and Smith(2001) have suggested, some English
vowel sounds are problematic in terms of their pronunciation for Farsi-speaking learners and students since they don’t have precise counterparts in Farsi.

In the light of the above-listed points and the fact that Farsi-speaking learners and students frequently use English load words, the occurrence of a large number of errors in the accurate placement of word stress on technology-associated words and the accurate pronunciation of their sounds seems bound to persist. Ergo, this area of research seems to be worthy of further scholarly and research attention in Iranian EFL contexts.

References


Swan, M., Smith, B. (2001). *Learner English: a teacher's guide to interference and other*
problems, Volume 1. The United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.


Appendix(1). List of Ten Technology-associated Words

- Computer
- Internet
- E-mail
- Mobile Phone
- Bluetooth
- Google
- Flash Drive
- Twitter
- SIM card
- Power Point

Appendix(2). The Passage Containing the ten-technology-related terms

Technology influences our daily lives. Today, people of almost all age groups, especially teenagers and young adults between the ages of 20 and 30, are familiar with and use a wide range of technological devices and services almost on a daily basis.

Computers are perhaps the most commonly-used technological machines these days. They are used to process data, access the Internet, which is a network of networks, contact others through sending them electronic mails, widely known as ‘e-mails’, and make complex scientific calculations. Despite their increasing use, some say that computers do more harm than good. They argue that these machines make people addicted to an dependent on themselves, endanger their health and reduce face-to-face contacts between humans. The Internet, they say, is also essentially addictive and can alienate people from the real world around them. Also, e-mails promote virtual contacts, which can never be as effective as real, face-to-face contacts and drive a spiritual wedge between humans. Further, social networking sites, such as Twitter, critics say, create ‘pseudo-real-life’ relationships and bonds between people. The more people use such harmful websites, the more isolated from real-life they will become. To highlight this, one critic has suggested that ‘Twitter’ should be called ‘the all-enticing virtual trap’. Even the hugely popular search engine ‘Google’ has come under fire for a number of reasons. One reason is that, like many other online entities, users can get addicted to and excessively reliant on
Google’s search engine, something which is often referred to as ‘obsessive Googling’. Moreover, some educationalist have recently drawn attention to the increasing use of the PowerPoint programme to organize and present academic materials in schools and universities. They have expressed serious concern that the outsized use of Power Point presentations can have a negative impact on the quality of education since it can create boredom in students and encourage instructors to do away with the effective use of the board and the adequate explaining of instructional points in the class. Besides, flash drives, special data-storage devices used for data-storage and transfer, are so small that people frequently miss them. Also, most flash drives are too delicate and are easily damaged.

Mobile phones are also popular with millions around the world. They, like many other technological gadgets and machines, have attracted widespread criticism. One criticism is that to make these phones, rare minerals are needed in large quantities, and these materials are often obtained through illegal activities including smuggling and child labor. Further, cellular phones can be used to spread all sorts of information. Bluetooth technology, for instance, has made it possible for people to readily transfer socially and morally inappropriate materials from one mobile phone to another. Teenagers are particularly vulnerable to inappropriate materials spread through the Bluetooth service, and it has led many parents unwilling to buy cell phones for their teenage children. Moreover, if the SIM-card of a cell phone, which contains important information, is damaged or lost, the phone will stop functioning. Having a damaged SIM-card repaired or buying a new one costs the cell phone owner a lot of money, and the repair activities can take time.

Despite all of the bad things linked to technological machines and devices, they have certainly benefited humans in different ways. Also, the increasing use of such machines and gadgets means that they represent a potent force to be reckoned with in the twenty-first century.
Title

Self-Evaluation through Videotaping as an Alternative Mode of Teaching Supervision: A Comparison of Self and Supervisor Ratings

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Abstract

This study was undertaken to explore the differences in evaluation of videotaped teaching process. A study which bridged the quantitative and qualitative methodologies. It drew upon supervisor and teachers' evaluations on the videotapes in which 8 participants had been involved over a month and half period. The major focus of the study was on exploring the differences between teachers' self-evaluations and supervisor's evaluation of teaching process and investigating the reasons of the possible discrepancies between them. The findings of this study, based upon the quantitative analysis, observations, and in-depth interviews with teachers, indicated that the above-mentioned groups' reflections
and evaluations of teaching process were completely different with each other. Results also demonstrated that a number of factors gave rise to these vast discrepancies. These factors could neatly be classified into a framework including 5 categories of psychological aspects, effectiveness of teacher's self-evaluation, objectivity of supervisor's ratings, critical views of supervisor, and effectiveness of videotaping.

Keywords: Reflection, Reflective teaching, Videotaping, EFL teachers' self-evaluation, Supervisor's evaluation

1. Introduction

In the modern era of language teaching, teachers try to move beyond the level of automatic responses to classroom situations towards a higher level of awareness of how they teach; one way of doing this is through an approach which is called "reflective teaching" (Richards, 1991). There is no doubt that reflective teaching is not a new concept in teaching field. This concept has been mentioned for more than 50 years. Recently, it has become a controversial issue in the field and there is an overwhelming conceptual and empirical body of literature related to teacher reflection in teaching and learning programs (e.g., Mc Mahon, 1997; Roskos, Vukelich, & Risko, 2001, cited in Hsu, 2008).

The pioneer in the field of reflective teaching is John Dewey (1933) who defined reflective teaching as the "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends" (p. 9). Schon (1987) defined a reflective teacher as a person who engages in "reflection-in-action" and he maintained that reflection is founded in self-evaluation and experiment. He also believed that reflection gives teachers a sense of empowerment.

According to an often-quoted definition by Richards and Lockhart (1994), reflective teaching can be defined as "an approach to second language (L2) classroom instruction in which current and prospective teachers collect data about teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection" about their efforts in language courses (p.1, cited in Murphy, 2001).

It is worth emphasizing that the purposes of reflective teaching are three-fold: 1) To expand one's understanding of the teaching-learning process; 2) To expand one's repertoire of strategic options as a language teacher; and 3) To enhance the quality of learning opportunities one is able to provide in language classrooms (Murphy, 2001). Bartlett is one of
the first researchers who dealt with reflective teaching in the form of self reflection which is essential for both classroom practice and social context.

One could safely argue that reflective teaching is a valid means towards successful teaching; authors like Richards, Lockhart, Ramirez and Wallace have done many studies in order to help teachers to teach reflectively (cited in Qing, 2009). Pollard (2002) pointed out that the process of reflective teaching supports the professional growth and development. In the same vein, Richards and Nunan (1990) asserted that "experience alone is insufficient for professional growth, but that experience coupled with reflection can be a powerful impetus for teacher development" (p. 8). Additionally, Wallace (1991, p. 82) maintained that reflection is an important factor to teacher professional growth because "it is through reflection on professional action that professional expertise is developed".

Generally speaking, reflective teaching asks teachers to stop, to think, slow their speed, notice and analyze their own teaching process, it helps them to consider both new and old experiences and to relate theory and practice (Qing, 2009). There is always a gap between theory and practice and Pacheco (2005) believed that this gap can be bridged by reflecting on ideas, approaches and techniques.

2. Videotaping and Reflection

It is noteworthy to mention that there are different ways for collecting information about what happens in the classrooms. Put differently, there are different approaches to critical reflection like written accounts of experiences, self-reports, autobiographies, journal writing, collaborative diary keeping, peer observation, and finally recording lessons which is the focus of the present study. Audio or video recording of lessons can be a very useful basis of reflection for different aspects of teaching, because it can capture ‘moment to moment’ processes of teaching; many things happen simultaneously in the classroom and some aspects of lesson can not be recalled by the teacher (Richards, 1991).

Since 1960s by the availability of portable video equipment, reviewing videotapes of student's teaching has supported reflection by pre-service teachers (Wang & Hartley, 2003). Englert (1984) and Sprick (1981) have recommended self reflection through the use of videotaping. Additionally, it might be safe to argue that the optimum learning occurs when the teachers watch the videotapes with the supervisor (Thomson, 1992, cited in Wong, 2003). There is also a rich literature on the use of audiovisual technology as a useful tool for teachers' self evaluation and professional growth (e.g., Davis, 1971; Thomson, 1992; Rogers
Kpanja (2001) brought this fact into stark focus that videotaped lesson analysis helped teachers in the mastery of teaching skills significantly (cited in Wong, 2003).

According to Guidry, Van Del Pol, Keely and Neilsen (1996, p. 52), videotaping was considered as "a powerful medium that captures the dynamics of movement, bodily expression, and emotion", they also proclaimed that it was useful for presenting a description of teacher's abilities and development. Further, a respectable stockpile of research indicated that teachers' efficacy, practical knowledge of teaching, confidence, and reflection could be fostered through videotaping (Akcan, 2010; Fadde et al., 2009; Hsu, 2008; Huang & Hsu, 2005).

Research on reflective teaching has been mounting steadily for a number of decades and numerous studies so far have focused upon implementing different tools for fostering reflection in pre and in-service teacher education programs in different countries (e.g., Brandl, 2000; Fadde et al., 2009; Hatton & Smith, 1995; Kettle & Sellars, 1996; Liou, 2001; Sherin, 2004; Zeichner & Liston, 1990) but reflective teaching through videotaping is, much to our chagrin, neglected in teacher education programs in Iran.

Upon reviewing such views, the present study can be considered as a response to the dearth of research on incorporating videotaping as a strategy in Iran, helping teachers teach, think and evaluate themselves more reflectively. Meanwhile, it aimed to investigate the differences between teachers' self-evaluations and supervisor's evaluation of teaching process on videotapes. This study also strived to explore the main reasons of possible differences between teachers' self-evaluations and supervisor's evaluation of the teaching process.

Following this line of argument, the principle questions that motivated this article are:
1. Is there any significant difference between teachers' self-evaluations and supervisor's evaluation of the teaching process in videotapes?
2. What are the main reasons of possible differences between teachers' self-evaluations and supervisor's evaluation of the teaching process in videotapes?

3. Method

3.1. Participants: This interpretive study was conducted with 5 male and 3 female EFL teachers of a language institute in Hamedan, Iran. They consisted of 4 experienced and 4 novice teachers with a mean age of 25 years, who participated in the study voluntarily.

3.2. Instruments
The content validity of the following instruments was evaluated through experts' judgments.

3.2.1. Videotaping: The English teaching process of 8 participants were recorded by video cameras. For each participant, there were two 90-minute videotapes after an interval of one month.

3.2.2. Teacher-evaluation (teacher-reflection) sheets: A 43-item teacher-reflection sheet was designed based on Danielson's Framework for Teaching (Danielson, 1996, cited in Song & Catapano, 2008) and Doff's reflection sheet (2000, p. 282, cited in Hsu, 2008) to yield participants' self-evaluations and supervisor's evaluation of the teaching process after viewing the videotapes. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .86, and because this value is above .7, so the checklist could be considered reliable with our sample.

3.2.3. Face to face interview: In order to explore the main reasons of possible differences between teachers' self-evaluations and supervisor's evaluation of the teaching process in videotapes, participants were attended face to face interviews voluntarily.

3.3. Procedure: In order to get the rich descriptive data, a variety of data collection procedures were used to ensure the validity and reliability of the information. Both observational techniques like video recordings, self observations, supervisor observation and non-observational techniques like interviews and evaluation sheets were used in data collection stage.

To begin, the eight participants signed the participants' audio/videotape consent form and the researcher promised that the data would be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Then, the dates of first videotaping, second videotaping, completion of self and supervisor-reflection sheets and final interviews were set.

Thereafter, the English teaching processes of these participants were videotaped twice. For each participant, there were two 90-minute videotapes; one of them at the beginning of the term and the other after an interval of one month at the end of term. Different aspects of teaching process like communication patterns in the classroom, teacher decision making, the affective climate of the classroom, teacher feedback, error correction, teacher's physical appearance, management of the class and rate of praise, were focused by the researcher as the participant observer.

It should be taken into consideration that in order to decrease the participants' anxiety, they were informed beforehand and given enough time to prepare themselves for teaching process. The video recordings were done by the use of video cameras which were situated on the corners of ceilings. It is of paramount importance to argue that all the classrooms of the
institute were equipped with the cameras and there wasn't any cameraman in the classrooms because as Berg and Smith (1996) put it quite aptly, video camera may have an impact on students' behaviors. On the contrary to all the previous studies in which the cameramen went to classrooms to record the films, leading up to some changes in classroom atmosphere, in this study, with the advantage of the above-mentioned cameras, the classrooms' atmosphere was completely natural. The video-recorded lessons were burned onto DVDs and one copy of each film and reflection sheet were given to participants and supervisor. They were given a period of time (about a week) to watch the films carefully several times, reflect on different facets of teaching process which were emphasized in reflection sheets, and fill out the sheets.

Then, the participants viewed their own videotapes of teaching process (New Headway Book series (3rd edition) were taught) through stimulated recall technique. A case in point is that, first, the participants watched the films at home because according to Orlova (2009), teachers at first focus on how they are acting and when this "actor's syndrome" (p. 32) fades away; they can focus on the teaching process and interaction with the students. Afterwards, they watched them several times, reflected on them, and finally, filled out self-reflection sheets to yield their self-assessments. Finally, the supervisor of institute watched the films and completed the reflection sheets.

After an interval of one month or so (at the end of the semester), the second videotaping was done like the first one and the videotapes were watched and reflection sheets were filled out by the teachers and supervisor. Eventually, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the 8 participants separately. Each interview lasted about 30 minutes for each participant and was audio-taped for further analysis. At last, the researcher provided the participants with small presents to thank them.

4. Data Analysis and Results
To address our research questions, both quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted. First, the results of the quantitative analyses are presented and then, the prominent patterns identified by the qualitative analyses are summarized.

4.1. Quantitative analysis
In order to find an answer to the first research question, the data was fed into the computer and then analyzed by The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).
1. Is there any significant difference between teachers' self-evaluations and supervisor's evaluation of the teaching process in videotapes?

**Mann-Whitney U Test** was used to test for differences between two independent groups of teachers and supervisor on the evaluation scores of the teaching process. In the output below, the z value is -2.52 (rounded) with a significance level of $p = .01$. The probability value is less than .05; therefore, the result is significant. There is a statistically significant difference in the evaluation scores of teachers and supervisor.

**Table 1** Mann-Whitney U Test for Teachers and Supervisor's Reflection Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection</th>
<th>Mann-Whitney U</th>
<th>Wilcoxon W</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>Asymptotic Significance (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Exact Significance [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>8.000</td>
<td>44.000</td>
<td>2.521</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.010(a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a  Not corrected for ties.
b  Grouping Variable: group

Inspections of the mean ranks for the groups suggested that the teachers group had the higher scores ($M = 11.50$), with the supervisor reporting the lower ($M = 5.50$). It means that teachers' self-evaluation scores were higher than supervisor's evaluation scores.

**Table 2** Mean Ranks of Teachers and Supervisor's Reflection Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>92.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.50</td>
<td>44.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Qualitative Analysis

In order to find an answer to the second research question, each interview was transcribed and the transcriptions were sorted to seek patterns which emerged from the data. A framework including 5 categories was generated. They were psychological aspects, effectiveness of teacher's self-evaluations, objectivity of supervisor's ratings, critical views of supervisor, and effectiveness of videotaping.

2. What are the main reasons of possible differences between teachers' self-evaluations and supervisor's evaluation of the teaching process in videotapes?
4.2.1. Psychological Aspects

Psychological aspect is a category concerning physical and mental states in using the supervisor in analysis of videotapes. It includes stress, fear, honesty and optimism. In this section, some empirical examples are presented; it may be very difficult to explicitly articulate the outcomes which are not always tangible or measurable. Thus, it is naïve to claim that findings are absolutely valid and useful; rather, they may be relevant for a while. It should be noted that these excerpts were directly extracted from the transcriptions of interviews.

Farzin believed that supervisors are pessimistic and said:

*The supervisors are not optimistic, they just focus on the weaknesses of the teaching process, and their ideas are not encouraging* (Interview, March 13, 2012).

Reza was one of the teachers who didn't trust the evaluator's expertise; he talked about teachers' honesty and stated that the supervisor cannot pass a value judgment just by observing the class in one session. Some of them are not honest with the teachers, but teachers are honest with themselves and they don't want to deceive themselves.

Azadeh didn't like supervisory observations and said:

*I am always stressful, I always have problem with the presence of the supervisor* (Interview, March 18, 2012).

4.2.2. Effectiveness of Teachers' Self-evaluation

This category concerns the effectiveness of teachers' self-evaluation through video-taped lesson analysis. All of the teachers expressed that because of the sporadic nature of supervisory visits, self-reflection is much more useful than supervisor's evaluation; they could not modify teaching behaviors meaningfully. This concurs with the results of a study by Stark and Lowther (1984, cited in Nhundu, 1999), in which self-rating was considered as the most appropriate evaluation method by teachers.

Farhad asserted that teachers try to make decisions in a particular situation, time, and atmosphere and those decisions could be the best; but supervisor may consider just some standards and think very ideally.

Mahboobe believed that:

*The supervisor may not be aware of teaching materials, students’ behaviors, and the atmosphere of the class and he/she cannot be a fair evaluator* (Interview, March 2, 2012).

In the same vein, Farzin believed that teachers can be the best evaluators of their own teaching process, because they don't want to find faults with their own works, they just think
of the improvement; they observe both positive and negative points of the teaching process, not just negative points!

Ali argued that:

Certainly perfection is not possible without criticism, but I believe that self-analysis could be more useful than the supervisor's evaluation (Interview, March 15, 2012).

4.2.3. Objectivity of Supervisor's Ratings

Half of the participants believed that the differences between self-evaluations and supervisor's evaluations may be attributable to objective ratings of supervisor and according to Holzbach (1978, p. 587, cited in Nhundu, 1999), "objectivity of supervisor ratings is attributable to the supervisors' wide experience and responsibility in evaluating job performance as well as their familiarity and sensitivity to differentiate among specific job-related behaviors of individual supervisees".

4.2.4. Critical Views of Supervisor

It is quite significant to note that all the teachers expressed that the supervisor's ideas are critical. Without considering the positive points and encouraging teachers, they just substantiate the negative points of the teaching process and finally, leave the teachers discouraged.

Ebrahim elucidated that:

It is not fair to pass a value judgment on teachers just by a one-session observation and just by considering the negative points of the teaching process (Interview, March 13, 2012).

Farzin criticized supervisory observations and maintained that:

Regarding the supervisor's observation, one of the criticisms that I always mention is that they don’t talk about the strengths of the teaching process and sometimes it is quite discouraging for me; it could be better to first talk about some strengths and then weaknesses of the teaching process (Interview, March 13, 2012).

4.2.5. Effectiveness of Videotaping

In one interesting finding, most of the participants proclaimed that videotaped self-analysis is a promising mode of teaching supervision which can be an alternative to on-site visits of supervisors; because it provided them with opportunities to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses and it could make abstract issues completely concrete.

On the contrary, Sherin (2004, cited in Brophy, Ed) proposed that "the information captured by the video camera may be much more limited than if someone was observing in a
classroom live" (p. 10). Accordingly, Mahboobe worried that videotaping could not capture different parts of the teaching and learning process:

_Videotaping can be a good way for self-analysis, but it is not the only way; some aspects of the teaching process could not be captured by videotapes (Interview, March, 2012)._ 

Farzin proposed that:

_Self-analysis through videotaping was a great experience for me; it made abstract issues completely concrete, and it made me aware of my strengths and weaknesses (Interview, March 13, 2012)._ 

Maryam put forward that videotaping made her sensitive to her teaching process, behaviors, movements, learners, and the learning atmosphere. Put differently, videotaping made her more aware of how she taught in actual classrooms. This finding is in the same line with the results of a study by Akcan (2010), in which video-based reflection sessions increased teachers' awareness of their use of English, grammatical and pronunciation mistakes, and students' participation.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The findings of this study, based upon quantitative analysis and results of in-depth interviews with teachers, indicated that there is a significant difference between teachers' self evaluations and supervisor's evaluation of their teaching process in the videotapes. Results also demonstrated that the main reasons of these discrepancies can neatly be classified into different categories of a framework including psychological aspects, effectiveness of teachers' self-evaluation, critical views of supervisor, effectiveness of videotaping, and objectivity of supervisor's ratings.

The findings of this study have stimulated interesting but often controversial discussion about self-evaluation and supervisor evaluation and until recently, few efforts had been made to conduct research in this field. The findings also strongly suggested that teachers had very positive ideas regarding the videotaped self-analysis and they found it as a very effective and promising mode of teaching supervision which can be an alternative to on-site visits of supervisors. They believed that the significant aspects of teaching and learning process could be captured by videotapes and it provided them with opportunities to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses.

As a concluding remark, it should be said that using videotaped lesson analysis was considered as an effective mode of teaching supervision by supervisor too, but he believed
that all the aspects of the teaching process could not be captured by videotapes and he also expressed that some of the items in the teacher-evaluation checklist should be modified based on the new mode of supervision.

Of course, some caveats and disadvantages need to be noted. Although all of the participants reported that self-evaluation by reflective teaching through videotaping was a really valuable tool for making necessary changes, progressing and moving towards professional development, it couldn't be without its disadvantages; the process of videotaping, transcribing 8 30-minute interviews, self evaluation and supervisor's evaluation could be subjective and quite time-consuming. Finally, it is important to note that despite the fact that self-ratings had greater potential of producing changes in teaching behaviors than supervisor ratings, other ways of teaching evaluation may be beneficial too. This remains a very exciting and promising area of research in future time and further research should be perused in this field.

Acknowledgments

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Title

The Relationship between Oral Corrective Feedback and Levels of Language Proficiency

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Abstract

This study is intended to investigate EFL learners' attitudes towards oral corrective feedback in terms of two levels of language proficiency. In addition, it is analyzing what types of error correction are most frequently used for oral errors of the low level and high level learners. Two pre-intermediate and advance classes of an English language institution in Qom were observed and audio-recorded for 7.5 hours during five sessions. 23 learners of two classes were given Persian questionnaires eliciting some aspects of their attitudes towards oral corrective feedback. In parallel, the teachers of the two classes answer English questionnaires concerning how often they apply each type of error correction to the learners' oral errors. The analysis reveals significant differences between the two groups of the learners' preferences, particularly in the area of time, type and source of oral corrective feedback. With respect to the recorded cases of error correction, recast, although at different rates, was the most frequent approach applied to the both classes.

Keywords: Oral corrective feedback, Level of language proficiency, Attitudes and preferences.
1. Introduction

Corrective feedback as defined by Seliger & Long (1983) refers to “language-related responses to learners’ utterances, upon which the learner is focused and which can be used by the learner to validate or invalidate concepts he or she has about the target language” (cited in Lu, 2010, p.16). Theoretically, corrective feedback is located on two extremes by Jang (2003). It is viewed as an immediate necessity in behaviorists' perspective. Since the main principle of behaviorism centers on rote-learning, any type of errors should be forbidden to prevent focalization. Nevertheless, corrective feedback has no significant status in the nativists' perspective. With regard to this view, L2 acquisition has to occur as natural as L1 acquisition; and since errors are the inevitable elements of this naturalness, error correction disrupts successful process of L2 development. Contrary to these extremes, for interactionists, provision of corrective feedback is necessary not for imitation purpose but for drawing learners' attention to the forms while performing communicative tasks.

Corrective feedback is in the form of written and oral and each form consists of different types. This study provides comparative descriptions of oral corrective feedback in terms of levels of proficiency. The findings of this study provide us with answers to these questions: (1) is there any relationship between learners' attitudes towards oral corrective feedback and the levels of language proficiency?, and (2) what are the most frequent types of oral corrective feedback used for the two different levels of language proficiency?

2. Review of literature

The issue of corrective feedback (CF) or error correction is not irrelevant to the nature of errors themselves. In the area of EFL, errors play an important role, so that "One of the most important factors included in almost all the stages and processes of language learning is error making." (Zhu, 2010, p.127). Zhu restates Corder's remarks about the significance of making errors for the three groups of learners, teachers and researchers involved in the process of SLA. In the case of teachers, for instance, "from the analysis of the learner’s errors, teachers are able to infer the nature of this knowledge at that point in his learning and discover what he still has to learn." or it enables them "to decide whether they can move to the next item."(Zhu, 2010, p.127). Moreover it is a useful source of information on the designing of an appropriate syllabus of teaching. Parallel to the errors importance, the significance of techniques and strategies to the error correction is emphasized by Corder, too. Jang (2003) puts error correction on a historical sequence. In 1950s and 1960s, as far as behaviorists were
Concerned, "language learning was a process of habit formation and errors were to be avoided at all costs." Therefore, "second language teachers were to provide immediate and explicit error correction when their students made errors." (Jang, 2003, par.2) Contrary to the behaviorists, for nativists, "error correction has no role in second language acquisition and the focus in the classroom should be on communicating meaning rather than on producing target-like grammar." (Jang, 2003, par.3) Finally, for interactionists like Long (1996) "another way to learn a language is through the provision of implicit negative feedback (recasts), and that the negative feedback (error correction) obtained during negotiation work may be facilitative of L2 development" (Jang, 2003, par.4)

Apart from these theoretically three general views, different aspects of corrective feedback, in general, and oral corrective feedback, in particular, have been proved to be perceived in significantly different way by both groups of teachers and learners. There are a number of comparisons drawn between the teachers' opinions and preferences on one hand, and the learners' preferences on the other hand toward different aspects of oral corrective feedback. Park (2010) investigated the teachers and learners' opinions about different aspects of oral error correction, including the necessity, frequency, timing, type, method and source of error treatment. According to her analysis of questionnaires, although majority of both students and teachers agree on the necessity of the correction of the serious errors in the process of communication, "students want to receive more error treatments than their teachers think." (Park, 2010, p.68) Also, she concluded that for the learners, contrary to the teachers, an immediate correction is the best time of corrective feedback. Additionally, she found that while the teachers prefer repetition strategy to error correction, elicitation method is most favored by learners. A rather similar conclusion is drawn from a study by Oladejo (1993): "learners want to be corrected more often and more thoroughly than teachers sometimes assume." (p.12)

However, similar to the present study, the concern of some researchers has been the investigation of different attitudes and preferences of learners toward corrective feedback in terms of different levels of language proficiency. In his study, Oladejo (1993), administered questionnaires between more than 100 secondary school pupils in Singapore, as an intermediate group of learners, and 500 the undergraduates of National University of Singapore, as an advanced group of learners. His survey revealed some differences between the attitudes of these groups of learners. For instance, while grammatical errors were more important for the intermediate learners, the advance learners were more concerned with the organization of ideas. Also, the advance learners prefer both the teacher correction and self-
correction to the peer correction, but the intermediates "are generally well disposed to peer-correction." (p.10). Similarly, assigning a great number of Korean learners to the three groups of beginners, intermediate, and advance, Jang (2003) begins his study with the hypothesis that "there is a relationship between EFL learners' proficiency and their attitudes toward corrective feedback." (para.16). To prove such a relationship, he uses ANOVA with a significant level of .05. The statistics drawn from the three groups show that the advance learners are more positive than the intermediates and the intermediate learners are more positive than the beginners, "with regard to their attitudes toward error correction." (para.34)

Some researches change the focus of their comparisons from the teachers and learners attitudes or within learners preferences to the application of various types of oral corrective feedback and bring up discussions on the probable effectiveness of some specific types of oral correction in specific circumstances. As emphasized by Kenedy (2010), "A basic question underlying research on corrective feedback is this: what kinds of feedback for what kinds of errors are effective for what kinds of learners?" (p.1) In other words, the kinds of errors and the proficiency levels of the learners act as two decisive factors for administering special types of corrective feedback by the language teachers. In relation to kinds of errors and kinds of feedback, Rauber (2004) refers to seven categories of CF types which have been already analyzed by Roberts (1995) and Lyster (1998). He mentions that the teachers in Lyster's study "tended to select feedback types according to error types." (p.280) He explains that "recasts were preferred after grammatical and phonological errors, while negotiation corrective feedback form was the usual strategy for correcting lexical errors." (p. 280)

Concerning the kinds of CF and proficiency levels of learners, it has been the subject of many researches with the purpose of discovering the effect of the second decisive factor on the form of CF. One relevant study mentioned by Kenedy (2010) is the work of Amar and Spada (2006) on two groups of low and high learners. After receiving two types of CF, i.e. prompts and recasts followed by knowledge tests, it was observed that:

The high-proficiency learners in both the prompt class and the recast class received similar scores on the tests, but the low-proficiency learners in the prompt class scored significantly higher than did the low-proficiency learners in the recast class. (Kenedy, 2010, p.33)

In her study of two groups of low and mid levels child learners, Kenedy (2010) divided all of CF into two general categories of with and without correct forms. She found that more than 60% of the low levels were provided with the correct form, while the CF fore more than 50% of high learners was lack of correct form. Although the role of proficiency factor in
adopting particular forms of CF is not questionable, on occasions, such as the present study, the strength of this role varies in significant way.

1. 1. Types of oral corrective feedback

Before dealing with the mainstream of this study, it is necessary to introduce 6 major methods of oral corrective feedback listed by Lyster and Ranta in their research on the relationship between the types of teachers' corrective feedback and the types of students' uptake and self-correction. (cited in Tedick, 1998)

1. Explicit correction: Clearly indicating that the student's utterance was incorrect, the teacher provides the correct form.

2. Recast: Without directly indicating that the student's utterance was incorrect, the teacher implicitly reformulates the student's error, or provides the correction.

3. Clarification request: By using expressions like “Excuse me?” or “Sorry, I don’t understand”, the teacher indicates that she has made an error that must be corrected.

4. Metalinguistic clues: Without providing the correct form, the teacher provides comments or information related to the formation of the student's utterance.

5. Elicitation: The teacher directly elicits the correct form from the student by asking questions (e.g., "How do we say that in French?") , by pausing to allow the student to complete the teacher's utterance (e.g., "It's a....") or by asking students to reformulate the utterance (e.g., "Say that again")

6. Repetition: The teacher repeats the student's error and adjusts intonation to draw student's attention to it.

3. Procedure

Both observations and questionnaires were applied to gathering appropriate data. At the first stage and during two weeks, the process of observation and recording was accomplished. The pre-intermediate class was observed and audio-recorded for three sessions; and the advance class was observed and audio-recorded for two sessions. At the next stage and following the observation, two types of questionnaires were given to the learners and teachers of the two classes. They were given enough time to answer the questionnaires.

3. 1. Participants

Both learners and teachers took part in this research. The learners were female students of the two classes in an English language institution. One class consisted of 14 learners in pre-intermediate level with average age of 14-16; and another class included 9 learners in
advance level with the average age of 17-20. Moreover, the two teachers of the two classes who were involved as participants of this study, had B.A degree in English language translation with about ten years experiences of teaching in language institutions.

3.2. Data collection

3.2.1. Learner and Teacher Questionnaires

Two groups of participants were required to answer different questionnaires developed for the purpose of eliciting learners' attitudes and teachers' performances in the area of oral corrective feedback. The learners were given questionnaires in Persian with five multiple-choice questions. The questions aimed at five main issues: (1) whether or not oral corrective feedback results in learning improvement, (2) the time learners prefer their errors to be corrected, (3) the person learners prefer to correct their errors, (4) the type of corrective feedback learners prefer more for error correction, and (5) the amount of sensitivity learners have toward error correction.

The two teachers were given questionnaires in English. These questionnaires consisted of 6 types and methods of providing corrective feedback on the learners' speaking listed for the two teachers to ask how often they apply each method to their classes (always, often, sometimes, or never?). For better clarification, each method explanation was simplified; also each was followed by an example.

3.2.2. Observation and Recording

Observation was used as a support for the data acquired from the learners and teachers questionnaires. After observing and audio-recording, all cases of errors and error corrections occurred during three sessions of pre-intermediate and two sessions of advance classes, were identified and listed separately.

4. Data analysis

4.1. Analysis of the learners' questionnaires

As the above-mentioned section, the learner questionnaire embedded five multiple-choice questions. Regarding the first question with four items, 50% of low level and 55% of high level students have selected the third item, i.e. "I memorize teacher's correction and try not to repeat the previous errors." This reveals that oral corrective
feedback results in learning improvement. For the second question with two items, 57% of low level students have selected the second item, i.e. "the teacher should correct me after I finished my speaking." In contrast, 66% of high level students have selected the first item, i.e. "the teacher should correct me immediately after I commit an error." Concerning the third question with three items, low proficient learners have equally selected first and second items which are in turn "the teacher, herself, should indicate and correct my errors" and "the teacher should indicate my errors and allow me to correct them". Nevertheless, only the second item was preferred by more than 55% of the advance learners. All low level students have selected the second item of the two items of the fourth question, while only 55% of high level students have selected this item, i.e. "before getting volunteer for speaking, I check to make sure that there isn't vocabulary or grammatical error in my speech." For the last question with four items, 42% of low proficient learners have selected the last item, i.e. "without indicating my error, the teacher should ask me to repeat my sentence, and so I will find that my sentence has been wrong." However, 33% of high proficient learners have selected the second item, i.e. "without indicating my error, the teacher should repeat the correct sentence."

4. 2. Analysis of the teachers' questionnaires

As above-mentioned section, the teacher questionnaire contained a list of six types of error correction strategies applied to the learners' oral errors. The results are as follows:

a) The teacher of the pre-intermediate class, uses recast method usually, explicit method usually, Repetition, elicitation, and clarification request sometimes, and metalinguistic method never.

b) The teacher of the advance class uses recast method always, and the other methods never.

4. 3. Analysis of observation and recordings

Analysis of transcriptions of audio-recordings provided more detailed and accurate information than what was drawn from analysis of the teachers' questionnaires.

During three sessions of the pre-intermediate class, about 65 cases of error correction were observed and recorded. The teacher applied four types of corrective feedback to the learners' oral errors. The results were as follows:

Recast method 77.04%, explicit method 13.11%, elicitation 6.55%, and 3.27% repetition method.

During two sessions of the advance class, about 40 cases of error correction were observed and recorded. The results were as follows:

One case (2.5%) was explicit method, one case (2.5%) was elicitation method, and the other cases (95%) were recast method.
5. Discussion

Concerning the first question of this study, it seems reasonable to assume the existence of a relationship between proficiency level of the learners and their attitudes toward oral corrective feedback. Drawing comparison between the questionnaires of the two groups of learners offers some differences in their attitudes in the area of time, type, and source of oral corrective feedback. For instance, in the area of time of error correction, the low proficient learners prefer a delayed correction at the end of their speech, but the high proficient learners prefer immediate correction after error commission. With regard to the source of error correction, although the teacher correction and self-correction are equally preferred by the low proficient learners, the higher level students show rather more tendency toward self-correction. The most significant difference between the two groups is apparently concerned with the types of oral corrective feedback. The low proficient learners prefer to be corrected in an implicit way. In other words, they are more satisfied with clarification or elicitation strategies for correcting their oral errors, while the advance learners prefer the recast method so that they are immediately corrected by the teacher. Apart from the different attitudes, there are some aspects which the two groups of the learners share with each other. When the two groups claim that they memorize their errors, in fact they admit positive effect of corrective feedback on their learning improvement. Also they declare high sensitivity toward error correction, although the amounts of this sensitivity vary in a significant way.

Regarding the second question of this study, the transcription of recordings introduces the recast method as the most frequently used strategy for the two levels of the learners. According to teachers’ questionnaires, the teacher of low proficient group believes that, except the metalinguistic method, she applies a variety of methods of error correction to her class, while the teacher of advance group believes that recast is the only way of her corrective feedback towards learners' oral errors. Therefore both teachers' questionnaires and transcriptions determine the superiority of the recast method over other types of oral corrective feedback.

References


Title

Iranian EFL Learners’ Purpose behind Using the Internet and Its Impact on Their Writing

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Abstract

Nowadays, Internet is playing an important role in our daily life and recently pedagogical systems are relying more on it both as a resource and a tool for improvement. In line with this, there has been a revolution in language learning. The present study was an attempt to investigate whether Iranian EFL students use the Internet to learn English or not. Most specifically, the researcher aimed to know that among the three levels of elementary, intermediate and advanced, which one tends to use the Internet mostly for the purpose of learning English more. Furthermore, the researcher tried to find out if male or female learners differ in their use of the Internet for language learning purposes. Another aim of the study was finding the relationship between students’ using the Internet and their writing skill. The data for this study were collected from 90 EFL students (45 males and 45 females) who were chosen from different levels of language proficiency. This study used “The Use of the Internet Questionnaire” to find the
participants’ purposes behind using the Internet; moreover, in regard to students’ levels of English three writing tests of ESOL (KET, PET, and FCE) were given to them. The results of the study revealed that the participants used the Internet more for fun and there was not any significant difference between levels of English or even gender in using the Internet to learn English. Finally, the results showed that those who used the Internet to learn English performed better in the writing tests.

**Keywords**: Internet, Writing skill, ESOL writing tests, Fun

### 1. Introduction

Nowadays, the Internet is playing an important role in our daily life. It has been spreading all over the world to the extent that all the people are using it on a daily basis at home, at work or even when they are commuting. When it is taken to the extremes, for most of the people life would be impossible without the Internet. This technology has brought about enormous changes in how people find, manage and use information. It has not only been affecting daily life but also educational systems. Throughout the world, educators underscore how beneficial the Internet can be in different aspects of pedagogical systems.

Recently, pedagogical systems are relying more and more on the Internet both as a resource and a tool for effective process of teaching and learning. In line with this, the Internet has attracted the attention of language experts and there has been a revolution in language learning. Providing an imaginary or artificial native context, teachers make use of the web to create a native and authentic environment for the students of foreign languages which facilitates learning and leads to highly successful understanding.

Highlighting the positive role of the Internet in language learning, this study aims at finding out EFL learners’ main purpose behind using the Internet in Iran, to see whether they make use of the net to learn English more. Furthermore, the same point will be analyzed in regard to level of English and gender and finally, this study is done to find if there is a relationship between the purpose of using the Internet to learn English and writing better.

### 2. Review of Literature

Pennington (1993), Sullivan and Pratt (1996), and Braine (1997) found that the writing skills of EFL students who used a computer-mediated networked environment and web-based materials improved significantly. Therefore, using a web-based writing program is a strategy
that may help students write effectively in a communicative sense. They can benefit from the Internet magazines and newspapers (Allen, 1995; Silver, 1990).

With the advent of the Internet technology, and its applications to teaching and learning, many students practice their writing skills synchronously as in chatting, instant messaging, and live discussion boards (Warschauer, 1996; Pan & Sullivan, 2005; Smith, 2006; Lloyd-Williams, 2007) or asynchronously as in emailing and blogging (Ocker & Yaverbaum, 2001; Pena-Shaff, Altman & Stephenson, 2005; Zeiss & Isabelli, 2005).

Huang (1999) investigated the use of the Internet in writing instruction in English as a foreign language (EFL). Subjects were 24 students majoring in English at a Taiwanese college. At the beginning of the writing course, several Internet programs were introduced to all the students, and students were reminded of the potential for use of the Internet throughout the course, although only one Internet-related assignment was required. Participating students answered an open-ended questionnaire at semester's end. Results indicated positive student attitudes toward use of the Internet for writing instruction, with access to computers and the nature of assignments seen as significant factors in the Internet use.

Tsou (2008) investigated the effect of a web-based writing program “My Access”. The sample was 49 university students from southern part of Taiwan. The post-test scores were analyzed using ANCOVA. A questionnaire was used and teacher interviews were collected and analyzed. The findings showed that students who used the web-based writing program got better gains than the regular writing group in most variables, especially in “content”, “development”, and “organization. This study did not show interaction and collaboration among students.

Al-Jarf (2004) investigated the effect of online learning on struggling ESL college writers. The participants were 113 ESL female freshmen students in two classes at the College of Languages and Translation, King Saud University enrolled in a writing 1 course. They were divided into two classes: control and experimental. The control group was taught with traditional writing instruction, whereas the experimental was exposed to a combination of traditional and online (web-based) writing. Both groups were pre-tested. Test results showed significant differences between the two groups. The control group covered the class material. The experimental group used an online course from home. The experimental group posted their paragraphs, stories, and poems. They located information in sites like “Yahoo Movies”. They processed their paragraphs and checked their spelling. At the end of the course, both groups were post-tested. They wrote an essay. ANCOVA results showed
significant differences between both groups in favor of the experimental group. They were more proficient, made less errors and they could communicate.

Chuo (2007) investigated the effects of the Web Quest Writing Instruction (WQWI) program on Taiwanese EFL learners’ writing performance, apprehension and perception of web resource integrated language learning. The participants were college students. One class received traditional learning and the other received the WQWI program. The findings showed that the students in the WQWI class improved their writing performance significantly more than the traditional class. Also the WQWI class showed significant reduction in writing apprehension. Moreover, students had a favorable perception of the WQWI program reorganization and more language learning progress through web resources. This study did not show that there was interaction among students and between students and the teacher. It looked into the effect of integrating web resources and EFL writing instruction. It did not touch on collaboration and discussion among students.

Wooley (2007) examined the effects of web-based peer review on students’ writing within an online, asynchronous peer review system. Participants included 114 students selected from 10 sections of a sophomore-level educational psychology course at Midwestern State University. The course is usually taken by all education majors during the second year of the four year program. Males composed 46% of the sample (n = 53), and females composed 45% of the sample (n = 61). The study sought to illuminate distinctions between different types of reviewing and reviewer preparation, namely the effects of feedback elaboration and the effects of providing examples of helpful and unhelpful feedback. Results indicated that students who provided elaborate forms of feedback with free form comments performed significantly better on writing than students who provided numerical ratings only. The results also indicated that review-first groups did not perform better than write-first groups. Using video and text chat discourse gave higher speaking skill results, followed by listening, reading and finally writing skills.

Baniabdelerahman and Bataineh (2007) investigated 210 Jordanian English as a foreign language (EFL) students’ perceptions of their use of the Internet for both general purposes (e.g., e-mail, chat, aimless browsing, games, and music) and EFL learning purposes (e.g., practicing various language skills, vocabulary, and structure through instructional software). The findings revealed that 47% of the sample reported using browsers to view documents, while slightly smaller percentages reported using the Internet for personal purposes, mailing lists and discussion groups, and e-mail. Furthermore, the majority of the respondents reported never or rarely using the Internet for any EFL learning purposes, except for about 58% and
52% who reported using it for developing speaking skills through chat and locating authentic texts, respectively. The findings further revealed a weak correlation between the students’ use of the Internet for general and EFL learning purposes. Class level, but not gender, was found to significantly affect the students’ use of the Internet.

Rezaee and Oladi (2008) believed that Weblogs as a new opportunity for people to express their thoughts using Internet facilities, is gaining universal impetus among scholars and educators. In the process of blogging, learners become involved in commenting and reflecting on diverse topics and ideas. The main questions generated from the study conducted by them were intertwined with the students' social interaction in class community and foreign weblogs. There were 60 participates in the study who took part in the class community weblog, Cyberdiscovery, conducted at the Medical School of the University of Tehran. The data was collected by the researchers in a period of one academic year while observing the class community weblog using several means including observation, questionnaire, interview and IELTS writing proficiency test. This study verified that blogging was a meaningful medium which can improve the students' social interaction towards the class community weblog and also promote creativity in writing.

Ghaemi and Kargozari (2010) investigated to determine whether Web-based Writing Instruction (WBWI) has any influence on the writing quality of Iranian EFL learners. Two groups of EFL learners who were studying English in an English language institute participated in the experiment. They were enrolled in an advanced writing course. Before instruction, both groups were pre-tested through writing essays. \( T \)-test results illustrated significant differences between two groups in writing ability. The experimental group made too many errors and had many writing problems. At the end of the experiment, both groups were post-tested through writing an essay. Results showed considerable differences between two groups. The experimental group made more gains as a result of web-based instruction. They became more proficient, and made fewer errors.

Keyvanfar and Sadr (2010) investigated the applicability of online instruction in improving the writing ability of Iranian EFL learners. In so doing, two classes of 20 EFL learners studying airline ticketing in a technical college in Tehran were selected and equated in terms of their general language proficiency and writing skill. The control group attended a traditional writing class for 15 sessions over 5 weeks. The experimental group, however, received the instruction at home through the Internet, from lessons and exercises to the corrective feedback on their writing. At the end of the instruction, both groups sat for a writing posttest and filled out a questionnaire about their experience. Statistical analyses
indicated that despite the positive attitude of the experimental group towards their new experience, they did not outperform their peers in the traditional class which could be due to their inability to take full advantage of the learning opportunities virtual instruction provides. The researchers concluded that Iranian EFL learners are just at the beginning of this web-based journey and need time to explore the demands of such self-service instruction.

Fageeh (2011) examined the use of a blog in an intermediate level EFL college writing class and its effect upon students as well as its effect on developing positive attitudes towards writing compared with oral presentation traditions of writing instruction. The researcher employed a triangulated research approach, involving an experimental research method and a descriptive research design to examine these effects of blogging on writing proficiency and attitudes. The findings indicated that the students perceived Weblog as a tool for the development of their English, in terms of their writing proficiency and attitudes towards writing. The students also viewed Weblog as giving an opportunity and freedom for self-expression in English, writing for both a local and global audience, creating active, interactive social exchanges in blogs, and maintaining an interactive relationship with a real time readership.

Behjat, Yamini and Bagheri (2011) conducted a study which was an attempt to find out whether hybrid learning or traditional face-to-face instruction could better foster language learners' writing skill. For this purpose, 110 male and female freshmen majoring in English at Zand Institute of Higher Education in Shiraz and Islamic Azad University in Shiraz, Iran were selected as the participants. They took an essay-writing test before the instruction. Then, they were divided into two groups. The first group took in-class writing instruction and activities in conventional mode; the second group took in-class instruction and did their activities online. After the treatment, they all took another essay-writing test as the post-test. The comparison between the conventional and hybrid groups' writing gain scores showed that those who were instructed in a hybrid learning environment could outperform their peers who took traditional face-to-face instruction.

Najjari and Ghaemi (2011) attempted to investigate the positive effects of the Electronic Mail (e-mail) and Text Message, i.e. SMS on Iranian students’ writing abilities. The e-mail provides a number of characteristics that can help Iranian EFL learners to improve their abilities as well as promote their confidence in the writing of English compositions. Writing is often considered a process that involves four main stages i.e., planning, drafting, revising and editing. These four steps seem to be applicable for paper-based writing as well as for e-mail writing. Although there are some limitations, the findings of this study revealed
that the advantages of the electronic tutorial using the e-mail and SMS to enhance writing skills in English overshadow the shortcomings.

3. Method

3.1 Participants
In order to conduct this study, 120 students who were studying English at the elementary, intermediate and advanced levels and were native speakers of Persian were selected based on convenience sampling from one of the language institutes in Shiraz. After collecting the data (explained in data collection procedure) only 90 of the students (45 males and 45 females) were chosen randomly as the main participants, 30 belonged to the elementary level, 30 others were from the intermediate, and 30 students were from the advanced level.

3.2 Instrumentation
Two instruments were used in this study. The first one was a questionnaire which consisted of 32 items to check the purpose of using the net. The second instrument was a writing test. There were several writing tests according to the levels of the students. The writing tests were chosen from ESOL international exams, KET, PET and FCE, for elementary, intermediate and advanced levels respectively.

3.2.1 The Questionnaire
“The Use of the Internet Questionnaire” was designed by the researcher. It included 32 items, based on a five-point likert scale ranging from always to never. 16 items of this questionnaire examined whether the students used the net for learning English and other 16 items checked other purposes.

In order to be sure about the validity of this questionnaire, it was checked by some professors and experts, and it was arranged under their observations. Then a pilot study was conducted with open ended items to be certain if all the possible purposes are among the items. To check the reliability of the questionnaire a pilot study was done. Then Cronbach’s alpha of was used to evaluate the internal consistency of the items and it was found to be 0.87.

3.2.2 Cambridge Writing Tests
Cambridge ESOL Skills for Life certificates test the English of adults who live, work or study in England, Wales or Northern Ireland. As part of the UK government’s plans to improve levels of English, they are fully based on the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum and reflect the use of English in everyday life.
There are several writing tests according to different levels of English. For this research, three tests of KET, PET and FCE were used to measure students’ ability in writing. **Key**, also known as **Key English Test (KET)**, is a basic level qualification that shows you can use English to communicate in simple situations and have achieved a good foundation in learning English. In this test, students are asked to write 25 to 35 words. Two KET writing tests were used in this study to have a better understanding about elementary students’ writing ability. **Preliminary**, also known as **Preliminary English Test (PET)**, is an intermediate level qualification in English that opens the doors to opportunities for work, study and travel. In this test, students are asked to write down 60 to 75 words. **First for Schools**, also known as **First Certificate in English (FCE) for Schools**, shows that a student is skilled in English and can use it for work or study purposes. In the writing part of FCE exam, students should write at least 150 words. ([http://www.cambridgeesol.org/exams/sfl/index.html](http://www.cambridgeesol.org/exams/sfl/index.html))

Due to the fact that the Cambridge Tests are standard, their validity and reliability are assumed to be satisfactory. Just to ensure rater reliability, the researcher checked all the papers twice within an interval of two weeks; moreover, another scorer was asked to check the writing tests for the third time. Eventually, the results were analyzed by the SPSS program in order to find inter and intra-rater reliability. The results of Kappa revealed that inter-rater reliability was .775 and intra-rater reliability was .79 with p< .00 which was satisfactory.

### 3.3 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was administered in EFL classrooms directly by the researcher. At the beginning, the researcher introduced the questionnaire to all the students; especially in the elementary classes, everything was explained in Persian to make sure that the students have understood all the process completely. It took about 10 minutes for the students to fill the questionnaires out. Then the students were given the writing test related to their level and a brief instruction was given to them.

### 4. Results

Results of the paired $t$-test reported in Table 1 show that there is a significant difference between two main purposes behind using the Internet, one for learning English and the other one for fun at the .05 level of significance. According to the table, the mean difference is -2.533, which suggests that the students use the Internet more for fun than learning English.
Table 1: Paired $t$-test results for EFL Students’ Purposes behind Using the Internet (Learning English vs. Fun)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English - fun</td>
<td>-2.53333</td>
<td>11.31490</td>
<td>1.19270</td>
<td>-4.90319</td>
<td>-2.124</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>.036</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to have precise understanding about the results presented in Table 1, the data on each level of language proficiency (elementary, intermediate and advanced) were analyzed separately. As for elementary level, the results of the paired $t$-test show that there is not any significant difference regarding the two different purposes (Table 2). In other words, the students use the Internet equally for fun and learning English.

Table 2: Paired $t$-test Results for the Elementary Group’s Purposes behind Using the Internet (Learning English vs. Fun)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English - fun</td>
<td>-3.13333</td>
<td>11.00073</td>
<td>2.00845</td>
<td>-7.24107</td>
<td>-1.560</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table 3, in the intermediate group there is a significant difference between using the Internet for fun and learning English at the .001 level. According to the table, the mean difference is -5.033, which shows that the intermediate group uses the Internet more for fun.

Table 3: Paired $t$-test Results for the Intermediate Group’s Purposes behind Using the Internet (Learning Fun)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English - fun</td>
<td>-5.033</td>
<td>7.19427</td>
<td>1.31349</td>
<td>-7.71972</td>
<td>-3.832</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finally, the paired $t$-test results report that in the advanced group there is no significant difference in regard to purposes behind using the net. (Table 4)

Table 4: Paired $t$-test Results for the Advanced Group’s Purposes behind Using the Internet (Learning English vs. Fun)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English - fun</td>
<td>.56667</td>
<td>14.26035</td>
<td>2.60357</td>
<td>5.89157</td>
<td>.218</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to understand which level (elementary, intermediate and advance) and sex group tends to use the Internet mostly to learn English, a two-way ANOVA was run. The items, level and sex, were considered as independent variables and the purpose to use the Internet to learn English was the dependant variable in this analysis. The results show that there is not any significant difference between males and females in using the Internet to learn English (p = .913). Meanwhile, the difference among three groups of elementary, intermediate and advanced is not significant as either (p = .609). Furthermore, there is no interaction between the independent variables.

Table 5: Two-way ANOVA Results for Level and Sex concerning the Use of the Internet for Learning English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>212.089</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>42.418</td>
<td>.318</td>
<td>.901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>149,165.511</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>149,165.511</td>
<td>1.117E3</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level</td>
<td>133.422</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>66.711</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>.609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>1.600</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.600</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level * Sex</td>
<td>77.067</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>38.533</td>
<td>.289</td>
<td>.750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>112,144.000</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>133.505</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>160,592.000</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>114,264.89</td>
<td>89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the last part of the study, at first two groups of using the Internet for learning English had to be established. In order to do so, the mean of the scores for using the Internet for learning English was calculated (M=40.7111). Those who scored higher than the mean were considered as members of the high group and the rest were considered as the low group. The members of each group were 45 students. Next an independent t-test was conducted in which writing was considered the dependent variable and group as the independent variable. Table 6 reports that at .039 level, there was a significant difference between the two groups of high and low.

Table 6: Independent t-test Results for the Relationship between Writing and Using the Internet for Learning English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Discussion and Conclusion

The first question posed in this study searched about Iranian EFL students’ purpose behind using the Internet: Do Iranian EFL students use the Internet to learn English or do they use it for other purposes? Table 4.1 revealed that Iranian EFL students use the Internet more for fun and enjoying themselves than learning English. Taken as a whole, the participants’ responses showed that most of the students surf the Internet, using their mother tongue for most occasions.

LeLoup (1997) and Graus (1999) believed the various Internet applications such as email, Internet Relay Chat, Newsgroups, Mailing list, etc. are excellent vehicles for communicating and exchanging ideas with native and non-native speakers. In line with what they mentioned, Iranian EFL students communicate through the net; they chat and send email to their Persian friends, check the latest news in Persian and search the net to spend their free time. Mainly, the students do not consider the Internet as one of the tools through which they can improve their English.

In a study by Baniabdelrahman and Bataineh (2007) 210 Jordanian EFL students’ perceptions of their use of the Internet for both general purposes and EFL learning purposes were investigated. The findings revealed that the respondents reported never or rarely using the Internet for any EFL learning purposes and there was a weak correlation between the students’ use of the Internet for general and EFL learning purposes. In this study Iranian EFL students, as well, used the Internet for general purposes and less for learning EFL.

Previous studies have reported students’ attitude toward using the Internet; for instance, in a study by Maleki and Ahangari (2011), the results of the survey indicated that the majority of EFL learners had a positive attitude towards the use of multimedia resources in their language program, and appreciated it. Also Izquierdo and Reyes (2009) found that the online social environments were very well perceived by most students; moreover, nearly 90 percent of the students that participated in a study by Yang (2004) agreed that they liked the web-based program in learning a foreign language.

Sajedi (2011) believes that most students hold an overall positive view towards using Web sites in their ESP learning, and also confirmed the usefulness of ICT in the ESP classroom and development of learner autonomy.

The second research question dealt with the relationship between the participants’ level of English and their tendency to use the Internet to learn English: At which level (elementary, intermediate, and advanced) do students tend to use the Internet to learn English more? Table
5 indicated that there is no significant difference between the three groups, and none of them tends to learn English through the Internet more than the others. (Tables 2 & 3 & 4)

According to Table 2 the elementary students use the Internet for both purposes and there is no significant difference in between; however, the intermediate students prefer to have fun while using the net instead of learning English (Table 3). Finally, the advanced group uses the net for both purposes, the same as the elementary students (Table 4).

The result of this study is in agreement with a study by Baniabdellrahman and Bataineh (2007) who investigated 210 Jordanian EFL students’ perceptions of their use of the Internet for both general purposes and EFL learning purposes. Research revealed significant differences between the mean scores of second- and third-year EFL students in favor of the latter group. Third-year students were found to perceive themselves as more frequent users of the Internet for general purposes than their second-year counterparts. As for the use of the Internet for EFL purposes, the results did not reveal any significant differences that can be attributed to class level.

Talking about the third research question (Which sex group tends to use the Internet to learn English more?), according to Table 5, there is no significant difference between the two groups. The result of this study is in agreement with a study by Baniabdellrahman and Bataineh (2007) which revealed that gender did not significantly affect the students’ use of the Internet. Also Fortson et al. (2007), Bressers& Bergen (2002) found that males and females spend roughly equal amounts of time using e-mail, and that male and female college students exhibit “no statistically significant difference” related to academic research, general information searching.

Concerning the last research question mentioned in this study (Is there any relationship between using the Internet to learn English and the improvement of writing skill?), Table 4.8 indicated that those students who used the Internet to learn English, had better writings in comparison with the other students and scored higher on the test. Warschauer (1996), Pan and Sullivan (2005), Smith (2006) and Lloyd-Williams (2007) believed that many students practice their writing skills synchronously as in chatting, instant messaging, and live discussion boards or asynchronously as in emailing and blogging (Ocker&Yaverbaum, 2001; Pena-Shaff, Altman and Stephenson, 2005; Zeiss and Isabelli, 2005) with the advent of the Internet technology, and its applications to teaching and learning; therefore this must be true about Iranian EFL students as well.

The findings of this study are commensurate with a growing body of research on this subject matter; for instance, Tsou and Li (2002) found that students who used the web-based
writing program got better gains than the regular writing group in most variables, especially in “content”, “development”, and “organization. Also Al-Jarf (2004) showed that there were significant differences between both groups in favor of the group that used online learning. They were more proficient, made less errors and they could communicate. While Ghaemi and Kargozari (2010) were investigating to determine whether Web-based Writing Instruction had any influence on the writing quality of Iranian EFL learners, they found considerable differences between two groups. The group that used web-based instruction made more gains; they became more proficient, and made few errors in writing.

Concerning the last research question mentioned in this study (Is there any relationship between using the Internet to learn English and the improvement of writing skill?), Table 4.9 indicated that those students who used the Internet to learn English, had better writings in comparison with the other students and scored higher on the test. Warschauer (1996), Pan and Sullivan (2005), Smith (2006) and Lloyd-Williams (2007) believed that many students practice their writing skills synchronously as in chatting, instant messaging, and live discussion boards or asynchronously as in emailing and blogging (Ocker&Yaverbaum, 2001; Pena-Shaff, Altman and Stephenson, 2005; Zeiss and Isabelli, 2005) with the advent of the Internet technology, and its applications to teaching and learning; therefore this must be true about Iranian EFL students as well.

The findings of this study are commensurate with a growing body of research on this subject matter; for instance, Tsou and Li (2002) found that students who used the web-based writing program got better gains than the regular writing group in most variables, especially in “content”, “development”, and “organization. Also Al-Jarf (2004) showed that there were significant differences between both groups in favor of the group that used online learning. They were more proficient, made less errors and they could communicate. While Ghaemi and Kargozari (2010) were investigating to determine whether Web-based Writing Instruction had any influence on the writing quality of Iranian EFL learners, they found considerable differences between two groups. The group that used web-based instruction made more gains; they became more proficient, and made few errors in writing. Also the findings in a study by Fageeh (2011) indicated that the Iranian students perceived Weblog as a tool for the development of their English, in terms of their writing proficiency and attitudes towards writing.

Based on the results of the study, both EFL learners and teachers can be assured of the positive role of technology in enhancing writing skill. The Internet helps learners by facilitating the process of learning through communication, interaction. Students must be
more familiarized with the usages of the Internet in EFL learning. If this happens, process of EFL learning will be much easier and it occurs in a natural English context which Iranian students lack and they are in demand of. By educating the students, explaining the advantages of using online sources for their language improvement and helping them to be technology-wise there will be a great revolution in EFL learning of Iranian students. To do so, teachers and instructors should be trained and educated themselves. They should be able to teach writing via Internet at schools, institutes and universities. Furthermore, this study can assure syllabus designers and materials developers about the positive effect of using the Internet on writing skill even if it is involuntary. Therefore, they can supplement both teachers’ and students’ books with the Internet-related materials and exercises to be used both in the class and at home.

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Title

The Relative Effects of Processing Instruction and Meaning-Based Output Instruction on Acquisition of English Conditional Sentences

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Abstract

This study investigated the relative effects of two types of instruction: (1) Processing Instruction (PI) and (2) Meaning-based Output Instruction (MOI) on: (a) the interpretation and (b) the production, i.e. acquisition, of English conditional sentences. The participants consisted of one hundred and eight intermediate level female students (PI group= 36, MOI group= 36 and control group = 36) from six intact classes of two high schools in Sarab, Iran. Gain scores from pretest to immediate post-test and to delay post-test were taken as an indication of learning effects. The data was analyzed by running one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and mixed between-within ANOVA. The results of interpretation and production data indicated that PI and MOI led participants to improved performance on interpretation and production of English conditional sentences: The control group did not improve. The effects of PI and MOI on the interpretation and production of English conditional sentences hold over time. In addition, interaction between time and groups indicates that the effect of
instructions on the interpretation and production of English conditional sentences did not disappear over time.

**Keywords:** Processing Instruction (PI), Meaning-based Output Instruction (MOI), Acquisition, Interpretation, Production

1. **Introduction**

There are different approaches to draw learners’ attention to linguistic form within communicative instruction. These approaches of L2 instruction are described in many ways that differ in terms of whether the learners’ attention is drawn to form or meaning or both (e.g., Ellis, 2001; Long, 1990; Spada, 1997). It seems to be generally accepted that SLA is dependent on input (Gass, 1997; VanPatten, 2004a, 2004b). There are grammar-teaching approaches based on input hypothesis as well as output hypothesis. The approaches based on input give more priority to input (i.e., exposure) whereas the approaches based on output give more priority to output (i.e., production). There are evidences to support both these approaches. PI is an approach based on input hypothesis. A significant amount of study has focused on two particular types of instruction: PI and MOI.

This study intends to compare PI, an input-based technique, with MOI, a meaning-based output technique, to assess their relative effects in helping EFL learners acquire English conditional sentences in terms of both interpretation and production. At the same time, this study also investigates whether, the advantage of instructions holds over time.

A key aspect of the acquisition of grammar for foreign language learners involves learning how to make appropriate connection between grammatical forms and their meanings, which they typically signal.

Most of the Iranian teachers and learners teach and learn through Traditional Instruction (TI). In addition, authorities are inattentive to PI, MOI, and other types of instructions.

Some similar studies have shown different results because of the qualitatively different nature of the contexts of each study (settings, learners, etc.). Benati (2005) showed that PI had a superior effect than MOI in helping L2 learners comprehend the English past simple tense while Farely (2004) indicated that PI and MOI had similar consequences in helping L2 learners comprehend and produce Spanish subjunctive forms. Therefore, it is necessary to find the plausible effects of PI and MOI on linguistic structure acquisition of EFL learners. Changing the usual instructions in Iran, TI to PI and/or MOI, may affect accuracy of Iranian learners.
The present study could be considered as a supplementary support for these two types of instruction (PI and MOI), as a contribution to the PI research literature by investigating the effects of PI and MOI on helping EFL learners acquire conditional sentences (here, type 1 and type 2) and as an input for material development. It is worth mentioning that both of these techniques led to better performance in both PI and MOI groups.

Moreover, two alternatives to TI, which is against communicative language teaching, are recommended. The potential benefits of PI and MOI were available to participants in this study. However, there is evidence in support of its efficacy in acquisition of target feature. In addition, addressing the question of how long the instructional effects can last is very important for any instructional treatment. Utilizing long-term effects of the study can make any real claim about the use of the instructional treatment (Wong, 2004b).

2. Review of the related literature

Various studies have compared the instructional effect of PI (VanPatten, 1996) to that of TI (e.g., Cadierno, 1995; VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993; VanPatten & Sanz, 1995). The results of the VanPatten and Cadierno’s (1993) study are not certain because the nature of the treatments is different. PI in contrast to TI is completely meaning-based.

Some studies compared PI with MOI (Benati, 2005; Morgan-Short and Bowden, 2006; Farley, 2004). Farley (2004) has compared PI to MOI, which excludes the mechanical component of TI, and includes only meaningful output-based activities. Benati (2005) compared PI to MOI, which rules out the mechanical component of TI, and includes only MOI activities. According to Benita’s study, PI had a greater effect than MOI in helping L2 learners comprehend English sample forms. Morgan-Short and Bowden (2006) concluded that, for interpretation, PI and MOI did better than control and that neither PI nor MOI surpassed the other. However, contradictory results have emerged.

2.1. Modes of Instruction

In this section, we explain three modes of instruction including: TI, MOI and PI. TI is an output-based instruction that includes grammatical explanations, mechanical practice and output practice. It begins with an explanation of rules in a paradigmatic way and there is some focus on meaning through meaning-oriented output practice. TI essentially is focus on forms (FonFS) instruction. In FonFS, discrete items of grammar, lexis, functions, and notions are presented one at a time. Based on the relative linguistic complexity of the phenomena, language curricula carefully sequence the beginning of grammatical phenomena, to learners,
such as the grammar-translation approach. In FonFS, activities are mechanical in nature, asking learners to manipulate and alter structures without being mindful of whether students are making form-meaning connections (VanPatten, 2004b). VanPatten and Wong (2004) consider TI as the dominant form of grammar instruction in foreign languages in the U.S. This particular approach is careful to focus students’ attention on the properties of individual forms, the changes of forms, and the separation of form from meaning. This approach does not emphasize the need to make form-meaning connections.

MOI instruction is different from TI in that there is no mechanical component. However, MOI includes grammatical explanation, meaningful output-based activities. MOI activities are all meaning-based and require learners to use both meaning and form at some levels during production. In focus on meaning (FonM), learners concentrate on the message for communicating or extracting the message from input.

PI constantly pays special attention to the need to make form-meaning connections and students make such connections in the context of meaningful communicative acts. VanPatten (2004a) notes that PI is not just another comprehension-based approach to language instruction (i.e., FonM) such as total physical response (TPR) or immersion; PI is a focus on form (FonF) instruction that serves as a supplement to existing communicative and acquisition-oriented approaches. Whereas with regard to the essential differences between FonF, FonFS, FonM, and PI approaches, Collentine (2004) points out that PI could not be strictly called a FonF treatment because it tries to alter the principles underlying processing mechanisms. On the other hand, FonF and FonFS treatments try to change the underlying linguistic system itself. VanPatten (2002) has argued that PI is an explicit type of instruction, which helps learners to process information via comprehension practice which might be more effective than instructions which requires learners to produce language too soon (see also DeKeyser, Salaberry, Robinson, & Harrington, 2002). VanPatten, (2004b), recognizes PI as “the pedagogical intervention that draws insights from a model of input processing” (p. 1). Collentine (2004) considers PI as a “powerful solution” (p. 184), with remarkable effects on learning. Wong (2004a) has summarized that PI is a pedagogical tool that is notified by a model of Input Processing (IP). PI is a type of FonF instruction that is based on a model of IP. Sheen (2007) makes a distinction between the terms IP and PI. IP derives from VanPatten’s theoretical model and refers to what is presupposed to take place in the brain on perceiving input. PI refers to what teacher force learners do in order to notice the grammar of input and it is predicated on the teacher’s providing explanation and understanding of the underlying grammar of input to be practiced.
VanPatten (2004a) has discussed IP with reference to two main principles that direct learner attention to linguistic form in the input: Primacy of meaning principle and the first noun principle. In the former learners process input for meaning, by concentration on prosodic cues (that signal content or more meaningful words than functions), before they can process it for form. The first noun principle force learners to process the first noun or pronoun in a sentence as the subject/agent. PI facilitates drawing richer intake from input for L2 learners by engaging them in structured input activities that drive them away from the strategies they normally use to make form-meaning connections (Wong, 2004b). PI begins with an explanation of rules in a non-paradigmatic way, then continues practice in processing input and always focuses on meaning through processing instruction.

Wong (2004a) specifies three characteristics for PI, which she defines as “the only type of FonF instruction to date that is informed by the strategies that learners use to initially parse input to make form-meaning connections” (p. 62), thus:
1. Explicit information about the target structure,
2. Explicit information about processing strategies, and
3. Structured input activities.

2.2. Structured input activities

Wong (2004a) points out that without identification of a processing problem (which will enable learners to drop their less than optimal strategies for efficient ones), it will not be possible to construct structured input activities that will help the learner contact his goals. She provides some major guidelines for developing structured input activities:
1) Present one thing at a time (which will not drain learners’ resources)
2) Keep meaning in focus (which means that acquisition of grammatical items will only happen if learners are required to process propositional content)
3) Move from sentences to connected discourse
4) Use both oral and written input (so that more “visual” learners would benefit from seeing written input)
5) Have learners do something with input (a reason for attending to input)
6) Help learner to keep processing strategies in mind (for example, “if learners are relying on lexical items to interpret tense, then we may want to structure the activities so that learners are pushed to rely on grammatical morphemes instead of lexical adverbs to get tense” (p. 42).

Wong (2004a) also describes two types of structured input activities used in PI: referential and affective activities. Referential activities require learners to pay attention to form in order
to get meaning and select a right or wrong answer. Affective activities require learners to express an opinion or belief, but do not have right or wrong answers. In addition, Collentine (2004) identifies characteristics of structured input tasks as:

1) Structured input tasks are sequences of carefully crafted input sentences.
2) Structured input tasks are coupled with a given task demand, i.e., the information that learners must extrapolate from that input.
3) Structured input tasks attempt to cause learners to process mechanisms in order to fail to interpret a sentence, and to become aware of such a failure.
4) Structured input tasks encourage learner to adopt a processing strategy that does not affect such a failure.

Collentine (2004) believes that “these tasks help learners make form–meaning connections in one of two ways: by raising the communicative value of a targeted structure or by raising its acoustic salience” (p. 182). He supposes learners should acquire the ability to distinguish of the semantic/pragmatic information of a grammatical input. After working with structured input tasks, PI affects learner during PI treatments and after such treatments. He identifies two types of input: input type A (specialized intervention), and input type B (authentic input). In input type A, learners take delivery of the structured input during a PI treatment. As a result, input type A ultimately modifies the fundamental processing mechanisms relevant to the phenomenon. In his view, the effect of input type A is important on the developing system. Input type B follows input type A and learners process the authentic input after input type A. This type of input has a strong consequence on the arrangement of the targeted grammatical phenomenon within the learner’s underlying developing system.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input Type A</th>
<th>Processing Mechanisms</th>
<th>developing System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Specialized Intervention)</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Input Type B</th>
<th>Processing Mechanisms</th>
<th>developing System</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Authentic input)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 1* Predicted outcomes of PI

*Note.* Bolded items have a strong response to input. Italicized items have a weaker (although potentially significant) response to input. From Collentine, 2004.

According to Allen (2000), not all input-based activities are structured input activities and not all input-based instructions are PI instruction. For instruction to be PI, the processing strategy that learners apply to process a particular form must be recognized. For an activity to
be a structured input, the activity must be considered with the ineffective strategy in mind. When this happened, the activity can assist learners use more efficient strategies to process input. In addition, a structured input activity is required to lead learners to process form correctly to acquire meaning. If learners do not need to pay attention to meaning or if they do not need to rely on form to get meaning, the activity is not a structured input activity.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

One hundred and eight intermediate tertiary level female students, from six intact classes of two high schools in Sarab, aging 17-18 participated in this study. Two of these six classes were randomly assigned to PI group, the other two were assigned to MOI group and the last two classes were assigned to control group. All students of these classes received the related treatment but only the data of participants in question were analyzed. Although the total number of potential participants was 139, due to homogeneity and proficiency level, 117 intermediate participants were chosen based on Oxford Placement Test (OPT) and were randomly assigned to three groups PI (N = 39), MOI (N = 39), and control group (N = 39). Only a subset of the participants who scored less than 65% on the pre-test was used in the statistical analyses. In this way, ceiling effects were avoided. However, the total number of eligible participants who received the treatments, the immediate post-test, and the delayed post-test was 108 participants, seven participants were excluded from the study for their outlier scores in the pre-test and two participants were excluded to balance the number of groups. These participants were assigned to PI (N = 36), MOI (N = 36) and control group (N = 36). It may be said that assessing control group is not necessary, but this was done only for confirming the results of the study and showing that groups’ improvement was unaffected by test familiarity or any other potential intervening variables. Just as important, participants did not receive explicit grammar instruction or homework assignments on the conditional sentences of doubt during previous weeks of the course.

3.2. Instrumentation

In order to carry out the study following instruments were needed:

1) A proficiency test, OPT: This test, designed by Edwards (2007), was used. This test is designed to assess students’ knowledge of the key language as well as their receptive and productive skills. The cut point for intermediate level of this test is 47 out of
possible 70. According to guidelines of the test, students whose scores fall below 47 should be considered as below intermediate level.

2) A test (as pre-test, immediate and delayed post-test): This test was used to assess the participants’ ability to interpret and produce English conditional sentences. They had two tasks, interpretation task and production task. To construct these tests, a table of specifications of tertiary-level course book was prepared in order to contribute to the content validity. The validity and reliability of these tests were estimated in pilot study. Moreover, after reviewing and revising the items, the test was piloted with 30 similar learners of an English institute. It is necessary to mention that these items adapted from Longman English Grammar (Alexander, 1995) and Advanced Grammar in Use (Hewings, 2005). Out of 60 interpretation and 60 production items, finally 24 interpretation and 24 production items were selected for the final version of the test. The vocabularies of the interpretation and production task were high-frequency vocabularies that the participants had already learned. They were based on the participants’ textbooks (secondary and tertiary levels).

3) Instructional materials (PI and MOI): There were two instructional packets for the treatments. Each instruction was intended to reflect a different treatment on teaching English conditional sentences (type 1 and type 2). The PI packet consisted of a three-page handout about explicit information, problem strategy, and structured input activities in relation to English conditional sentences. The handout contained explicit information about: General information about conditionals, types of conditional sentences, basic form of type 1 conditionals, when we use type 1 conditionals, basic form of type 2 conditionals, when we use type 2 conditionals and processing problems (problems that learners encounter in using type 1 and type 2 conditional sentences). The MOI packet consisted of the same three-page handout used in PI, and production-oriented activities without mechanical components, i.e., the students provide their own content or information, in relation to English conditional sentences. Both instructional packets were controlled to have identical subject matter, vocabulary and number of tokens.

3.3. Research Questions

The study is part of a larger investigation (Khani, 2010). Based on previously mentioned aims and with the specific intention to investigate the possible effects of PI and MOI on the acquisition of English conditional sentences, a set of four specific questions are posed:

1) Do PI and MOI lead to any significant difference in the interpretation of English
conditional sentences?
2) Do the effects of PI and MOI on the interpretation of English conditional sentences hold over time?
3) Do PI and MOI lead to any significant difference in the production of English conditional sentences?
4) Do the effects of PI and MOI on the production of English conditional sentences hold over time?
To find answers to these research questions, the following null hypotheses are formulated:
1) PI and MOI do not lead to any significant difference in the interpretation of English conditional sentences.
2) The effects of PI and MOI on the interpretation of English conditional sentences do not hold over time.
3) PI and MOI do not lead to any significant difference in the production of English conditional sentences.
4) The effects of PI and MOI on the production of English conditional sentences do not hold over time.

3.4. Design
The instructional materials (PI and MOI) and the test (pre-test, immediate post-test and delayed post-test) were piloted before their use in the final experiment in order to balance them in terms of vocabulary used during the instructional period, assessing enough time for tests and treatments and calculating reliability and validity of the tests. The purpose of the pilot study was to determine item characteristics and gain insights about the plausible problems that the participants might encounter in the test administration and treatments. The Figure 1 shows the procedure of the whole study.

- Proficiency test
  - Experimental groups
  - Control group
- Pilot study
- Week 1
  - Pre-test (two weeks before the treatments)
    - Experimental groups
    - Control group
- Week 3
  - Instructional materials
4. Results and Discussion

The results of this study are organized in the following 2 sections. First, the results of proficiency test that participants were divided randomly into three groups based on their proficiency level are stated. Scores on the proficiency test were analyzed in order to verify the homogeneity of the three participating groups in terms of their general English knowledge. And the analysis of this test is described. Then the results of interpretation and production tasks in a test (as pre-test, immediate post-test, delayed post-test) are explained. And performance of two experimental groups (PI and MOI) and one control group are compared in terms of interpretation and production task. In the second section, also, long-term effects of the variables under investigation over a period of two weeks are presented.

4.1. Preliminary Measure (proficiency measure)

In the present study, participants were divided randomly into three groups based on their proficiency level. Scores on the proficiency test were analyzed in order to check homogeneity of the three participating groups in terms of their receptive and productive skills. It is evident from Table 1 that three groups were approximately equivalent and homogeneous and the mean scores of the three groups were close together. Table 2 indicates that there is no significant difference between groups.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics for the Proficiency Measure across the Three Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>51.7</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOI</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>3.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>52.12</td>
<td>2.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>52.09</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. PI = processing instruction, MOI = meaning-based output instruction, C = control.

Table 2 One-Way ANOVA Results for Proficiency Measure across the Three Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>38.735</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.368</td>
<td>.454</td>
<td>.636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>1097.231</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>9.625</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1105.966</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>9.625</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Moreover to one-way ANOVA, test of normality (Table 3) determined distribution of groups in terms of normality. This test assesses the normality of the distribution of scores. Non-significant results (Sig. value of more than .05) indicate normality of the groups. This test also showed that the there was no significant differences between the three groups in proficiency scores ($p_{PI} = .091$; $p_{MOI} = .254$; $p_c = .304$) and the homogeneity of the groups was supplementary proved.

Table 3 Test of Normality for Proficiency Measure across the Three Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scores</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>.107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOI</td>
<td>.087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>df</strong></td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig.</strong></td>
<td>200*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Statistics</strong></td>
<td>.946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>df</strong></td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sig.</strong></td>
<td>.091</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = This is the lower bound of the true significance
a = Lilliefors Significance Correction

4.2. Data Analysis of Interpretation and Production Data

In order to ensure that participants in all three groups began the study with similar ability in terms of interpretation and production of English conditionals, descriptive statistics and an ANOVA were performed on scores obtained from interpretation and production task of the pre-test. The results are shown in Table 4 and 5. Table 4 shows that PI, MOI and control group were homogeneous in terms of interpretation and production of English conditional sentences; mean scores of the three groups were close together.

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics for Interpretation and Production Task of the Pre-test Scores across the Three Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Type of task</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>PI</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7.92</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MOI</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8.19</td>
<td>1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8.09</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>8.10</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td></td>
<td>PI</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MOI</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows the results of one-way ANOVA. As a case in point of the information exposed in Table 5, it can be seen that there was no statistically significant difference between three groups in terms of the interpretation and production of English conditional sentences ($F_{(2,105)} = .276$, $p = .759$) for interpretation and ($F_{(2,105)} = .554$, $p = .576$) for production task. This indicates that the three groups’ abilities in interpretation and production of English conditional sentences were equal at the beginning.

Table 5 One-Way ANOVA Results for Interpretation and Production Task of the Pre-test Scores across the Three Groups
As can be seen, the result of one-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (Table 6) indicated that the distribution of pre-test scores was normal for interpretation and production data. This test also showed that there was no significant differences between the three groups in pre-test scores of interpretation task ($p_{PI} = .059$; $p_{MOI} = .73$; $p_C = .177$) and of production task ($p_{PI} = .326$; $p_{MOI} = .395$; $p_C = .063$) and the homogeneity of the groups in both types of tasks was supplementary proved.

Table 6  One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Interpretation and Production Data of Pre-test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
<th>Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SS</td>
<td>df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>1.852</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>352.028</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>353.880</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>352.528</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>356.250</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4, means of the two groups’ performance in the interpretation of the pre-test were $PI = 7.92$ and $MOI = 8.19$ and the means of the two groups’ performance in the production of the pre-test were very close.

In terms of interpretation of English conditional sentences, Table 7 shows that PI and MOI improved from the pre-test to the immediate post-test, but the control group did not improve. The means for both immediate and delayed post-tests showed that PI did better than MOI and both did better than control group. The analysis of delayed post-test confirmed that the effects of PI and MOI hold over time.
In terms of production of English conditional sentences, Table 7 shows that means of PI and MOI on the immediate post-test increased to 9.92 and 10.03 respectively. Table 7 shows that means of PI and MOI on the delayed post-test increased to 9.83 and 9.64 respectively. This means that improvement is due to treatment. The control group had no development.

Table 7 Descriptive Statistics for Interpretation and Production Task of the Immediate and Delayed post-test Scores across Three Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16.33</td>
<td>3.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOI</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13.28</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>2.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>12.15</td>
<td>4.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PI</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9.92</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOI</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>10.03</td>
<td>5.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>2.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>7.70</td>
<td>5.16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of mixed between-within subjects ANOVA revealed that there was different effect for types of instruction at the .05 level for interpretation (F = 72.449, p = .000) and for production task (F = 49.778, p = .000) (Table 8).

Table 8 Test of Between-Subject Effects for Interpretation and Production Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial η²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation Groups</td>
<td>2181.673</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1090.836</td>
<td>72.449</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>.580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Groups</td>
<td>1431.352</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>715.676</td>
<td>49.778</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>.487</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** = statistically significant at p < .05

Group differences in tests of interpretation and production task were examined through a Scheffe Post-hoc test (Table 9). This was in order to explain the contrast among the three groups in terms of interpretation and production task of conditionals. The results revealed that difference between groups was significant. There was a statistically significant difference between control group and the two experimental groups in terms of interpretation, in addition, the PI and MOI group differ significantly (p = .002) from each other. Table 9 shows that there was a statistically significant difference between control group and the two experimental groups in terms of production, moreover, the PI and MOI group did not differ significantly (p = .986).
Table 9 Scheffe Post-Hoc Test (Multiple Comparisons) for the Interpretation and Production Task across the Three Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Task</th>
<th>(I) Group</th>
<th>(J) Group</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>PI MOI</td>
<td>1.94*</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.002***</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>6.21*</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>7.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MOI PI</td>
<td>-1.94*</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.002***</td>
<td>-3.26</td>
<td>-.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>4.27*</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>5.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C PI</td>
<td>-6.21*</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>-7.52</td>
<td>-4.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MOI</td>
<td>-4.27*</td>
<td>.53</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>-5.58</td>
<td>-2.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>PI MOI</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.986</td>
<td>-1.76</td>
<td>2.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>4.67*</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>6.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MOI PI</td>
<td>-1.3</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.986</td>
<td>-2.02</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>4.54*</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>6.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C PI</td>
<td>-4.67*</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>-6.56</td>
<td>-2.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MOI</td>
<td>-4.54*</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.000***</td>
<td>-6.43</td>
<td>-2.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** = The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Figure 3 indicates the immediate and delayed post-test scores of the interpretation task of three groups graphically as compared with the corresponding pre-test scores of the same groups.

![Figure 3](image)

Figure 3 Pre-and post-tests means plot of interpretation task

Figure 4 indicates the immediate post-test and delayed post-test scores of the production task of the three groups graphically as compared with the corresponding pre-test scores of the same groups.
Scores from the three groups were analyzed for differences in two times in order to find whether there was any difference between performance of the groups in interpretation and production task of immediate and delayed post-tests.

The results of interpretation task (Table 10) revealed that there were statistically significant differences between time1 (immediate post-test) and time 2 (delayed post-test) ($F = 16.295, p = .000$). This result proposes that $T_1 \neq T_2$. However, which time groups outperformed the other can be determined based on descriptive statistics (Table 7). Comparing means of the immediate post-test and delayed post-test verifies that the groups in the immediate post-test outperformed the groups in delayed post-test.

The results of production task (Table 10) revealed that the difference between time1 (immediate post-test) and time 2 (delayed post-test) was not statistically significant. The level of $p (.041)$ was close to level of alpha (.05). However, which time groups outperformed the other can be determined based on descriptive statistics (Table 7). Comparing means of the immediate post-test and delayed posttest verifies that the groups in the immediate post-test had approximately similar performance to the groups in delayed post-test.

Table 10 *Repeated Measures ANOVA for Interpretation and Production Task of Immediate versus Delayed Post-Tests*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation Immediate post-test vs. Delayed post-test</td>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>.866</td>
<td>16.295</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Immediate post-test vs. Delayed post-test</td>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>.961</td>
<td>4.293</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results from mixed between-within subjects ANOVA (Table 11) confirmed that the effect of the interaction between time and the groups was statistically significant \((F = 31.131, p = .000)\) and \((F = 29.303, p = .000)\) in interpretation and production task, respectively.

Table 11 Mixed Between-Within Subjects ANOVA for the Effects of Interaction between Time and Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial η²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation Time × groups</td>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>.391</td>
<td>31.131</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production Time × groups</td>
<td>Wilks’ Lambda</td>
<td>.409</td>
<td>29.303</td>
<td>.000***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*** = statistically significant at \(p < .05\)

Figure 5 shows the interaction effects of time by groups on interpretation task graphically. It is evident that the effects of both PI and MOI on interpretation task were retained over time. Two weeks after immediate post-test, the PI group outperformed the MOI group and both outperformed the control group in terms of interpretation task.

Figure 5  The interaction effect of time × groups on interpretation task

Figure 6 shows the interaction effects of time by groups on production task graphically. It is evident that the effects of both PI and MOI on production task were retained over time. Two weeks after immediate post-test, the PI and MOI groups performed similarly and both outperformed the control group in terms of production.
5. Conclusion

In the study, the effectiveness of PI and MOI on interpretation and production of English conditional sentences was explored in Iranian learners, which have not been comprehensively studied before to provide the field with more comprehensive findings concerning the effect of PI and MOI on acquisition of target feature. With regard to the results of the current study, it may well be concluded that the current study indicates the effectiveness of PI and MOI on linguistic features. It is essential to repeat that PI all the time has considerable enhancement on both interpretation and production tasks.

5.1. Findings

The results of the present study can be summarized as follows:

1. The PI and MOI group outperformed the control group in interpretation of English conditional sentences.
2. The PI and MOI group outperformed the control group in production of English conditional sentences.
3. The PI group outperformed the MOI group in the interpretation but they did similar in the production of English conditional sentences.
4. The PI and MOI have long-term effects on the interpretation and production of English conditional sentences.

On the basis of the above findings, now we can argue and support or reject the research hypotheses by the existing data. PI and MOI led participants to improved performance on interpretation of English conditional sentences: The control group did not improve. Thus, the response to our first research question is affirmative, so the first hypothesis was rejected.
Regarding the results of interpretation task of both immediate and delayed post-tests of PI and MOI, the second hypothesis also is refused. In other words, the effects of PI and MOI on the interpretation of English conditional sentences hold over time. In addition, interaction between time and groups indicates that the effect of instructions on the interpretation of English conditional sentences did not disappear over time (Figure 5). The long-term effect confirms that form-meaning connections that established by PI and MOI are stored in long-term memory and retrieved, not all of them, when it is needed.

The instructional data collected through the production task and the subsequent statistical analysis revealed that the differences among pre-test and post-tests in the three groups under investigation were statistically significant (Table 8 and 9). Results revealed that the PI and MOI groups performed better in the production task when compared to control group. So, the third hypothesis was rejected.

Long-term effects of the variables under investigation were measured over a period of two weeks. Comparing production scores of the immediate and delayed post-tests of three groups revealed that PI and MOI have the long-term effects on the production of English conditional sentences. In addition, the effect of interaction between time and Groups indicates that the effect of instructions on the production of English conditional sentences did not disappear over time (Figure 6). So, the fourth hypothesis was refused.

The instructions did facilitate input processing to long-term memory (long-term effects of MOI and PI). PI offers explicit information about the feature in question that can be said explicit information simplify the input and raise the consciousness of the learners. This is also correct about the structured input activities of PI. In addition, explicit information about the strategy problem of PI play the role of interactional modifications. The problem strategy provides feedback about the negative understanding of the target grammar. PI was more effective than MOI on interpretation task because it encouraged participants to direct their attention to formal aspects of the input. The meaning-oriented nature of instruction plays a key role in SLA. There is also some evidence that output-based instruction may be more effective when language measures require meaningful activities.

The instructions may have been successful in encouraging participants to process the input for acquisition. It appears that stages such as those used in the present study that are 1) structured input activities, 2) production-oriented activities and 3) explicit three-page handout include rule presentation at any stage, affect some changes in participants’ interlanguage. Even the addition of the instruction to pay attention to the target structure (in both instructions) provided evidence that it is sufficient sending the input to long-term memory.
5.2. Applications and Implications

The study can support other positive or exploratory studies on the effects of PI and MOI on language acquisition.

Theoretically, PI and MOI were sufficient to affect a change in learners’ interlanguage. Moreover, instruction can accelerate acquisition as well as help learners eventually achieve greater proficiency. Instruction is, therefore, beneficial for acquisition to take place. In addition, these results confirm that instruction is important in raising learners’ awareness of a feature of language (Fotos, 1994). This notion has important implications to SLA. PI has made an important contribution to SLA theory by trying to explain why this is the case. PI affords learners a significant advantage in adhering to grammatical phenomena that they might otherwise overlook in listening and reading tasks. The explicit information develops participants’ awareness and increases the potential benefits of these types of instruction. By the way, it was tried to establish a better option to the common TI, output-based instruction while keeping the communicative nature of the class and that alternative turned out to be PI and MOI, which resulted in better effects at least in this study. The present study could be considered as a complementary foundation for these two types of instruction. It is worth mentioning that both of these techniques led to better performance in both PI and MOI groups. Moreover, two substitutes to TI, which is against communicative language teaching, are recommended. The potential benefits of PI and MOI were available to participants in this study. However, its usefulness in acquisition of target feature was confirmed.

Pedagogically, the findings of the current study suggest several implications for research on second or foreign language teaching and learning and practice of English education in Iran. The study can support other positive or investigative studies on the issue of PI. Therefore, the study supports the use of PI rather than the use of TI in teaching. To keep the communicative nature of the language classes, moreover, teachers need to be introduced to the techniques of teaching grammar. Thus, assigning some time to the training of teachers in this regard would be practical. The implication for particularly classroom teaching is that successful grammar instruction cannot be seen as an end in itself, but has to be related to ultimate learning outcomes. For that reason, teachers must be careful in selecting effective instructions. Of course, instructions that lead to successful performance may occupy their own benefits; they encourage students, make possible classroom interaction and may not be as tiring as more challenging tasks. Teachers, obviously, have to regard a variety of factors,
but should be aware that instructions force learners to operate input with high levels of processing are more likely to have an effect on acquisition.

Regarding the implications for materials development, since one of the responsibilities of materials developers is to supply and sequence the content of teaching materials, such as the tasks, creating communicative tasks to offer opportunities for teaching grammar in one of the suggested systems.

5.3. Suggestions for Further Research
Considering that the study compared the effects of PI and MOI in the acquisition of English conditional sentences, it is necessary to compare different linguistic features in students. However, as the study has shown, further research is needed to discover the effects of PI and MOI on SLA in a range of linguistic forms and constructions. Moreover, the researchers are needed to understand the reason of the different findings and results for PI, MOI and TI in some studies. Therefore, finding factors that are the origin of differences is essential. Determining these factors could propose a foreign language teaching curricula with collection of the valuable components of both PI and MOI in a single technology. Pedagogically this layer of research now is obligatory. It is also important to investigate whether MOI has a consistently strong impact on how learners interpret and produce various target language features and whether it can consistently bring about effects similar to those of PI. Until now experimental studies have been unsuccessful to measure the long-term effects of PI and MOI (eight months or longer), so examining the effects of such instructions would hold over post-test sessions should also be dealt with. Also, the issue of whether PI could be distributed in a more efficient manner should be addressed. Briefly, few studies look at long-term performance further than some weeks or a month. Some related studies report conflicting results; one indicates instructional effects vanishes; the other shows that instructional effects maintain but the treatment was continued during the long-term nature of the study. To duplicate these results and prove what other types of input- and output-based instructions are effective for SLA, other studies should be done. Possible candidates are those methods that supply communicative and essential output-based performance, and try to attract the attention of learners to form, such as in task-based instruction (Nunan, 1989). Additionally, to divide completely the effects of PI and MOI and those instructions that may have offerings to theoretical status in SLA, later study should be conducted.
References


Title

A Qualitative Evaluation of the Iranian EFL Textbooks: A Call for Change or Adaptation

Author

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Sheikhbahaee University of Isfahan, Iran

Biodata

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Abstract

This article aims to evaluate qualitatively the series of English textbooks taught in Iranian high school in accordance with detailed checklist for textbook evaluation proposed by Rivers (1981). What emerges is an acknowledgment of subjectivity of the process, but also the desirability of counteracting this by means of more principled approach through a set of criteria. While the focus of attention is principally on evaluation, some adaptations and use of commercially produced materials as some suggestions for improvement will be offered. Additionally, this article problematizes the present status of the Iranian’s EFL textbooks organization, content, quality factors and appropriacy for students’ needs and based on the existing pedagogical realities calls for a radical change or an immediate adaptation.

Key words: Evaluation, Checklist, Textbooks, Adaptation, Materials

1. Introduction

The importance of the textbook is undeniable for it will inevitably determine the major part of the classroom teaching and the students’ out-of-class learning. Therefore, one of the issues that a language teacher has to deal with is material selection or adaptation. Since in some situations materials are fixed, teachers must make effective of what has already been prepared. Nonetheless, there may remain some room for improvement according to the scientific and meticulous assessments.
According to Sheldon (1988), we need to evaluate textbooks for two reasons. First, the evaluation will help the teacher or program developer in making decisions on selecting the appropriate textbook. Furthermore, evaluation of the merits and demerits of a textbook will familiarize the teacher with its probable weaknesses and strengths. This will enable teachers to make appropriate adaptations to the material in their future instruction.

Azizifar (2009) classifies most of the textbook evaluation studies carried out in Iran focus on three main goals: the first group has mostly tried to develop some criteria to contribute to more successful textbook evaluation studies (Ansary and Babaii, 2002), the second group has evaluated certain textbooks for their strength and weakness to find their advantages and shortcomings (Kheibari, 1999; Shahedi, 2001; Yarmohammadi, 2002; Jahangard, 2007; Riazi and Aryashokouh, 2007), and the third group has studied discourse features and the representation of discourse elements in the textbooks (Amalsaleh, 2004; Darali, 2007).

Ansary and Babaii’s (2002) study is an example of the first group. They 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.

The second group in textbook evaluation concentrated on the strengths and weaknesses of the textbooks. For example, 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. The 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.

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, in general, the textbooks demonstrated a deferential representation of social factors that tended to portray females 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 middleclass urban male was considered to be the norm.

High school education in Iran comprises three years for male and female students aged 14–17. In each year, an EFL textbook (written by the EFL experts of the Iranian Ministry...
of Education and published by this Ministry, 1985) is taught across the country. These textbooks consist of eight lessons each, and each lesson comprises a section on new words, a reading text, reading comprehension questions, speaking drills, writing exercises, language functions exercises, pronunciation drills, and vocabulary exercises. As a compulsory course, English is taught with three to four hours of practice per week (Ahmadi Darani, 2012).

The main reason why this article shall be dealing with the evaluation and suggestions for improvement of the series of English textbooks taught in Iranian high schools is that they are the staple textbooks that form the basis of foreign language education in Iran. Furthermore, for any given set of materials the choice is not only between using them or rejecting them. Adaptation, as a third alternative can prove effective in some cases.

There are, in fact, comparatively few empirical investigations of materials development and use in the classroom. One checklist, reported in Rivers (1981), investigated the possible questions concerning evaluation of textbooks. In River’s checklist (1981: 475) significant questions are raised within each of these areas. The writer of this article found it more exhaustive in comparison to the foregoing checklists.

2. Review of literature
When selecting materials, it is important to match the materials with the goals and objectives of the program, and to ensure that they are consistent with one’s beliefs about the nature of language and learning, as well as with one’s learners’ attitudes, beliefs and preferences. Evaluating and selecting materials is not an easy task. As Low (1989) points out “rather like the evaluation of hi-fi equipment, it remains something of a black art, even supported by empirical investigations”. “Designing appropriate materials is not a science; it is a strange mixture of imagination, insight and analytical reasoning, and this fact must be recognized when materials are assessed” (Low, 1889: 153).

A checklist is an instrument that helps practitioners in English Language Teaching (ELT) evaluate language teaching materials, like textbooks. It allows a more sophisticated evaluation of the textbook in reference to a set of generalizable evaluative criteria. These checklists may be quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative scales have the merit of allowing an objective evaluation of a given textbook through Likert style rating scales (Skierso, 1991). Qualitative checklists, on the other hand, often use open-ended questions to elicit subjective information on the quality of course books (e.g., Richards, 2001). While qualitative checklists are capable of an in-depth evaluation of textbooks, quantitative checklists are more
reliable instruments and are more convenient to work with, especially when team evaluations are involved.

Based on Mukundan and Ahour’s (2010) review of textbook evaluation checklists, most of the checklists are qualitative (e.g., Bruder, 1978; Haycraft, 1978; Robinett, 1978; Cunningsworth, 1984; Breen & Candlin, 1987; Dougill, 1987; Hutchinson & Waters, 1987; Matthews, 1985; Sheldon, 1988; Cunningsworth & Kusel, 1991; Harmer, 1991; Cunningsworth, 1995; Griffiths, 1995; Hemsley, 1997; Garinger, 2001; Richards, 2001; Zabawa, 2001; Garinger, 2002; McGrath, 2002; McDonough & Shaw, 2003; Rubdy, 2003; Driss, 2006; Rahimy, 2007); than quantitative (e.g., Tucker, 1978 Daoud & Celce-Murcia, 1979; Williams, 1983; Grant, 1987; Harmer, 1998; Skierso, 1991; Ur, 1996; Peacock, 1997; Harmer, 1998; Canado & Esteban, 2005; Litz, 2005; Miekley, 2005); or head words/outline format, i.e., those without rating scales or questions (Brown, 1995; Littlejohn, 1998; Roberts, 1996; Ansari & Babaii, 2002;).

Most of these checklists are either too short or too long and some criteria in them are vague, so they do not thoroughly meet the requirements of a good and applicable instrument for evaluation purposes. Despite their crucial roles in language instruction, most if not all the available textbook evaluation checklists have been developed qualitatively often with no empirical evidence in support of their construct validity. Additionally, even when fundamental matters like validity and reliability are accounted for, most of these checklists are impractical. For example, some make use of ELT terminology that sound ambiguous for language instructors with little expertise in the area. A further disadvantage of some of the available checklists is that because of the high number of their items they lack economy and hence practicality. This could be the reason why most language learning materials in the world are evaluated based on the subjective and impressionistic judgment of evaluators (Rivers, 1981).

Sheldon (1988) provides and extensive checklist of questions which can aid in the selection of materials. He proposes that materials should be evaluated according to criterion such as their rationale, accessibility, layout and ease of use. A somewhat more accessible list of evaluative questions is provided by Breen and Candlin (1989). Their checklist invites the teacher to adopt a critical stance toward the materials’ aims, appropriateness and utility.

Littlejohn and Windeat (1989) propose a more modest scheme for assessing materials. They suggest that materials can be evaluated from six different perspectives:

1. The general or subject knowledge contained in the materials,
2. Views on the nature and acquisitions of knowledge,
3. Views on the nature of language learning,
4. Roles relations implicit in materials,
5. Opportunities for the development of cognitive abilities and,
6. The values and attitudes inherent in the materials.

Content areas covered in materials include the use of fictionalized characters and events, general interest (which often reflects the materials writer’s guess about what might interest learners), academic subject matter, a focus on language itself, and literature. Littlejohn and Windeat (1989) also add learning how to learn and specific purpose content to the list.

In considering the views on the nature and acquisition of knowledge inherent in materials, Littlejohn and Windeat (1989) make reference to work in general education by sociologists of knowledge such as Young (1971), who have pointed out that what gets included in materials largely defines what may count as ‘legitimate’ knowledge. The way materials are organized and presented, as well as the types of content and activities, will help to shape the learner’s view of language. They provide examples of grammatical explanations which convey the simplistic and sometimes erroneous notion that the grammatical system consists of objective rules, and that gaining ‘knowledge’ in language learning is basically a matter of accumulating objective facts (Rutherford: 1987, provides an incisive critique of this ‘accumulating entities’ view of language learning). These will often relate to psychological and/or psycholinguistic theories of language learning or acquisition and may be explicitly spelled out in the introduction to the materials. The importance of the role relationships in the classroom is being increasingly recognized within the profession. A key variable here is the amount of initiative and control which learners are allowed to exercise and the extent to which they are active participants in the learning process. Wright (1987) provides the most comprehensive treatment available on roles of teachers, learners and materials in language classrooms.

In discussing the opportunities provided by materials for cognitive development, Littlejohn and Windeat (1989) contrast the ‘empty bucket’ view of learning with its emphasis on the accumulation of linguistic knowledge with a more active approach in which learners are encouraged to negotiate and interpret meaning and engage in problem-solving activities which challenge them cognitively as well as linguistically. They suggest that if this latter view becomes more widely accepted, we shall see a reorientation away from ‘language learning as reproduction’ to ‘language learning as problem solving’; we have problem ‘posing’. This more critical perspective is presented in Candlin (1984).

The final area in which materials can be critiqued relates to the values and attitude which are inherent in them: it is possible to evaluate materials for their sexism, racism and so on.
Littlejohn and Windeat (1989) provide examples of textbooks, which are biased in numerous subtle and not so subtle ways. For example, one book showed only two black people, one of whom was a muscular athlete, the other a manual worker. Another contained over thirty references to smoking and drinking in the first twenty-five pages, perhaps thereby ‘legitimizing and sanctioning such behavior’.

While the checklist provided by Sheldon (1988), Littlejohn and Windeat (1989) are extremely valued, they only enable us to evaluate materials in a preliminary way. Most of the questions on such things as rationale, availability, layout and appropriacy relate to issues which are external to the classroom. Any comprehensive evaluation also needs to collect data on the actual use of materials in the classroom. And while we can exercise professional judgment in answering questions such as, ‘Do the introduction, practice, and recycling of new linguistic items seem to be shallow/steep enough for your students?’, ultimately, such questions can only be settled with reference to their actual use.

For the evaluation of this series of textbooks, arguments mainly have been grounded on the detailed checklist of textbook assessment proposed by Rivers (1981:475). The major areas that shall be assessed in relation to the local situation are dealt with under the headings such as appropriateness for local situation, appropriateness for teacher and student, language and ideational content, linguistic coverage and organization of material, types of activities, and practical considerations. In the meantime, there will be a section in the appendix (I) under the heading of “Suggestions for Improvement” in which some changes in and additions to this set of Textbooks are proposed.

3. River’s evaluation checklist
3.1. Appropriateness for local situation
To see whether or not a textbook is appropriate for a local situation, teachers must be informed about the objectives the writer has had in mind. The writer’s objectives are usually disclosed in the preface or foreword of a book. Apparently, preface or foreword seems lacking in this set of books; however, at the very beginning of Book 1, there is a two-page section addressed to ‘the esteemed colleague’, in which the authors claim to explicate the objectives and the teaching methods of each section of the books. But, they have just offered some teaching techniques rather than the objectives of each section. The writers’ objectives in terms of the four skills, general reading, or specialized reading are quite missing in this section.
Each of these high school books is teacher taught. Three hours for Book 1, two hours for Book 2, and two hours for Book 3 per week during 9-month period. To some high school teachers, scarcely is this time enough to finish the book, and to my knowledge, this time does not seem reasonably sufficient to teach and students to learn each book.

The pace of the material is another issue which must be considered. Having taught the given set of books, I think Book 3 moves too fast for the intended students. The numbers of words in the vocabulary section of this book sometimes goes beyond 70 items. These long lists of vocabulary have proved overwhelming to students. Due to the unreasonable pace of the materials in Book 3, some teachers have to leave out some parts of the materials to complete the course in the time they have available. In other words, there is so much material in Book 3 that the teacher would feel smothered or pressured.

In material preparation, the students’ interests according to their age should be taken into consideration. In this respect, however, the writers have sometimes made too obvious an effort to amuse the students. For instance, In Book 2, the reading of lesson 4 sounds too juvenile for the students or that of lesson 7 on Book 3 seems too dull for them. Moreover, the writers have failed to supply the material for the students of differing abilities. In other words, there is no extra material to be used for enrichment for the faster learners and no extra practice for the slower learners.

3.2. Appropriateness for teacher and student
The set of books seem to be based on eclectic method. This method can be carried through well in the unit design if teachers do not deal with the sections of each lesson disjointly. In the meantime, the native language as it is asserted by the writers should be eschewed as much as possible.

Film, slides, filmstrips, transparencies, large pictures, or flashcards are not available with this set of books. But, there are some tapes, with acceptable quality, available on which only the reading and pronunciation sections have been practiced. One wonders why repetitions, substitutions, and transformations which can be best conducted and learned through tapes have been totally overlooked in them. Moreover, the tapes seem to aim at the student’s pronunciation improvement in the reading section because the passages are read in a stilted and slow but not natural fashion. Thus, if the teacher has a good command of English pronunciation, and the students can trust his pronunciation, the books can be used successfully without the tapes.

One major problem of this set of books is that there are no supplementary readers available with the books. As stated earlier, students of differing abilities are dealt with in the
same way. To remedy this deficiency, the writer of this article has tried to provide some supplementary readers and dialogs in the ‘Suggestion for Improvement’ Section.

Generally speaking, scope for student-initiated participation is out of question in these books since they are so tightly structured that they can only be used in a lockstep, teacher-directed fashion. Language Function sections could be a good place to ask students to have self-initiated participation. It is possible, by giving guidelines, to put the students in a situation in which they can initiate their own participation in classroom activities.

There is a table of contents at the beginning of each book setting out which structures are introduced but no definite order can be perceived. There is no index but a word list showing in which lesson each new word has been introduced. There is teacher’s manual for the books with instructions on how to use the materials. The three EFL textbooks of Iranian high schools are supplemented with a manual providing the EFL teachers with the objectives of the course and guidelines on how to apply the textbooks. Nazari (2011) in a critical article concerning description, analysis, and interpretation of the EFL Teacher’s manual used in Iranian high schools argues that “the socio-cultural aspects of the language have been marginalized, and the focus is reduced to the enhancement of linguistic competence. In effect, the marginalization of the acquisition of socio-cultural competence has resulted in applying a reductionist, study-skills, and atomized model of language in the statement of the course objectives, in that language is literally disintegrated into skills and sub-skills”. Also, the writers of these books claim that they are every year revised according to the teachers’ and other experts’ comments.

3.3. Language and ideational content
The language in the lessons sounds authentic and free of dated slang or obscure dialectal idioms. The language used in these textbooks sounds correct for the persons and relations in which it is used. Nevertheless, the situations are not sometimes realistic and some of the exercises are merely banal vehicles for linguistic material; i.e. they lack strength. In other words, there are few situations in which such sentences are employed. To cite one example, how frequently is the following sentence is used? “A watch is more expensive than a pen.” (Book 1, p.55)

In this series of English books, the culture of the people who speak English is scantly dealt with; however there are no chauvinistic, racist, sexist elements implicit or explicit in the textbooks. As Aliakbari (2002) put it “The research findings make it clear that the current materials or textbooks are shallow and superficial with respect to their treatment of culture. They are therefore inadequate to the task of teaching culture specifics in deeper sense (values, norms, beliefs, etc.) or culture-general skills as intercultural communication and understanding”.

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3.4. Linguistic coverage and organization of material

To familiarize the students with the sound system of English, the writers have designed a section under the heading of “Pronunciation Practice”. In Book 1 and 2, this section has been devoted to teaching vowels and diphthongs. But, there are two main problems with this section in Book 1 and 2. First, the authors have sometimes resorted to low-frequency words in teaching some vowels and diphthongs and lost sight of more frequent words. For instance, the writers’ examples for /ɔː:/ sound are ‘err’, ‘fur’ and ‘curd’ which are less frequent words in English. They could have used more frequent words like ‘dirty’, ‘person’ and so forth instead. Or to mention other instances, there are such deliberate sentences as “Please sit in this seat.” That make the distinction between /iː:/ and /ə/ quite difficult. To remedy this awkward rendering, the “Pronunciation Practice” section cold precede the “New Words” section and be designed so deliberately that students have the opportunity to learn the pronunciation of the new words that would follow. If the lessons had been organized in this way, different parts of each lesson could have been more related and it could have been more likely for students to achieve a good command of pronunciation.

In Book 3, the “Pronunciation Practice” section of the first lesson includes a quick review of some sounds in Book 1 and 2. The second lesson tries to ach how the plural morpheme that is adding ‘s’ or ‘es’ to the end of a word is pronounced differently in different words. The rest of “Pronunciation Practice”, in Book 3, is devoted to stress pattern of isolated words in English. In this set of Books, however, intonation and juncture are no considered at all.

Grammar is presented inductively through repetition, substitution, transformation, and production. As it related to grammar, there is a box in each lesson addressed to the teacher in which the grammatical points are explained. As stated at the beginning of Book 1, the authors believe that grammar is not an end but a means to writing reading, and speaking correctly. And the teacher should never expect students to memorize these explanations. Also, the exercises are well-organized and give adequate practice in what is supposed to be learned. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, some of the sentences are just banal vehicles for linguistic material and lack strength.

In this series of books, a reading passage is presented in each lesson and followed by some comprehension questions. Some of these reading passages are not interesting in content for teenagers. Some are too juvenile and some too dull. The writers could make use of some jocose stories that could prove appealing to the students of this age.
There are three problems with vocabulary presentation in the given set of books. First, in every reading passage, there are a number of new words. But only are some these new words contextualized for clarification in the “New Words” section and the rest are taken for granted. For instance, in the last lesson of Book 2, such words as ‘receive’, ‘duty’, ‘guide’, and entire contextualized; whereas words like ‘universe’, ‘preach’, ‘trustworthy’, and so forth are not. Secondly, in some lessons, especially those of Book 3, too many words are presented. This sometimes makes the pace of the material too fast. Furthermore, the vocabulary is not recycled sufficiently within each lesson or in successive lessons. In other words, a new item is presented in a lesson but not repeated throughout the lesson or book.

3.5. Types of activities
There are some dialogs in the “Language Functions” section but they hardly represent realistic situations within the foreign culture. There is no material introduced just for fun and relaxation while using language (e.g. humor, problems to solve, anecdotes, rhymes, and curious customs).

3.6. Practical considerations
The books printed in an ordinary style. The page layout is ordinary too. The type is quite clear. The binding, cover, and the quality of paper are not satisfactory and not durable to stand up to normal wear and tear.

4. Conclusion
Materials are an important component within the curriculum, and are often the most tangible and visible component of pedagogy. This article looked at some of the persistent issues surrounding the evaluation and use of language teaching materials. While the evaluation of materials can be partly carried out outside the classroom such as a task being greatly facilitated by the checklist and evaluative questions, their real potential or lack of potential can only be evaluated in relation to real learners in real classroom. In keeping with the other sections of this article, the evaluation of materials based on the collection and analysis of classroom data are highly recommended.

I would like, on the basis of existing realities, to argue that time is ripe for making radical changes or immediate adaptations in the Iranian EFL materials. This claim emanates particularly from the defects of our educational system. As Celce-Murcia (2001) states "no teacher is entirely satisfied with the textbook used, yet very few manage to teach without one". As a matter of fact in the past thirty years various measures have been taken to design and prepare textbooks for students. The developed materials suffering from shortcomings that are
not good enough to be used for the attended results. This short reasoning is to conclude that even if we make innovations in our educational system in line with new language theories, we are not able, as a rule of thumb, to make profound changes in our plans without taking into account the importance of materials. However, this fact ought to be considered as a sign of the insufficiency of the Iranian textbooks used in high schools. By this virtue, we may be able to lead our characters to the water but not able to make them drink. Thus we need to care for the education system in general and language in particular, in case we feel responsible to our teenagers.

References


Hardcover, Heinle & Heinle Publishers


Suggestions for Improvement 1

By no means do my suggestions intend to underestimate the writers’ work. However, they can be applied to enhance the standards of the given series of textbooks. The writer of this article thinks that the following passages can be used for two different purposes. First, as stated in the evaluation of the textbooks, there are no supplementary readers available with them and the students of differing abilities are treated the same. To improve this deficiency, the following passages can be used for enrichment of the faster learners. Secondly, it was discussed that some of the reading passages of the textbooks were not appealing to in content to teenagers and that and no material was introduced just for fun and relaxation while using the language.

**Passage One: Less to carry and Less to Count**

A boy once went to a baker’s to buy an eight penny loaf. He thought it was much smaller than usual, so he said to the baker, “I don’t believe this loaf is the correct weight.”

“Oh, never mind, “said the baker, “you’ll have less to carry.”

“Quite right, “said the boy, and put sixpence on the counter. As he was leaving the shop, the baker called out to him: “Eh! You haven’t given me the correct price.”

“Oh, well, “said the boy, “you’ll have less to count.”

Suggestions for Improvement 2

Some suggestions concerning the “Language Functions” section of the given series of textbooks are brought up which can prove to be constructive. “Language Functions” sections are supposed to simulate real world conversations and to improve students’ communicative skills. Real world conversations are more natural and more diverse than the simple mini-dialogs since they are said to be more functional and appealing to the students. The following dialogs adopted from Matreyek’s book, “Functions” (1990). Some guidelines are given for further practice amongst students of the classroom.

Dialog One: Two acquaintances meet in a supermarket and stop to talk.
A1: Hi, Stan. How have you been?
A2: Oh, hi, Luanne. Not bad thank you. How about you?
A1: Pretty good. Today’s shopping day, is it?
A2: Yeah. I have to buy a few things for dinner tonight.
A1: Uhmm … so do I. By the way, have heard about Fred?
A2: …. That’s really interesting about Fred. Well, I’d better finish my shopping.

           It’s been really nice talking with you, Luanne.
A1: I’ve enjoyed it too. I hope we run to each other again.
A2: Yeah, I do, too. Take care, O.K?
A1: Yeah, you, too.

Suggested Activity (Discuss and Perform)
Imagine the following situation. What would you do?
You unexpectedly meet a friend in the drugstore. You haven’t seen each other for at least a couple of months (Practice with a friend).

Appendix II

A. Appropriateness for Local Situation

1. What objectives did the writer have in mind? (See preface or foreword of book.)

2. For what level of study was the book designed? (Look very carefully at a book which claims to be usable at several levels, e.g., junior high school and senior high school; senior high school and undergraduate level.)

3. For what kind of course is the book intended? (a. three hours per week, five hours per week, intensive? b. teacher taught? Individualized? Student study followed by class activity?)
4. Pace of material. Having studied the material in the book carefully, do you think it moves too fast or too slowly or just right for the class you have in mind?

5. Is the material of a kind that would interest students at the level and of the age you have in mind?

B. Appropriateness for teacher and Student

6. On what method is the book based? Is the method appropriate for your purpose?

7. How much is the native language used in the exercises? Could the target language have been used instead?

8. Are tapes or cassettes, films, slides, filmstrips, transparencies, large pictures, or flashcards available with the book?

9. Are supplementary readers available with this book? Are these satisfactory for the level of your class? Are they of level of difficulty which can be easily read by students at this level?

10. Is there a student’s workbook for laboratory or home use?

11. Does the book leave scope for student-initiated participation, or is it so tightly structured that it could only be used in a lockstep, teacher-directed fashion?

12. Is this the type of book that students could use for independent study or to catch up on work on their own?

13. Is there a table of contents setting out clearly which structures are introduced and in what order? (Check the way a particular structure which causes students problems is presented and practiced.)

14. Is there an index to help students and teachers find Grammatical explanations, special lists, or paradigms?

15. Does the publisher provide a teacher’s manual with indications on how to use the book and suggestions for extra activities?

16. Has the book been pretested in schools for a similar level to that of your students and revised before being printed in its final form?

C. language and Ideational Content

17. Is the language in the lessons authentic (not stilted or artificial; not old-fashioned; free of unnatural language not used by native speakers; correct for the persons and relationships in the situation in which it is
used; free of dated slang or obscure dialectal idioms?)

18. Is there an interesting theme through the book, or related themes for sections of the book?

19. Are the situations in dialogues or practice activities realistic and thought-provoking, or are they merely banal vehicles for linguistic material?

20. Is the content of the reading material interesting and worthwhile?

21. Does the material give an unprejudiced and balanced picture of contemporary life in countries where the language is spoken? Does it bring out contrasts between the foreign culture and the culture of your students? Similarities/ If customs of an earlier period are included, is this made clear?

22. Are there chauvinistic, racist, or sexist elements, implicit or explicit in the text material, illustrations, or supplementary?

D. Linguistic Coverage and organization of Material

23. How is the pronunciation dealt with? Is the treatment satisfactory? Are stress, intonation, and juncture considered?

24. Is the grammar presented through structures? Some other ways? Does the type of presentation suit your purposes?

25. Is reading introduces early or late? Is it interesting in content and written language which is appropriate for your students? Is the content of the later reading material worthwhile?

26. Are the exercises well-designed? Do they give adequate practice in what has been learned, or would they have to be supplemented? Do they move from simple to more complex? Are there too many exercises in each unit for practical use?

27. Is the vocabulary well-presented? How much new vocabulary per lesson? Is the vocabulary reentered sufficiently within the unit and in successive units? Is it summarized in some way? At the end of the book? In a dictionary formation target language or in a bilingual list? How is the vocabulary to be taught? Is incidental vocabulary glossed within the text, at foot of page, in margin, between lines, at end of passage? Is attention paid to word formation (prefixes, suffixes, common roots)? to cognates, synonyms, antonyms? to thematic groupings?
To the semantic coverage of related words? Is choice of vocabulary based on a frequency count? If so, is the level of the count for this book sufficient or too advanced for your purposes? If not, does the vocabulary appear to be generally useful, or is it esoteric?

28. Is writing introduced early or late? How does the timing suit your purposes? Do the writing exercises provide for progressive development of the skill?

29. Does the unit design allow for progressive development of and practice in listening comprehension? Speaking, reading, writing? What is the proportion of working time allotted to each skill in the unit design? Is this proportion appropriate for the objectives of your course?

30. Is adequate opportunity provided for review at regular intervals? Does this review give reference to elements learned earlier as well as to current work?

31. If tests are provided with the textbook, do they test what the students have been learning (that is, all items are drawn from material studied and practices to that point)? Are they of an appropriate level for your students? Is there a good balance in the aspects of the work they test? Are they of a suitable length for your purpose? Is provision made for integrative as well as discrete-point testing?

E. Types of Activities

32. If there are dialogs, do they represent realistic situations within the foreign culture? Is the language authentic for use in such situations and relationships? Are the dialogues cluttered with new structures which could more effectively be presented in some other way? Are the dialogues too lengthy to be useful in the classroom? Can other material than dialogues be dramatized?

33. Are there indications of ways in which students can be encouraged to use what they have learned in actual communication in speech and writing?

34. Is there variety in the types of exercises? Are the exercises interesting? Do they encourage students to create utterances of their own?

35. Are indications given of extra activities (games, songs, poems, crossword puzzles, things to look for) which would add variety to the
lessons?

36. Is provision made for student-conducted activity? for group work without the teacher’s direction?

37. Is some material introduced just for fun and relaxation while using the language: humor, problems, anecdotes, rhymes, cartoons, curious customs?

F. Practical Considerations

38. Is the book part of a series which would be adequate for the sequence of courses in your school? Are the other books in the series satisfactory for the purposes of your classes? Is the transition from level to level well worked out?

39. Are the illustrations in a style which is likely to make the book seem to your students old-fashioned, ridiculous, or just dull? Are they of a type which can act as a stimulus to class discussion?

40. Are there appropriate maps somewhere in the book? Are they too detailed or too sketchy?

41. Is the book printed in an interesting style? Is the type clear? Is the page layout attractive? Is the book set out so that it is easy to find what you want? Are the binding, cover, quality of paper, and clarity of illustrations satisfactory? Is the cover attractive? Would the book stand up to normal wear and tear? Is it too heavy to carry around with other course books?

42. Is the book free of printing errors? In the dialogues and reading passages? in the exercises? in the glossary?

43. Is the price reasonable for your school situation?

44. Is the book readily available in the area in which you are teaching?

G. Enjoyment Index

45. Would you enjoy working with this book at this level? Is it hard on the teacher in any way? Could the teachers in your department (particularly the inexperienced ones) work with it? Does it provide scope for individual? testing styles?
Title
Translation of Function in Political Headlines Translated from Persian into English

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Abstract
Translation of news headlines is difficult since the sentences are fragmentary and abbreviations and acronyms of proper names are frequently used. Translators play a significant task in negotiating meaning between discursive partners within social and political processes. Translations may be manipulated and reframed by rival parties to circulate and legitimize their own narratives, with each side attempting to frame the same event in a different way that strengthens its own narratives and serves its own interests. MEMRI (The Middle East Media Research Institute) website translates Arab and Iranian media into European languages so everything depends on the choice of texts and sequences that MEMRI translates. Using a corpus of 12 Persian-language headlines and their translated English pairs from MEMRI website, this article investigated what happened to the functions of these headlines in the translation process by considering Skopos theory of Vermeer (1989) and four proposed procedures of Baker (2006). Finally it was concluded that the functions were mostly changed in target text (TT) according to its own political Skopos.

Keywords: Headline translation, Skopos, function, MEMRI, Vermeer, Baker
1. Introduction

Language is a very important consideration to take into account when examining the messages one receives from the news media, and how one might decode them. Put simply, language is a set of symbols shared by a community to communicate meaning and experience (Jandt, 2004).

Different times however assigned different values to the importance of translation, and the situationality of the translator within the larger context of social transaction played a major role in the translation strategies chosen at a particular instance in the process of knowledge transfer, especially in an area of human activity as viscous and ephemeral as news media. In one respect, motivated by the doctrine of fidelity, the translator sought to be faithful to the original. Yet a host of situational factors were brought to bear on this quest for the truth in translation. The state of tension and conflict was resolved through reframing that conformed to specific editorial policy, norms and formulas. (Darwish, 2006).

Baker (2006) proposed an approach to ethics that encouraged translators to become fully conscious of their role in the circulation or resistance of the narratives which served to legitimize legal or moral standpoints or violent action in conflict situations, leading to a more active or activist stance on the part of translators themselves.

News was a representation of the world in language (Bell, 1991). News placed values on whatever it produced and, thus, was not a neutral presentation of facts. Subsequently, news media and news practitioners were not neutral agent in news dissemination. News staff did not merely report events, but were active agents in constructing socio-political realities (Hail et al., 1978 cited in McNair., 1994). The media presented their account of social reality by drawing on particular sets of values that were shaped and molded by societal factors such as politics, power, and ideology.

This study focused on MEMRI website on purpose because MEMRI website translated Arab and Iranian media into European languages so everything was depended on the choice of texts and sequences that MEMRI translates. Arab, Iranian and occasionally European, writers have several times accused MEMRI of being a propaganda organ working for the Israeli government. However, this study was done to test their idea because there was a gap in this field and especially about this website.

2. Literature review
Looking at translation as a broad discipline, one is deemed to believe that with regard to the dramatic improvements in the world affairs, nothing but an access to the theory of translation, that is, a tool for opening the door to the world events, plays a significant role. In other words, dealing with a field in which a great number of studies and knowledge intermingle, makes the study of background inevitable and highlights its necessity.

Bassnett (1996) stressed the need for reassessing the role of the translator by analyzing his/her intervention in the process of linguistic transfer, when she argued ‘Once considered a subservient, transparent filter through which a text could and should pass without adulteration, the translation can now be seen as a process in which intervention is crucial’ (p. 22).

Vermeer (1998) postulated that as a general rule it must be the intended purpose of the target text that determined translation methods and strategies. From this postulate, he derived the skopos rule: Human action (and its subcategory: translation) was determined by its purpose (skopos), and therefore it was a function of its purpose.

The main point of this functional approach was the following: it was not the source text as such, or its effects on the source-text recipient, or the function assigned to it by the author, that determined the translation process, as was postulated by equivalence-based translation theories, but the prospective function or skopos of the target text as determined by the initiator’s, i.e. client’s, needs. Consequently, the skopos was largely constrained by the target text user (reader/listener) and his/her situation and cultural background.

Skopos theory allowed the possibility of the same text being translated in different ways according to the purpose of the TT and the commission which was given to the translator.

Vermeer, who extended the validity of his Skopos theory explicitly to legal translation, provided as an example the translation of a ‘will’ written in French. This may be translated in at least two ways depending on the function it was required to perform in the target culture (TC).

Since the headline was the first sentence of the document, context information for target word selection was not available at the time of translation. Words were abbreviated in headlines and they were sometimes hard to understand. Another difficulty in translating news headlines was the lack of context information needed for target word selection. For these reasons, the translation of news headlines was quite difficult. However, their correct translation was crucial, since readers usually read only the headline to decide whether they will go on to read the body or not.
In 1980s, translation was increasingly conceptualized as cultural transfer rather than a linguistic operation. Translation was appreciated as socially-enacted communicative practices, which was oriented towards the function of the target text (Hornby, 1990).

As Nord argued, the word “skopos” was usually applied to refer to the purpose of the target text, and some of the related words used by Vermeer together with this word (skopos) were “aim”, “intention” and “function”.

Baker (2009), wrote an article which was inspiring for this study. In this article it was discussed that constructing and disseminating ‘knowledge’ about a number of communities and regions were widely designated as a security threat was now a big industry. Much of this industry relied heavily on various forms of translation and, in some cases, was generated by a team of dedicated translators working on full-blown, heavily funded programs that involved selecting, translating and distributing various types of text that emanated from Arab and Muslim countries: newspaper articles, film clips, transcripts of television shows, selected excerpts from educational material, sermons delivered in mosques. Drawing on narrative theory and using examples from institutions involved in constructing this type of knowledge, this article argued that attempts to discredit such efforts by questioning the ‘accuracy’ of individual translations missed the point. What was needed, instead, was a more nuanced understanding of the subtle devices used to generate dehumanizing narratives of Arabs and Muslims through carefully planned and generously funded programs of translation. She concluded that public narratives of terrorism and security has pervaded our lives and were elaborated by a range of influential institutions, including some that presented themselves as non-partisan and apolitical. These institutions had a vested interest in portraying certain communities as inherently terrorist and extremist and did so largely by making a range of carefully selected translations available to audiences around the world, especially politicians and the media. Narrative theory allowed us to make sense of their entire programs of translation as well as individual choices at text level.

Although one of the most challenging tasks for all translators was how to render political elements in texts, not much attention has been paid to this problem in our country.

However, a few researches were done related to this matter and as far as the researcher knows no one has done a research in this field. For instance Mohammadi Dehcheshmeh (2007) wrote a paper on “Specialized Monolingual Corpora in Translation” She considered political collocations in machine translation field and in this study, she
attempted to show the effectiveness of a specialized monolingual corpus in translating various collocations usually found in political texts from English into Persian and in this experiment compared the accuracy in translating collocations using a specialized monolingual corpus to the conventional resources (e.g. monolingual as well as bilingual dictionaries). The results showed how the quality of translation could be improved using corpus-based translation tools.

3. Methodology

The present study viewed political headline translation from the functional point of view. As a matter of fact, it described the translation issues in a functional manner just as the functionalists endeavored to do so. Vermeer in functional translation presented his strictly functional theory (“Skopos Theory”) of translation. Acting was primarily conditioned by a “purpose” and the nature of the intended addressees. The source text wording was of secondary importance. The functional skopos model allowed the translator freedom to act as an expert and gave him responsibility for his approach.

According to Baker (See also Olohan, 2004: 91-100), there are four universal features of translation, namely simplification (the idea that translators subconsciously simplify the language or message or both) it refers to the “tendency to simplify the language used in translation” (Baker, 1996: 181-182), and as a result translated language became simpler than the target native language lexically, syntactically and/or stylistically; explicitation (an overall tendency to spell things out rather than leave them implicit in translation to make implicit information more explicit). Explicitation was manifested by the tendency in translations to “spell things out rather than leave them implicit” through more frequent use of connectives and increased cohesion (Baker, 1996: 180). Normalization or conservatism was the tendency to conform to patterns and practices which were typical of the target language, even to the point of exaggerating them. It suggested that translational language displayed a “tendency to exaggerate features of the target language and to conform to its typical patterns” so that translated texts were more “normal” than non-translated texts (Baker, 1996: 183); and levelling out (a hypothesis that translated language and translated texts ‘steer a middle course between any two extremes, converging towards the centre’, meaning that we may encounter less variance in textual features in a corpus of translations than in a corpus of non-translations) . Levelling out refers to “the tendency of translated text to gravitate towards the centre of a continuum”
(Baker, 1996: 184), which was also known as “convergence”, that was, the “relatively higher level of homogeneity of translated texts with regard to their own scores on given measures of universal features” (Laviosa, 2002: 72).

4. Results and Discussion

In this article 12 headlines were gathered from Iranian news websites and their translation from the MEMRI website.

Kayhan: Palestinian Agreement Will Facilitate Jihad in West Bank  (Source: Kayhan (Iran), April 30, 2011)

In the Persian headline it was mentioned that “ceremony in Palestine, mourn in Israel/ Fath and Hamas finished the discordance”.

In the Persian headline it wanted to convey this idea that Palestinian people were so happy because of the ceasefire so it had celebrations there but if one takes a look at the English translation of this headline it is obvious that it omitted this part and also the part which talks about Israel and translated this headline according to the whole article not the headline itself so they used the simplification procedure in order to convey news’ function into English. It looked at this news from a different angle and point of view and didn’t talk about terminating disagreements between Fath and Hamas and translated it in a way to have powerful effect on TT reader.

In Persian it just mentioned the general points so its function is different from the English translation. In TT it used explicitation in order to convey its own concept into English and translated it according to the whole article not just its headline and contracted the article to its desired length and conveyed its desired function into TT.

New Cyber Attack Targets Iran (Source: Mehr, Iran, April 25, 2011)

In the Persian headline it was said that “Iranian websites are subject of the cyber attack from today.”

The Persian headline is more explicit and complete than its English pair and the English headline is so vague in comparison with its Persian ST(source text); in Persian this function can be understood that it is for the first time that they wanted to be attacked but in the English translation of this headline by bringing the word “new” MEMRI wanted to show that it isn’t the new idea and in the past also they were attacked and it is clear that
how this word changes its function and meaning in English. Therefore one can say that this website adjusted it according to its own purpose and somehow the translator used the normalization procedure which means by bringing a few words convey their meaning.

3. وزیر امور خارجه کشورمان از توافقنامه فتح و حماس استقبال کرد

Iran Pleased With Fatah-Hamas Reconciliation Agreement (Sources: IRNA, ISNA, Iran, April 28, 2011)

In the Persian headline it was said that “our foreign minister welcomes Fath and Hamas reconciliation agreement”.

As one can see in this headline and its translation in English there is a nuance difference; in Persian headline it is said that the foreign minister pleased with Fath-Hamas reconciliation agreement which in the English headline it is generalized and referred this saying to all Iranian people and by changing one word it could change the function of this headline in English.. It can be said that in English headline the translator used simplification and didn’t give details and transferred this headline into TT.

4. وحدت فلسطینیان بزرگترین خطر برای اسرائیل است/ حمایت از توافق فتح و حماس

Iranian Official: Fatah-Hamas Unity Will Strengthen Resistance Movement (Source: Mehr, Iran, May 3, 2011)

In Persian headline it was written: “unity in Palestine is the biggest danger for Israel and they advocate this unity”.

It is clear that in the translation they got the meaning and transferred it according to their own wish and one can say that they used levelling out and describe the general event and didn’t go to the details of this headline and although in Persian they explained more and talked about danger and advocacy, which was not present in its translation. So it can be said that it changed the function of this headline by using levelling out procedure.

5. احمدی‌نژاد در دیدار با رئیس رسانه ملی عنوان کرد: رابطه رهبر انقلاب و من پدر و فرزندی است؛ دشمنان خاج‌زند و آب در هاون می‌گویند

Ahmadinejad: My Relationship with Khamenei Is That of a Son to a Father (Source: Fars, May 1, 2011)

In ST it was said that Ahmadinejad while speaking with the head of national Medias said that “My relationship with the leader of revolution is that of son to a father; enemies are lame and do something useless”.

In English it is clear that it used simplification procedure and omitted some parts of ST.
In Persian it brought the referent of Ahmadinejad’s speaking while in English it was omitted and also in Persian it brought the whole he said but in English it omitted the parts about disability of enemies and the idiom which also conveyed the sense of that disability.

So in English for transferring their preferred function it used simplification and normalization because it didn’t translate the idiom which was used in the Persian headline.

In the Persian headline it was mentioned: “Amir Mohamadi informs that Iran equips air forces with modern training equipment”. The assistant of training and educating of air forces of military said “programs of this force is codified according to the need and change in the defense guideline doctrine of the country”.

When one compared these two headlines with each other it is clear that they had great difference in the length and it seemed that in the English headline some parts were omitted and weren’t translated in the TT. Therefore, in Persian it conveyed the whole message completely so its function was different from the English headline which used simplification and levelling out (because it just mentioned the general idea about this headline and didn’t go to the details).

In the Persian headline it was mentioned: “commander Vahidi in the gathering of news reporters said that new production line of cruise missiles will be inaugurated soon.”

As one compared these two headlines in both languages he could understand that there wasn’t a difference between these two headlines; in the English headline it used normalization procedure at lexis level to convey the same function and sense of ST into the TT.
Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi: Ahmadinejad's Messianic Proclamations Unacceptable (Source: Ebtekhab, Iran, May 11, 2011)

In the Persian headline it was said: “Mesbah Yazdi: this utterance that imam Asr (messianic power) is guiding the community will have a dangerous future/ Ahmadinejad says that my foreign politics should be directed by this holy person.”

As it is clear according to the length of these two headlines the English one used simplification and when one takes a look at their choices of vocabulary it becomes clear that it used normalization at the lexis level and from another point of view it used levelling out procedure while discussing the general points of this event and in the Persian headline as it is clear it discussed about the details also. Therefore, these two headlines are not so different from each other while using different procedure to convey the function into both languages.

Deputy Majlis Committee Chairman: Iran Rejects Bahraini Call To Renew Friendship (Source: Fars, Iran, May 11, 2011)

In the Persian headline it was said: “inclination of the king of Bahrain for talking with Iran for solving the problems.”

As one compares these two headlines with each other it can easily be discovered that these two are different from each other. In the Persian headline it just talked about the king’s inclination towards having relationship with Iran while in the English headline it gave the result which was not accepted by Iranians. Therefore both have different functions in both languages. Although they talked about the same topic, they looked at it from different points of view. Somehow it can be said that Iranian talked about this topic in a general manner while in the English headline it paid attention to the result and details and it can be said that it used explicitation for conveying the function into the TT.
Former Iranian FM: No Chance For Obama Reelection; Obama 'Entangled With The Same Problem' As Carter (Source: Fars, Iran, April 11, 2011)

In the Persian headline it was said: “Motaki: Obama won’t have so much chance for the future election. Our former FM said that if there exists a voting for future election, Obama won’t have so much chance.”

As one can see in the English headline they added some parts to this headline and increased it and compared his reelection to that of Carter. So in Persian it discussed the general topic which Motaki talked about while in English it took the advantage of explicitation procedure to transfer its function into English which changed the function of these two headlines in ST and TT.

Iranian Intelligence Minister: Fight Israeli Foreign Ministry Farsi-Language Facebook Page (Source: Fars, Iran, May 11, 2011)

In Persian it was mentioned: “Hojat Alislam Moslehi told Fars news agency: collation with the foreign ministry of Zionists’ regime for initiating Persian page in “Facebook”.”

In the English headline, one can get this meaning that one should fight Israeli foreign ministry for having Farsi Facebook page; which is so different from its function in Persian. In the English headline it used simplification procedure by omitting the word “initiating” and by omitting this word it changed the function and its meaning completely.

Fars: Lebanese General Says U.S. Seeks To Compensate For Failures With Report Of Bin Laden's Death (Source: Fars, Iran, May 2, 2011)

In the Persian headline it was said: “American hidden aims of announcing Bin Laden’s murder”.

As it is clear according to the length of these two headlines, one can understand that the English headline used explicitation to convey the same function by adding some information to the original headline and translated it according to the whole article not just the ST headline while in the Persian headline it discussed the news in general.

5. Conclusion:
In MEMRI website as discussed in the previous part it is so clear that some special headlines were chosen according to its own purpose. In these selected headlines it was clear that MEMRI didn’t pay attention just to the headline. It mostly translated headlines according to the whole article but sometimes some parts of the article were selected and put beside each other and construed another meaning out of the ST headline.

It can be said that this website mostly changed the function of these headlines by using explicitation procedure and in some of them it took the advantage of the mixed procedures e.g. “normalization and simplification” then in the third place it benefited from levelling out, normalization and simplification with the same level of frequency.

As it can be seen from the above discussion it can be understood that TT used “explicitation” more than other procedures in order to convey its functions into TT but in the ST it discussed more general points and it didn’t like to go to the details a lot and in English it benefited from “normalization” which meant it contracted these headlines according to its own lexis, grammar and wish rather than the original one.

At last when one compares the English and the Persian headlines it is obvious that the functions of those headlines were more different from each other and one can conclude that in the TT the website changed the function of these political headlines according to its own wish and skopos rather than paying attention into their functions in Persian.

Therefore, it can be concluded that in this website which translated Persian news into English its own skopos was more important than the function of the news headlines in the ST.

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Title

On the Investigation of Effects of Cooperative Learning on Critical Thinking; A Case of Iranian University EFL Context

Author

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Biodata

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating the effects of Cooperative learning on Critical Thinking in an Iranian university EFL context. In doing so, 72 senior university students (Experimental group=36, Control group=36), studying English as a Foreign Language at Isfahan University, were administered Critical Thinking Test. Then, a course was taught to experimental group via cooperative learning method and control group through conventional lecturing method. MANCOVA analysis indicated that subscales of Critical Thinking including critical analysis, credibility of evidence, and critical evaluation in experimental group were much higher than those of control group. Furthermore, it has been discussed how cooperative learning would affect Critical Thinking in an Iranian university EFL context. Supported by previous research, results showed that while cooperative learning had a significant effect on Critical Thinking potentiality, the level of it was negligible in Iranian academic setting.

Keywords: EFL context, Cooperative Learning, Critical Analysis, University Students

1. Introduction

Critical thinking is a rich concept that has been developing throughout the past 2500 years. The term "critical thinking" has its roots in the mid-late 20th century. It entails the examination of those structures or elements of thought implicit in all reasoning: purpose,
problem, or question-at-issue; assumptions; concepts; empirical grounding; reasoning leading to conclusions; implications and consequences; objections from alternative viewpoints; and frame of reference. Critical thinking — in being responsive to variable subject matter, issues, and purposes — is incorporated in a family of interwoven modes of thinking, among them: scientific thinking, mathematical thinking, historical thinking, anthropological thinking, economic thinking, moral thinking, and philosophical thinking.

Critical thinking can be seen as having two components: 1) a set of information and belief generating and processing skills, and 2) the habit, based on intellectual commitment, of using those skills to guide behavior (Qin, Z., et.al 1995). It is thus to be contrasted with: 1) the mere acquisition and retention of information alone, because it involves a particular way in which information is sought and treated; 2) the mere possession of a set of skills, because it involves the continual use of them; and 3) the mere use of those skills ("as an exercise") without acceptance of their results.

Critical thinking of any kind is never universal in any individual; everyone is subject to episodes of undisciplined or irrational thought. Its quality is therefore typically a matter of degree and dependent on, among other things, the quality and depth of experience in a given domain of thinking or with respect to a particular class of questions. No one is a critical thinker through-and-through, but only to such-and-such a degree, with such-and-such insights and blind spots, subject to such-and-such tendencies towards self-delusion. For this reason, the development of critical thinking skills and dispositions is a life-long endeavor.

Cooperative learning is an approach to organizing classroom activities into academic and social learning experiences. It differs from group work, and it has been described as "structuring positive interdependence". Students must work in groups to complete tasks collectively toward academic goals. Unlike individual learning, which can be competitive in nature, students learning cooperatively capitalize on one another’s resources and skills (asking one another for information, evaluating one another’s ideas, monitoring one another’s work, etc.). Furthermore, the teacher's role changes from giving information to facilitating students' learning. Everyone succeeds when the group succeeds. Ross and Smyth (1995) describe successful cooperative learning tasks as intellectually demanding, creative, open-ended, and involve higher order thinking tasks. Five essential elements are identified for the successful incorporation of cooperative learning in the classroom. Brown & Ciuffetelli Parker (2009) and Siltala (2010) discuss the 5 basic and essential elements to cooperative learning:

1. Positive interdependence
   - Students must fully participate and put forth effort within their group
• Each group member has a task/role/responsibility therefore must believe that they are responsible for their learning and that of their group.

2. *Face-to-Face Promotive Interaction*
  • Member promote each other’s success
  • Students explain to one another what they have or are learning and assist one another with understanding and completion of assignments

3. *Individual and Group Accountability*
  • Each student must demonstrate master of the content being studied
  • Each student is accountable for their learning and work, therefore eliminating “social loafing”

4. *Social Skills*
  • Social skills that must be taught in order for successful cooperative learning to occur
  • Skills include effective communication, interpersonal and group skills
    i. Leadership
    ii. Decision-making
    iii. Trust-building
    iv. Communication
    v. Conflict-management skills

5. *Group Processing*
  • Every so often groups must assess their effectiveness and decide how it can be improved

In order for student achievement to improve considerably, two characteristics must be present:

a) Students are working towards a group goal or recognition and b) success is reliant on each individual’s learning.

  a. When designing cooperative learning tasks and reward structures, individual responsibility and accountability must be identified. Individuals must know exactly what their responsibilities are and that they are accountable to the group in order to reach their goal.

  b. Positive Interdependence among students in the task. All group members must be involved in order for the group to complete the task. In order for this to occur each member must have a task that they are responsible for which cannot be completed by any other group member.
Thus, in an attempt to provide more empirical evidence for the investigating the effects of Cooperative learning on Critical Thinking in an Iranian EFL university context, this research aimed to answer following question:

- Does cooperative learning affect on Critical Thinking in an Iranian EFL university context? and the researcher hypothesized that Cooperative learning has a significant effect on Critical Thinking in Iranian EFL university setting.

2. Review of the Related Literature

Most of the studies I reviewed found cooperative learning to be more effective than other modes of instruction on higher level tasks. In the studies where cooperative learning did not clearly improve quality thinking, it nonetheless led to gains in other areas, which are often associated with cooperation. Tables 1 and 2 summarise the findings of the studies by Jacobs, G. M., Lee, C, & Ng, M. (1997) reviewed.

Table 1 Studies that found cooperative learning to be “more effective” in promoting thinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Treatments</th>
<th>Nature of Thinking Tasks</th>
<th>Findings/Explanations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, Skon, Johnson (1980) n = 45 1st grade</td>
<td>Cooperative vs. Competitive vs. Individualistic goal structures</td>
<td>Categorization and retrieval task</td>
<td>Cooperative structure led to higher achievement than individualistic on all 3 tasks. In two of the three tasks, the cooperative structure produced higher achievement than the competitive. Why? Students in cooperative groups used superior strategies and perceived more peer support and encouragement for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, Johnson, Stanne&amp;Garibaldi (1990) n = 49</td>
<td>CL with no processing; CL with teacher-led processing; CL with teacher &amp; student-led processing</td>
<td>Complex computer assisted problem solving task</td>
<td>Students in all three cooperative conditions performed better than in the individual learning condition. Cooperation with teacher- and student processing led to greater problem solving success. Why?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### High School Humanities vs. Individual learning

Metacognitive processing improves ability to problem-solve through increased student self-efficacy and insights on effective behavior; feedback increases the frequency of skillful behavior.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lazarowitz and Karsenty (1994)</th>
<th>Peer tutoring and small investigative groups (PTSIG) vs. Classroom-lab mode of instruction (CLMI)</th>
<th>Process-inquiry skills (BTSP): measurement, classification, graph communication, interpreting data, prediction, evaluating hypotheses, controlling variables, selecting useful data, designing an experiment</th>
<th>Experimental group achieved significantly higher scores in four sub-scales - measurement, graph communication, interpreting data, designing an experiment, and total test scores. Why? Skills are enhanced by exchange of ideas and cooperative discussion.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n = 708 10th grade Biology</td>
<td>Peer tutoring and small investigative groups (PTSIG) vs. Classroom-lab mode of instruction (CLMI)</td>
<td>Process-inquiry skills (BTSP): measurement, classification, graph communication, interpreting data, prediction, evaluating hypotheses, controlling variables, selecting useful data, designing an experiment</td>
<td>Experimental group achieved significantly higher scores in four sub-scales - measurement, graph communication, interpreting data, designing an experiment, and total test scores. Why? Skills are enhanced by exchange of ideas and cooperative discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharan et al (1984)</td>
<td>Group investigation vs. STAD vs. Whole class instruction</td>
<td>Higher order test items (Bloom’s taxonomy)</td>
<td>Pupils from the GI classes scored the highest on the higher-order items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>Treatments</td>
<td>Nature of Thinking Tasks</td>
<td>Findings/Explanations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharan, Ackerman &amp; Hertz-Lazarowitz (1979)</td>
<td>Group investigation</td>
<td>Low and high levels of cognitive functioning as measured by MCQ achievement test</td>
<td>No difference in achievement on the lower-level questions; superior achievement on higher order thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skon, Johnson, Johnson (1981)</td>
<td>Cooperative vs. Competitive vs. Individualistic goal structures</td>
<td>Categorization and retrieval task; paraphrasing and explanation task; Math story problems</td>
<td>Higher achievement for cooperative groups. Why? Higher quality of discussion and interpersonal exchange within cooperative learning groups. (Effect Size = 0.41)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Effect sizes cited in Qin, Johnson, and Johnson (1995)

**Table 2** Studies that found cooperative learning to be “no more effective” in promoting thinking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Treatments</th>
<th>Nature of Thinking Tasks</th>
<th>Findings/Explanations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kneip&amp; Grossman (1979)</td>
<td>Use of higher order teacher questioning in cooperative(C) vs.Competitive(Cm) goal structures vs.Control (C)</td>
<td>40 lower-order and 40 higher-order questions</td>
<td>Lower-order subtest - Cm and Co did significantly better than C. There was no difference between Cm and Co. Higher-order subtest - Cm did better than C. Co did better than C. Why? Lack of training in working in cooperative groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ross (1988)  
Study 1  
\(n=342, 4^{th} \text{ grade}\)  
Study 2  
\(n=259, 4^{th} \text{ grade}\)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Treatment</th>
<th>Design</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STAD vs. Whole-class vs. Control</td>
<td>with no explicit teaching of problem solving skills</td>
<td>Socio-environmental studies problem solving test: comparative problems, decision-making problems</td>
<td>Cooperative and whole class teaching outperformed the control; cooperative treatment did not produce better problem solving skills than whole class. Why? STAD independent practice was not sufficient for mastery (time was constant in all treatments); loafers left difficult part of the task to others; most competent group member not able to tutor effectively; lack of helping behaviors. Effect Size (Study 1) = 0.80* Effect Size (Study 2) = 0.49*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* and individualistic reward structure that motivates children to engage in competitive behavior (Effect Size = -0.11)*
Cooperative vs. Competitive vs. Individualistic

Problem-solving - Mastermind and questions

No difference in problem solving effectiveness of the three groups.

Why? Stress dominated because of a demanding level of performance expected.

Effect Size: -0.22*

Group mastery learning (Jigsaw) vs. Individualized mastery learning

Creative essay Earth Science

No significant differences in number of ideas and essay scores between the two groups.


Furthermore, table 3 indicates some theoretical perspectives on how cooperative learning can promote thinking and cooperative learning techniques that arise from them.

**Table 3 Theoretical perspectives and cooperative learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Perspective</th>
<th>Theorists</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>CL Technique</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social psychology</td>
<td>All port</td>
<td>Group dynamics, e.g., positive interdependence and individual accountability, create the conditions for groups to think together</td>
<td>Jigsaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deutsch</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Johnson &amp; Johnson</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lewin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3. Method

#### 3.1. Participants

Participants consisted of 72 senior EFL university students at Isfahan University, Iran. They were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. They ranged between 19-24 years old. It should be noted here that for the present study both gender and age variables were excluded.

#### 3.2. Instrumentation

In order to investigate Critical Thinking, Oxford, Cambridge and RSA (Royal Society of Arts) Exam (OCR, 2000) was administered. This exam includes 16 multiple-question and 5 short

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental psychology</th>
<th>Piaget</th>
<th>Differing views foster cognitive development by causing disequilibrium; Thinking that students can do today only with peer scaffolding, they can do tomorrow alone</th>
<th>Cooperative controversy; Pairs check</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive psychology</td>
<td>Bruner</td>
<td>Greater depth of processing and deeper thinking via explaining to others</td>
<td>MURDER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Craik &amp; Lockhart Wittrock</td>
<td></td>
<td>STAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation theory</td>
<td>Bandura</td>
<td>Peers provide positive reinforcement for and models of thinking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skinner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slavin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Intelligences theory</td>
<td>Gardner</td>
<td>Opportunities to apply interpersonal intelligence to tasks aids thinking and develops the ability to think collaboratively</td>
<td>Talking chips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanistic psychology</td>
<td>Dewey</td>
<td>Taking initiative encourages students to think about what is important to them</td>
<td>Group investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rogers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Corners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global education; Moral values education</td>
<td>Kohlberg</td>
<td>Students need to learn the skills and develop the inclination cooperate with other people and with nature to promote the welfare of all.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reardon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
passages. Allotted time for this exam was 1 and a half hour and its total score equals 100 which according to its scoring procedures guidelines, for critical analysis, credibility of evidence and critical evaluation are 40, 16, and 14, respectively. Scorings were totaled via key answers. Reliability of the exam \( R = 0.71 \) was estimated by Wells, et al. (2005) through Cronbach alpha. Quasi-experimental method, i.e. pretest and posttest, was administered. After translating the exam, in order to estimate its validity, it was administered between 117 students and its homogeneity with California Critical Thinking Exam was 0.655 which supports its validity. Cronbach alpha coefficient in this study was 0.64 and equal to that of Wells, et al. (2005).

To teach students via cooperative method, 6-member groups were used and then 70 percent of class activities and 30 percent for final exam were selected. At every session, experimental group was given guidelines to perform each task. Allotted time varied according to task difficulty. They were asked to record results from group activity. Other groups were received such recordings and their feedbacks along with recordings returned to the each group to rectify their activity.

A representative from each group to present group activity was selected. At the end, course content was determined according to final students’ comments and they were asked to give their point of views on themselves and their group members. The instructor provided the course content and course total score was based on both cooperation score of students and their individual score. It should be noted that 8 sessions was held during a semester. Finally, Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) was administered to investigate effects of cooperative method and controlling posttest scores based on pretest.

4. Results and discussion

Mean of Critical Thinking before the study was 23.8 (from 100). This amount for critical thinking was 10.58 from 40, for credibility of evidence 6.4 from 16, and for critical evaluation 6.3 from 44. (See Table 4. and Figure 1.)

Table 4 Means and Standard Deviations of Critical Thinking and its Subscales
Comparing critical thinking pretest scores in experimental and control group indicated that there was no significant difference between two groups’ scores. Moreover, investigation of covariances (F=1.62, P=0.137) verified the reliability of MANCOVA administration. In this study, results obtained from MANCOVA showed the significant effect of cooperative learning on critical thinking. (Table 5)

Table 5 MANCOVA analysis of Critical subscales of both groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooperative Learning</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Critical Analysis</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Credibility of Evidence</td>
<td>40.03</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Critical Evaluation</td>
<td>7.1410</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1

Critical Thinking Exam and its Subscales Means

5. Conclusion

Potentialities of cooperative learning including problem-solving activities, discussion, social interactions, a number of references, miscellaneous point of views, as well as opportunity to criticize each other acceptably are among the factors that lead to the dominance and significance of cooperative learning over conventional lecturing methods. Thus, most of the researchers have considered cooperative learning as one of the most effective ways in boosting critical activity and highlighting its major role (Johnson, et al, 1980, Slavin, 1990, Koppenhaver, et al 2003, Herriman et al, 2006, Hwag, et al 2005, Norman, et al 2004, Doymous, 2008, Dikic, et al., 2006).

Although Gray (2006) did not ascertain any significant difference between experimental and control groups regarding critical thinking, his findings illustrated the effect of cooperative learning on critical thinking as well.

5.1. Findings

As it was mentioned, a number of studies have either rejected or accepted the effects of cooperative learning on critical thinking. Various factors could lead to such kind of dichotomy. For instance, different definitions of thinking, type of thinking, topics of teaching, learning and discussion, different definitions and characteristics of cooperative learning, various sizes of cooperative groups, age, gender, discipline, differences in samples and statistical methods as well as varying measurement test (e.g. California Critical Thinking,
Watson-Glasner, Kernel, OCR, and researcher-made exams). Furthermore, although Iranian University students did not enjoy Critical Thinking too much, findings, in line with previous research, supported the effects of cooperative learning on critical thinking.

Generally speaking, all of the cooperative activities in order to facilitate learning environment in view of individual interactions and availability to various learning resources, will provide positively critical atmosphere and thereby enhance critical thinking. It is apparent that, on the other hand, a critical thinking setting, especially in an academic context, leads to a number of opportunities to reveal individual potentialities and increase their deeper learning. Surprisingly, findings displayed that university EFL students did not enjoy critical thinking satisfactorily. This finding is in line with other findings including Wells, J. et al (2005), Kuhan (1991) and Braxton, et al (1996).

In addition, Lewittes (2007) found that nearly 1/3 of all students are lacking critical thinking ability. Thus, it should be noted that university students do not enjoy high level of critical thinking potentiality which would be due to miscellaneous factors such as: teaching method deficiencies, focus on parrot-learning, irrelevant course contents, superficial question-answering discussions, and some participants’ characteristics including lack of motivation, and commitment in filling the questionnaires.

5.2. Applications and Implications

Although this research was limited in scope (only covering an Iranian EFL university context), the results clearly were compatible with earlier research on effects of cooperative learning on critical thinking and found that it enhances academic potentiality to create critical individuals as well as having positive effects on cooperation and social interaction among language learners. As this research displayed, having students in groups does not guarantee any positive effects on the process of learning. Language instructors should apply main elements of cooperative learning in place so language learners can come to feel that they are a part of small community and know that they are bale to be a critical thinker about themselves and their co-workers. Cooperative learning would enable language learners to learn from one another and from the small learning community in which they participate.

5.3. Suggestions for Further Research

As it was mentioned earlier, two kinds of dichotomous research studies were found regarding the effectiveness of cooperative learning on promoting thinking. Although the findings of the present research were in line with those studies that displayed the positive effects of cooperative learning on thinking, further research is needed to provide more experimental
evidence regarding Iranian EFL academic settings. Like any other research, this study has its own limitations:
This research was based on a relatively small learner corpus which, in fact, was not generated in an authentic setting. Thus, the study should be replicated on a large scale and over longer time duration. Moreover, the effects of the cooperative learning on critical thinking should be investigated with other EFL language learners such as guidance and high schools learners. Finally, it is suggested that exploring the effects of the cooperative learning on critical thinking be done with heterogeneous EFL language learners groups.

References
Georgas, J. (1986). Cooperative, competitive, and individualistic goal structures with seventh-


Title

Exploring Sources of Demotivation with Iranian High school Students Abroad, Far East Asia

Author

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Biodata

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating the potential reasons why Iranian high school students who follow their education at Iranian-oriented schools abroad are highly motivated at the outset but gradually they are found to display poor motivation towards improving their studies. To figure out the factors enhancing the decline of motivation on the part of the high school students, the present survey was carried out, applying a survey method of research. Accordingly, a researcher-made questionnaire was designed and passed out among 18 high school teachers and 41 students present at Iranian schools in Far East Asian nations so as to elicit their ideas on the issue. The findings of the study concluded that, based on participants’ evaluation, the most significant factor contributing to the loss of students’ academic motivation was failure to providing them with a standard and suitable place as a school. Nevertheless, the role of other related factors in relation to students’ demotivation including shortage of facilities and equipment, the role of living away from hometown and the like were no less important.

Key words: Academic motivation, Demotivation and education, Iranian schools abroad.

I. Introduction

As true in every realm of human knowledge, motivation holds a substantial status in education performance (Hegarty, 2010; Dornyei 2005; Ball, 1997, as example). However, the
role of motivation as a key parameter is at times marginalized as Keller (1983) termed it as “neglected heart” of education. The place of this vital element was studied in the specific context of Iranian high schools abroad, being active in tune with Iran’s educational system. What prompted the researcher to approach the current study stemmed from his own personal experience of teaching at Iranian-based high schools in Far East Asia for over two years as well as exchanging ideas with other colleagues either currently busy teaching at Iranian schools in other countries or they used to be in schools run on the basis of Iranian educational system. The students, who freshly join Iranian high schools abroad mostly, if not all, prove to be ever hardworking, highly motivated and talented enough to reinforce the subjects defined in their curriculum but passing time a number of them gradually tend to display poor motivation and noticeable reluctance as to pursuing their studies as seriously as they are expected. It seems necessary to mention that demotivation attributed to these students sometimes goes on for a short term of time and at times turns out to be lasting. Further, I personally have noticed students who express their feelings as “I am really fed up with my courses”, “What the … are all these for?” or “I have had enough of that” or while asked for their being inactive and seemingly uninterested in their studying trend, they merely gestured their unwillingness towards this issue. Another major stimulation to tend to this project comes from the fact that Iranian high school students have been reported, both formally by the authorities and directly by their parents, to face a noticeable short of academic achievement upon the time they are fresh back from schools abroad to domestic schools. Yet, various aspects which are capable to influence students’ academic motivation need to be taken into consideration. Apart from linguistic and psychological factors as two significant sets of parameters considered in learning, as Brown (2007) highlights, sociocultural factors need to be regarded, as well. These can cover areas such as context, style of life, customs and so on. The arrival of learner’s own culture, customs, traditions, ideas into the new context could potentially bring about conflict and incongruence on the part of the learner. In addition to the areas cited, even religious considerations should not be overlooked, where the clashes of two or more religions do exist and they might play a part.

What stated so far was the impetus to conduct a systematic research study to investigate the motivation reduction among Iranian high school students who carry on their schooling at Iranian schools abroad in Far East Asia in order that the origin or origins behind this problem could be uncovered and as far as possible feasible solutions be presented.
2. Statement of the problem and the significance of the study
As put forth earlier, there has long been the issue of the decrease of motivation among the students who arrive in a foreign country to run on their education in an Iranian-centered high school. They have frequently been found to lose temporarily or permanently their motivation to take their courses seriously. There exists no documented study in the literature having addressed this problem. The rampancy and urgency of this issue encouraged the researcher to put it into investigation.

3. Literature Review
To begin with, this section comes up with what motivation is. There exist multitude definitions introduced to motivation. As for instance, Richards and Schmidt (2002) define motivation as the driving force in any situation that leads to action. To be considered motivated requires someone to be energized and or activated toward an end (Ryan & Deci, 2000). There is an undeniably significant role pertaining to motivation in any kind of learning. Motivation gets learning started, helps it move on and enhance it to be permanent. This statement can be endorsed by Dornyei’s (2005) discussion where he thinks of motivation as an element without it even people having the most outstanding abilities would not be able to reach long-term goals. Further, in the realm of language learning, Gardner and Lambert (1972) state that in spite of the fact that language aptitude accounts for one’s learning achievement, motivational factors can override aptitude effect.

What is followed by the current study is the other side of the coin, namely demotivation. Deci and Ryan’s self determination theory (1985) is composed of three elements, including intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and amotivation. To them, the element of amotivation refers to situations where there is lack of motivation in any area of human’s activity. A person who feels no impetus or inspiration to act is considered as unmotivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In Dornyei’s word (2001), demotivation comes as specific external forces that reduce or diminish the motivational basis for a behavioral intention or an ongoing action.

Demotivation associated with academic achievement in the literature renders a plethora of studies having covered the issue from different angles of look. Conducting an investigation on fall of college students’ motivation, Marzieh, et al (2009) pointed to factors including personal, social and cultural problems and shortcomings related to the system of education. Another example by Ghaemi (2011) reported that the reasons for decrease of motivation on
the part of Iranian junior high school students were concluded to be textbooks, feeling disappointed as to finding a job in future, the quality of pedagogy, and issues evolving around the physical setting of schools but the variable of parents’ literacy was found to have little effect. Additionally, covering the same topic on the sources of decrease of students’ motivation, Moradi (2002) found a significant relationship between one’s improvements in education and self-concept. In a rather different research into the relationship between emotional atmosphere of family with individual-social compatibility and educational performance of students, Mosavi Shoshtari (1992) displayed the presence of a positive and significant relationship between emotional atmosphere of family with students’ improving their average in their studies. To report foreign studies on the place of motivation, a project by Ugurogla and Walberg (1979) concluded that high motivation would end up in academic achievement. Further, in the research carried out by Ayub (2010) in Pakistan, results suggested that motivation, both intrinsically and extrinsically, and academic performances were positively correlated. To examine the loss of motivation on the part of students, Wilson (2005) talked of the vital role of teachers, the close and positive emotional relationships between parents and students, and existence of instructive peer interactions in raising students’ motivation.

Researching the part motivation plays among students in general and Iranian students in particular are undoubtedly of no novelty. Nevertheless, as stated earlier, no documented and systematic study has ever dealt with the roots of lack or weakness of motivation in students who continue their education in an Iranian-centered school in a foreign country. Therefore, it is hoped that the findings of this investigation would contribute to the awareness of educational authorities, teachers, and parents in order that they would pay more serious attention to the problem with the purpose of settling or minimizing it.

4. Methodology
The intent of the current study was to give an answer to the why of demotivation on the part of Iranian high school students who are attending an Iranian-based high school abroad. Due to the limitations prevalent, the investigation aimed at Iranian schools active in Far East nations including China, Japan, South Korea, and North Korea.

4.1. Research question
The major purpose of the current study is to arrive at the answer to the following questions:
1. Based on students’ perception, what are the most effective factors which undermine high school students’ motivation in Iranian-centered schools abroad?

2. Drawing on teachers’ perception, what are the most effective factors which undermine high school students’ motivation in Iranian-centered schools abroad?

4.2. Participants

Two groups formed the intended population for the purpose of the study; all students presently pursuing their education in an Iranian-based high school in any of the schools situated in Far East Asia (i.e. China, Japan, South Korea and North Korea) as well as teachers at the moment involved in teaching in these schools. 18 male students and 23 female students along with 12 male and 6 female teachers attended the study. The age of students ranged from 14 to 18 years old. Their staying in a foreign country was reported to vary from one year to eleven years. The age of the teachers was between 32 and 47 and their career experience fell between 10 to 24 years. Further, out of the 18 teachers, seven of the them held M.A. degrees and the rest had B.A. degrees.

4.3. Research method

To carry out the study a descriptive survey was designed. As an instrument to gather the data, a 16 item questionnaire in Likert scale was administered. To design the questionnaire, a pilot study was first conducted and it led to modify the questionnaire, screening out some items. Initially the study intended to investigate the role of the gender, male and female students and teachers, to present if there would be any difference in participants’ views toward the purpose of the study in accordance with gender. The pilot study pointed out that gender played no significant role in participants’ evaluation; therefore, it was overlooked.

4.4. Instrument

A researcher-made questionnaire with 16 items served as the instrument to elicit the information regarding the purpose of the study. Before the final conduct, the questionnaire was piloted and necessary changes and improvements were applied. Additionally, to assure its reliability, Cronbach’s alpha was run and it turned out to be 0.72 which was acceptable. In addition, the questionnaire was revised and modified after it was consulted with some experienced teachers.

4.5. Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed to the respondents and they were asked to fill it out manually. Initially, they referred to the demographic information including their age, gender, and present level of education. Next, they tended to the items. Of course, they were informed about the objective of the study as well as the issue that the information would be announced
anonymously. To let participants release their attitudes fully and freely, they were asked to express their notions in their mother tongue, i.e. Persian, the time they were filling out the questionnaire. The students and teachers at Beijing High school were directly given the questionnaire to complete, the place where the researcher was teaching simultaneously and those who were in other three countries received the questionnaire through email and they returned them after completion. It deserves notice that in any of the three Iranian-centered high schools, a colleague of the researcher cooperated to distribute the questionnaire, gathering them and forwarding them back to the researcher in China.

5. Data collection and data analysis

Following gathering data, frequency and percentage for all the responses were computed. The data were then tabulated under each item of the questionnaire. This section provides explanation for each of the items. Each table contains two groups of respondents, i.e. students and teachers. The percentages were rounded according to mathematical rules.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first item of the questionnaire tested whether the absence of a counselor at Iranian high schools abroad affects students’ academic motivation. As Table 1 reveals, 41 percent of students supported this statement fully. Still 32 percent agreed with it. 20 percent marked no idea. And only 7 percent of this group showed disagreement with this idea. Put together “Fully agree” and “Agree” responses, 73 percent of students acclaimed the view that where there is no expert counselor at school, it would help their academic motivation fall. As to teachers’ responses, just opposite students’ view, 44 percent went against the idea. 6 percent were totally disagreed. 11 percent gave no idea. 22 percent were in agreement with the concern cited and 11 percent came up with full agreement regarding the statement. Teachers, generally speaking, rejected the role of not having a counselor in decreasing students’ motivation.

Table 2: Lack of appropriate educational and physical educational settings gives rise to students’ demotivation.
Table 2 represents the respondents’ reactions to the hypothesis that lack of an appropriate place both for classrooms and sport or other activities can result in loss of motivation in Iranian high school students abroad. As seen below, 51 percent of students agreed with the idea put forth here. 39 percent displayed strong compromise with this item. The remaining 9 percent were of no idea (2%), disagreed (5%) and fully disagreed (2%). Therefore, almost all of the students, 90 percent, stated lack of having a good and suitable place as their school categorically plays role in diminishing students’ motivation as to their education. Likewise, teachers’ responses rendered the same result. They were 61 percent agreed and 33 percent completely agreed with the issue put forth. A minor part showed disagreement with this idea, i.e. 6 percent.

Table 3: Being away from family, relatives, and friends can decrease students’ academic motivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next item elicited participants’ attitudes towards the proposition that living far away from family members, friends, and relatives influences students’ motivation negatively. As table 3 reveals, 32 percent of students said it would not affect their motivation. 7 percent of them were in full disagreement with this item. Yet, 27 percent and 17 percent agreed and fully agreed, respectively, with the idea suggested here. And, 17 percent were neither for nor against the idea. On the whole, with a slight difference students were more agreed with the idea. Considering teachers’ reactions, they were also agreed with the effect of this factor on students’ motivation though their agreement was remarkable. As Table 3 signifies, 67 percent showed agreement and 22 percent as full agreement with item 3. The amount of disagreement with the factor mentioned reached 11 percent.
Table 4: Poor affection relationships between parents and students, due to parents’ being too busy with their work, contribute to decrease in students’ academic motivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To see if weak emotional interactions between parents and students leave any impact on students’ motivation, item 4 was proposed. 29 percent of students chose no idea option. 27 percent were disagreed and 15 percent were fully disagreed with the idea cited. 19 percent of students showed full agreement and 10 percent were in agreement with this item. This statement was rejected by students if we combine two columns of disagree and fully disagree which come to 42 percent. Regarding teachers’ responses, 61 percent of them were agreed and 17 percent were fully agreed with item No.4. 17 percent of teachers were against the idea. And, 6 percent stood as neutral. In contrary to students’ standpoints, combining fully agree and agree sections which reaches 77 percent, teachers supported the notion that students’ motivation can be afflicted by poor affection interactions between parents and students.

Table 5: Being too tough on the part of some teachers and lack a warm relationship between students and some teachers are effective in undermining students’ academic motivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the pilot study a great number of students favored the idea in item 5. The item aimed at extracting participants’ viewpoints to the statement that teachers’ tough manners and their not having intimate contacts with students would contribute to the loss of students’ motivation. Table 5 shows 37 percent of the students appeared to be fully agreed and 22 percent agreed with the suggested view. 19 percent were neither for nor against it. And, 17 percent of students displayed their disagreement with the idea cited. Still 5 percent fully disagreed with this item. To sum, students represented 57 percent of acceptance of what came under item 5.
In light of teachers’ responses, 50 percent disagreed with the idea and 6 percent were totally disagreed. 28 percent of teachers showed agreement and 11 percent fully agreed with item 5. And, 6 percent marked no idea. Finally, more than half of teachers went against what proposed in item 5.

Table 6: Insufficient programs on extracurricular activities, fun group contests at school, and out of school picnics and camps accelerate students’ academic motivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>groups</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 depicts respondents’ notions on whether inadequate extracurricular programs are effective in undermining students’ academic motivation. Based on the analysis 54 percent of students showed agreement and 32 percent complete agreement with the assumption noted. 5 percent had no idea. 7 percent were of disagreement and 2 percent of full disagreement with the idea mentioned. The students noticeably, i.e. 86 percent, compromised with the role of group and fun programs in raising their motivation. The same position was taken by teachers as 67 percent of them supported the idea included in item 6. And 28 percent showed disagreement while only 6 percent marked no idea on the questionnaire.

Table 7: Shortage of lab equipment and other facilities are among the sources driving academic demotivation pertaining to students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>groups</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
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<td>46</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item No.7 was put forth to measure participants’ attitudes toward the assumption that shortage of facilities and equipment enhances students’ demotivation. As observed, 87 percent of students said yes to this notion. Only 5 percent were of neutral position and 7 percent disagreed with it. By the same token, 77 percent of teachers displayed their agreement with what included in item 7. Equally, 11 percent disagreed and 11 percent showed neutrality with respect to this statement.
Table 8: Assigning teachers to teach subjects not in the area of their expertise can be one reason for students’ academic demotivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>groups</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>21</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The study proposed that if teachers were assigned to teach in domains out of their expertise, it would lower students’ motivation. Relying on Table 8, 22 percent and 15 percent of students were respectively fully agreed and agreed with the proposition. The great number of students with 51 percent expressed no idea on this item. And 12 percent of students did not accept the assumption. Teachers agreed with this notion showing 89 percent. Yet, 11 percent rejected it and 6 percent displayed no inclination for or against it. Therefore, teachers believed that teaching subjects not included as a part of their major would decline students’ motivation.

Table 9: Easy and widespread access to the Internet and other technologies and overuse of them affects students’ academic motivation negatively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>groups</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Item 9 sought participants’ perception on the effect of excessive use of modern technologies like the Internet on students’ motivation. As represented in Table 9, 22 percent and 32 percent of students showed respectively full agreement and agreement with the assumption cited. 19 percent of them were of neutral position. And, 27 percent of students did not accept the role of the factor stated. The results represent students’ agreement with the destructive impact of overuse of technologies on their motivation. More strongly the proposition was acclaimed by teachers with 72 percent agreement. The remaining amount belonged to those who posed no idea, those with disagreement, and those with full disagreement, i.e. 11 percent, 11 percent, and 6 percent, respectively. Accordingly, teachers also believed that too much use of technologies would affect students’ motivation.
Item 10 touched on the matter of making students do too much homework by teachers and that it could decrease students’ motivation. Observing Table 10, one can realize that students favored this idea by showing 64 percent of agreement with it. Those who opposed it were 22 percent and 15 percent marked no idea regarding the issue declared. In contrary, teachers emphatically rejected that forcing students to do lots of homework can result in students’ motivation to fall. Only 12 percent of teachers accepted the assumption and 11 percent were neither for nor against it.

Table 11: Teachers’ monotonous and noncreative methods of teaching are responsible for decreasing students’ academic motivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>groups</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Percentage</td>
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<td>49</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>100</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next item suggested teachers’ noncreative and monotonous trend of teaching as a source of students’ loss of motivation. According to Table 11, students’ feedback was 49 percent agreement and 32 percent full agreement. 12 percent indicated no idea. Altogether, 7 percent were against the notion proposed. Likewise, teachers’ reaction to the assumption in item 11 was 39 percent agreement and 22 percent full agreement. 11 percent appeared to be neutral and 28 percent of teachers did not believe in the proposition already cited. So, both students and teachers thought of Iranian high school teachers’ methods of teaching as not various and creative, 79 percent and 61 percent, respectively.

Table 12: Administering excessive exams with short time intervals is another cause of students’ academic demotivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>groups</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Frequency</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>61</td>
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</table>
To see if giving students too many tests in short time intervals leaves any effect on diminishing students’ motivation, item 12 was put forth. The results of table 12 show that 51 percent of students were in agreement with the idea and 20 percent gave full agreement reply. Only 7 percent turned out to be impartial. And, 15 percent and 7 percent were respectively disagreed and fully disagreed with what stated under item 12. Teachers similarly were 39 percent agreed and 28 fully agreed with the hypothesis just cited. Again 6 percent marked no idea and 28 percent of teachers went against the role of the element mentioned. Therefore, both students (71%) and teachers (67%) were for the assumption that administering excessive exams with short time intervals is another cause of students’ academic demotivation.

Table 13: Uncompetitive atmosphere of classrooms enhances students’ academic demotivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>groups</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>Percentage</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rationale behind the following item was to extract participants’ responses on the issue saying classrooms free from competition gives rise to students’ academic demotivation. Table 13 clearly signifies the support of the idea by students with 41 percent agreed and 17 fully agreed. Impartial students formed 19 percent of responses. Those who were disagreed emerged as 10 percent and fully disagreed ones composed 12 percent of responses. The very idea just stated received 50 percent agreement and 17 percent full agreement from teachers. Impartial teachers were 11 percent. And, 23 percent of teachers did not favor the idea came in item 13. In a word, students (58%) and teachers (67%) compromised with uncompetitive atmosphere of classrooms as a demotivator force on the part of the students.

Table 14: The opportunity provided for some students to carry on their higher education without passing nationwide entrance examination leaves negative effects on ether students’ academic motivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>groups</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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Some students in Iranian schools abroad find a chance to run on their higher education without passing entrance exam. Item 14 tried to find out participants’ notions on this idea as a negative factor associated with students’ motivation. Observing Table 14, we see 44 percent of students showed to be impartial. 29 percent agreed with the idea and 27 percent did not believe in the factor proposed. Teachers were also of 50 percent neutrality, 33 percent support and 17 percent opposition regarding the assumption stated in item 14. Consequently, students (44%) and teachers (50%) both showed no for or against position on the idea put forth here.

Table 15: Cultural and religious clashes between source and target nations play role in students’ academic demotivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Frequency &amp; Percentage</th>
<th>Fully Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>No Idea</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Fully Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students</td>
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<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
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<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last item traced the probable effect of cultural and religious differences and clashes on students’ academic motivation. Based on the statistics from Table 15, students (56%) rejected the role of the factor cited. 37 percent of students came up with no idea position and only 7 percent showed their compromise with the assumption. As to teachers’ feedback, they (67%) conversely believed in part cultural and religious clashes play in lowering students’ motivation. 11 percent formed the impartial group and 23 percent were in agreement with the suggested idea.

7. Discussion

Recall from the data analyzed and explained in the previous section, the study now tends to illustrate the most effective elements which have been considered to play role in weakening academic motivation in Iranian high school students abroad with reference to attitudes and evaluation of students and teachers as two participants of the study.
Figure 1. Ranking of the factors linked with students’ demotivation from students’ perspective.

As Figure 1 portrays, in the eye of students, lack of a standard place for school to provide adequate space for classes and other activities (90%) accounts for the most basic source of demotivation in Iranian high school abroad. Another major reason highlighted by students was associated with insufficient programs on extracurricular group and fun activities in and out of school (89%). Observing the statistics in Figure 1, we will see students (86%) stated that their school does not supply required equipment and facilities and this was characterized as an influencing factor linked with students’ demotivation. Further, students (81%) believed teachers fail to make use of creative and various techniques and methods of teaching. As a result, it is able to enhance fall of academic motivation on the part of students. Of the remarkable considerations by students refers to situations where there is no expert counselor to guide students in their studies as well as help them resolve their problems in different areas. 73 percent of students posed this issue as a demotivator. Still Students complained of two more sources of demotivation, namely being forced to take too many exams (71%) and carry out too much of homework (64%). The way teachers cope with students, as another factor under consideration, was evaluated by students (59%) to play a negative role pertaining to students’ academic motivation. In relation to the atmosphere of the class, students’ reaction (58%) showed the role of classes free from competition as another cause of demotivation in students. The study aimed at extracting students’ viewpoints on the adverse impact of overuse of the Internet, games, mobiles, and other technologies on their motivation, 54 percent of
them took this factor as a demotivator. Moreover, as one of the less emphasized factors, being away from family, relatives, and friends received 44 percent in students’ perception. In light of poor emotional and affection interaction between parents and students, students gave 42 percent reaction. Since teachers in foreign schools are assigned to teach subjects not within their skills and knowledge, the study investigated students’ standpoint on this issue. They accordingly responded 37 percent to it. Finally, the last two factors with the least emphasis based on students’ evaluation appeared to be the effect of some students’ chance to following their higher education without taking entrance exam and the role of clashes between source and target culture and religion, 29 percent and 8 percent, respectively.

Figure 2. Ranking of the factors linked with students’ demotivation from teachers’ perspective.

The other group of respondents, as noted previously, was teachers. Their reactions to 15 items under study are demonstrated in Figure 2 below. As true with students, teachers (94%) thought of lack of a standard school in terms of its space and physical environment as the most significant factor which affects students’ academic motivation adversely. The second major reason in teachers’ idea was living in a place off family, friends, and relatives (89%). Unlike students’ position, teachers (83%) gave special attention to the negative impact of having teacher teach subject not within their expertise. Next, teachers (78%), almost like students, believed that shortage of enough facilities and equipment stands as a demotivator regarding students’ motivation. Whereas poor affection relationships between parents and students received low emphasis by students, teachers (77%) took it seriously. Again a considerable number of teachers (72%) said that overuse of modern technologies play a role
in dropping the amount of motivation in high school students. Measuring four factors by the teachers yielded the same result, i.e. (67%). The factors dealt with insufficient extracurricular activities, uncompetitive atmosphere of classes, cultural and religious clashes, and excessive implementation of exams which were believed to undermine students’ motivation. An area teachers themselves agreed with its bad effect on motivation originated in the way teachers present materials and their methods and techniques which was shown (61%) to be not creative and various. In contrary to the previous group, lack of an experienced counselor at school did not stand out (39%) as a cause of decreasing students’ motivation. Likewise, teachers’ tough manners, as alleged by the study as a demotivator, received less emphasis by teachers (39%). Further, teachers’ reaction to the opportunity of continuing education in college for some students without passing entrance exam and its negative influence on students’ motivation resembled the attitude of the first group (33%). And, the item dealing with doing too much homework as a source of diminishing students’ academic motivation was believed by teachers (12%) to be the weakest and the least related area to having role in this issue.

8. Conclusion
The major concern of this study was to scrutinize the loss of academic motivation attributed to Iranian high school students abroad. Relying on students and teachers’ reactions to the questionnaire, the highly influential factor which gives rise to students’ demotivation was characterized as lack of an appropriate space allocated for school where students can enjoy a suitable place for their classrooms, break times, sport activities, etc. This very finding is consistent with that of Ghaemi’s (2011) study in which this factor was shown to be effective in lowering motivation. As to other items of the questionnaire, students and teachers’ responses were dissimilar. The other sources of reducing students’ motivation which were significantly emphasized by students included the dearth of extracurricular activities allowing students to have fun and join group programs; shortage of equipment and facilities required by different courses; and the quality of teaching methods assessed as not creative and various enough. In terms of pedagogy, the findings of this study go with Ghaemi’s (2011) investigation in which the role of pedagogy was indicated as a cause of demotivation. Moreover, students, to a rather high extent, found the state of demotivation in the need to have an experienced counselor to consult with in any area related, in being under pressure to take undue exams, and doing too much homework. There still exist elements with less
emphasis, as perceived by students, to be responsible for the issue intended. Teachers’ strict manners, class atmosphere with no sense of competition, living off hometown, overuse of modern technologies were other demotivators. In relation to teachers’ behavior and its importance in students’ motivation, Gorham, et al.’s (1992) study indicated the negative teacher behavior to be central to students’ demotivation. Yet, students’ standpoint went against the role of cultural and religious differences as a reason for afflicting students’ motivation.

Unlike students’ reactions, teachers focused on areas which received less attention by students. Teachers conspicuously linked students’ demotivation in Iranian high school abroad to the effect of being away from hometown. Similarly, they believed in the negative consequence of assigning teachers to teach courses out of their expertise. Poor interactions between parents and students, shortage of facilities, and excessive use of the Internet and other technologies were among the rather highly significant factors to diminishing students’ motivation in teachers’ perspective. Considering parents-student interactions, teachers’ perception is in tune with that of Mosavi Shoshtari’s (1992) survey showing the positive correlation between high motivation in students and good interactions between parents and students. Except for cultural and religious clashes, like students, teachers agreed with the influence of insufficient extracurricular programs, too many exams, uncompetitive classes, and noncreative methods of teaching as other important incentives pertaining to demotivation. As stated before, Marzie, et al.’s (2009) study also referred to cultural and social problems as reasons for loss of students’ motivation. Unlike students, teachers displayed rather poor agreement with the absence of a counselor, teachers’ tough behavior, and the chance for some students to continue their higher education without passing entrance exams as thrust of demotivation in students. Finally, what received approximately high significance by students to be a demotivator appeared to be the least effective factor in teachers’ idea, i.e. having students do too much homework and its negative effect on their motivation.

As a social concern, rather than an individual issue, the loss of motivation associated with students in the long run will affect students’ destiny, school’s overall performance, and parents’ accountability and more importantly the community in such a way that if this problem weren’t diagnosed and treated or minimized, its damage and detrimental impacts would be beyond expectation. In accordance with the results of the present study, if we are to alleviate the very issue of demotivation in the sensitive and specific context of Iranian schools abroad, the most vital step would be providing an appropriate place for schools
matched with standards of an acceptable school. Further, it is felt necessary to organize extra enjoyable and fun activities in addition to the routine schedule of instruction. This, of course, depends on the previously mentioned requisite and if done, it might redress students’ sense of loneliness teachers believed in. Another area which demands particular attention is to provide equipment and required facilities so that theory and practice in any field would go together. Teachers, as Wilson (2005) highlights, are also recommended to improve on not only their teaching and evaluation techniques and methods, but their behaving students in a more appealing way as well as encouraging students to be in positive and constant competition with one another. Officials also should not neglect the need for a counselor at such schools; therefore, they are required to pave the way for the realization of this important aspect. As the last word, parents are of a paramount role in raising motivation in their students via establishing intimate relationships and applying different strategies to take students away from destructive factors to their motivation.

As true with any research study, the present study faced confinement and limitation throughout the course of the investigation. The most salient one was availability of a limited number of students and teachers as the sample of the survey. Due to this shortcoming, it was next to impossible to get to know about the evaluation and perception of students and teachers in Iranian schools in other parts of the world in association with the issue of students’ demotivation. Hence, future projects are expected to reappraise the problem covering a wider range of population and dealing with more aspects and factors which might affect loss of students’ motivation in Iranian schools abroad.

References


Cross-cultural Pragmatics of Bilingualism

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Biodata

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Abstract

This research is an attempt to investigate the effect of bilingualism on the strategies used in 10 speech acts of requesting, apologizing, expressing gratitude, suggesting, congratulating, complaining, commiserating, giving bad news, declining an invitation, and disagreeing performed by Persian-English bilinguals (n=14) in comparison with the native strategies examined in the study of Authors (2012). The performance of these speech acts by Iranian English majors (n=14) having high level of English language proficiency is inspected as well. Another issue explored in this research is the effect of formality on the performance of these speech acts. Moreover, gender as moderator variable is also probed. Discourse Completion Test (DCT) and interview were used as data collection instruments. The results demonstrated that both Persian-English bilinguals and Iranian English majors used formulaic expressions and sets of strategies in performing the aforementioned speech acts. However, in some cases, a few participants did not know the formulaic expressions and they used an expression just to convey the meaning. Formality of the situation and gender differences were observed by Iranian English majors especially in the Persian responses. Formality
of the situation was highly observed by Persian-English bilinguals; however, gender differences were not considered.

**Keywords:** Speech act, Speech act theory, Pragmatics, Bilingual, English major

1. **Introduction**

Pragmatics is that branch of linguistics which studies invisible meaning. In fact, pragmatics focuses on "how we recognize what is meant even when it isn't actually said or written" (Yule, 2006, p. 112). The study of speech acts is one of the domains to investigate pragmatics and it is the main area of pragmatics in second language studies (Bardovi-Harlig, 2002). Speech act is "an utterance as a functional unit in communication." In Yule's (2006, p. 118) terms, a speech act is an "action performed by a speaker with an utterance" such as requesting, commenting, questioning, informing, etc.

Although a diversity of theoretical approaches and methodological frameworks has been used in the study of speech acts, a lot of fundamental issues have remained unanswered. The study of speech acts is thus still a central concern of pragmatics and cross-cultural pragmatics (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). As a result, the present research focuses on speech acts in the broad area of cross-cultural pragmatics which investigates how speakers from different cultures construct meaning and more specifically in the domain of contrastive pragmatics in which different cultural ways of speaking are analyzed (Yule, 1996). According to House-Edmondson (1986), cross-cultural pragmatics "is a field of inquiry which compares the ways in which two or more languages are used in communication" (cited in Barron, 2003, p. 23). In principle, studying speech acts from cross-cultural perspective pays attention to contrastive patterns of pragmatic features (Pütz & Neff-van Aertseelaer, 2008) and both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic aspects of language are considered (Barron, 2003). As noted by Afghari (2007, p. 178), cross-cultural studies of speech acts take into consideration not only linguistic but also cultural sides of language. In addition, "studies of speech acts need to move away from western languages and include as many non-western languages and cultures in their scope of study as possible."

One of the factors that affects the use of speech acts is bilingualism and many scholars have studied bilinguals in their use of speech acts (e.g., Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986; Walters, 1981; Zimin, 1981). There is no one definition for bilingualism and bilinguals (Baetens Beardsmore, 1986) due to multidimensional aspects of bilingualism. However, in general, it can be said that bilinguals are those who can speak two or more languages, to some level of proficiency (Bialystok, 2001). In Brown's (2007, p. 72) view, bilingualism is "learning two
first languages, and the key to success is in distinguishing separate contexts for the two languages." However, bilinguals usually use code-switching, i.e. "the act of inserting words, phrases, or even longer stretches of one language into the other."

The purpose of the present research is to investigate the effect of bilingualism on the strategies used in 10 speech acts of requesting, apologizing, expressing gratitude, suggesting, congratulating, complaining, commiserating, giving bad news, declining an invitation, and disagreeing performed by Persian-English bilinguals in comparison with the native strategies examined in the research of Authors (2012). The performance of these speech acts by Iranian English majors having high level of English language proficiency is inspected as well. Another issue explored in this research is the impact of formality on the performance of these speech acts. Moreover, gender as moderator variable (Mackey & Gass, 2005) is also probed. The present research addresses the following research questions: (1). Are there any differences due to bilingualism in the strategies used by Persian-English bilinguals in the speech acts of requesting, apologizing, expressing gratitude, suggesting, congratulating, complaining, commiserating, giving bad news, declining an invitation, and disagreeing in comparison with the native strategies? (2). Are there any differences due to being English major in the strategies used by Iranian English majors in the speech acts of requesting, apologizing, expressing gratitude, suggesting, congratulating, complaining, commiserating, giving bad news, declining an invitation, and disagreeing in comparison with the native strategies? (3). Are there any differences due to the degree of formality in these strategies used by Persian-English bilinguals and Iranian English majors? (4). Are there any gender differences in these strategies used by Persian-English bilinguals and Iranian English majors?

2. Background
Speech act theory is the brainchild of Austin (Gorman, 1999). Austin (1962, p. 18) believed that there are "some cases and senses...in which to say something is to do something; or in which by saying or in saying something we are doing something" such as making a promise or an apology. As stated by Liu (2011, p. 1802), this idea became the foundation of Austin's theory proposing that any utterance consists of three acts: (1) locutionary act which is "the actual words that the speaker is saying"; (2) illocutionary act which is "the intention of the speaker"; and (3) perlocutionary act which is "the effect of the utterance on the hearer." In Austin's (1962, p. 114) words, locutionary act is "roughly equivalent to uttering a certain sentence with a certain sense and reference" and so "roughly equivalent to 'meaning' in the
traditional sense." Illocutionary acts are "utterances which have a certain (conventional) force" like informing, ordering, warning, and so forth. Perlocutionary acts are "what we bring about or achieve by saying something" like convincing, persuading, deterring, etc. Thus, as Barron (2003, p. 12) mentioned, when we produce an utterance, "we not only say something about the world (locution), but we also perform an act (illocution) which we intend to have an effect on our interlocutor (perlocution)."

A great deal of empirical studies has been conducted to examine speech acts across different languages (e.g., Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; House, 1989; Olshtain, 1989). The speech acts of requesting and apologizing have received particular attention (such as Afghari, 2007; Barron, 2008; Blum-Kulka, 2003; Blum-Kulka & House, 1989; Eslami & Noora, 2008; Hendriks, 2008; Linnell et al., 1992; Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1984; Otcu & Zeyrek, 2008; Reiter, 2000; Salmani-Nodoushan, 2007) and, as Culpeper and Archer (2008) stated, the key work is Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP). This project was conducted by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989, p. 11) to investigate cross-cultural and intralingual variation in speech acts of request and apology. The rationale to study these two speech acts was that requests and apologies are face-threatening acts and so are often realized through indirect strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987); therefore, they were worthy of investigation. Moreover, some studies have explored the impact of bilingualism on the use of speech acts such as Blum-Kulka (1982, 1983), Eisenstein and Bodman (1986), Fraser and Nolen (1981), Walters (1981), and Zimin (1981).

Other speech acts such as thanking (Al-Falasi, 2007; Al-Khateeb, 2009; Morsi, 2010), complaining (Al-Tayib Umar, 2006; Boxer, 1995; Deveci, 2003; Ellwood, 2008; Murphy & Neu, 1995; Tanck, 2002; Yian, 2008), refusing an invitation (Beebe et al., 1990; Houck & Gass, 1995; Kinjo, 1987; Nelson et al., 2002), congratulating (Ellwood, 2004), suggesting (Banerjee & Carrell, 1988; Martinez-Flor, 2005), disagreeing (Guodong & Jing, 2005), sympathizing (Feyzi Behnagh, 2009), and giving bad news (Du, 1995) have been investigated as well. In some of these studies, a combination of speech acts has been explored; for instance, Du (1995) studied the speech acts of complaining, giving bad news, and disagreeing. Authors (2012) also investigated different speech acts of requesting, apologizing, expressing gratitude, suggesting, congratulating, complaining, commiserating, giving bad news, declining an invitation, and disagreeing together. The focus of the present research is also on speech acts to explore the impact of bilingualism on this domain.
3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

Two groups of participants attended the present research: (1) Persian-English bilinguals and (2) Native speakers of Persian whose major was English at university and so their English proficiency was high. It is worth noting that the preferred language (Dodson, 1981) of the Persian-English bilinguals of this research, which is "a substitute for the notions of dominant language, mother tongue or L1" (Baetens Beardsmore, 1986, p. 35), was Persian and English was the preferred language of only one participant. In fact, they could speak, read, and understand "two languages equally well (a balanced bilingual); however, they "had a better knowledge of one language than another" (Richards & Schmidt 2002, p. 51). The type of sampling employed in this research was purposive sampling. That is, the researchers "knowingly select individuals based on their knowledge of population and in order to elicit data in which they are interested" (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 122). A total of 28 participants comprised the sample of the current research. Each group had 14 members and half were female and half male. All the subjects were Iranian. The members of Group 2 were all English majors but the members of Group 1 had different educational backgrounds and varied in their fields of study and education level. The age of participants was not controlled and their age range was between 23 and 64. The mean age was 33.5 for the male and 28.83 for the female participants.

3.2. Instruments

3.2.1. Discourse Completion Test

Similar to numerous research (e.g., Banerjee & Carrell, 1988; Barron, 2008; Beebe et al., 1990; Blum-Kulka, 1982; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Takahashi & Beebe, 1987; Yian, 2008), this research employed Discourse Completion Test (DCT) as its main method of data elicitation. DCTs are written role play questionnaires (Beebe & Cummings, 1995, p. 65) on the basis of "everyday situations which are designed to elicit a specific speech act" (Barron, 2008, p. 363). After a short description of the situation, respondents are asked to write what they would have said in the situation (Dippold, 2008). Via DCTs, the performance of speech acts is compared cross-linguistically and cross-culturally. DCTs have at least three formats: (1) "dialogue completion tasks with rejoinders"; (2) "dialogue completion tasks without rejoinders"; and (3) "open questionnaires in which only the scenario is provided but no turns" (Bardovi-Harlig, 2002, p. 184). The present research employed the latter type of DCT. Kasper and Dahl (1991, p. 221) asserted that DCTs are "a much used and much criticized
elicitation format in cross-cultural and IL [interlanguage] pragmatics." Therefore DCTs have their own pros and cons. However, as Beebe and Cummings (1995) mentioned, excessive use of DCTs to collect data in speech act studies reveals that their advantages outweigh their disadvantages. In effect, although DCTs do not provide natural speech, they are a highly effective research tool and their continued use is supported while their weaknesses are acknowledged as well.

In the present research, DCTs, employed in Authors' (2012) research, one in English and one in Persian, were used to explore the effect of bilingualism on the strategies and patterns in 10 different speech acts including requesting, apologizing, expressing gratitude, suggesting, congratulating, complaining, commiserating, giving bad news, declining an invitation, and disagreeing in comparison with the native strategies. The participants of both groups received both Persian and English versions of the DCT and filled them out.

3.2.1.1. English Version of Discourse Completion Test
The English DCT was composed of 10 scenarios each of which consisted of an example of a situation. The respondents of the DCT were required to imagine themselves in the situation and provide answers to each scenario as natural as possible. Each scenario had four parts. First, the respondent was talking with a friend of him/her same sex. Second, the respondent was talking with a friend of him/her opposite sex. By friend, it was meant that there was a close relationship between the respondent and his/her friend. Third, the respondent was talking with a colleague of his/her same sex. Fourth, the respondent was talking with a colleague of his/her opposite sex. By colleague, it was meant that there was a formal relationship between the respondent and his/her colleague. In this way, the impact of gender and formality on the performance of the speech acts was investigated. The DCT also had a consent section to assure the participants of their anonymity and confidentiality of their responses.

3.2.1.2. Persian Version of Discourse Completion Test
To examine the effect of bilingualism on the strategies used in the speech acts performed by Persian-English bilinguals and Iranian English majors in comparison with the native strategies, a Persian DCT, which was the exact translation of the English version, was also utilized.

3.2.2. Interview
Rose and Ono (1995, p. 207) argued that "each data type will provide different information, so as many sources of data should be employed as possible." Barron (2003) also emphasized that triangulation; i.e., more than one data collection instrument, is needed to reduce any
possible task-bias and increase reliability and objectivity of the results. Contrary to DCT which is a controlled method of elicitation, interview is a free method of elicitation and allows participants to reflect on their own productions. Thus, for validity and reliability (following Al Falasi, 2007), at the end of the study, a semi-structured interview was carried out with a few of the participants to shed more light on the responses provided by them. The interviewees were selected randomly. Field notes were taken during the interviews for later analysis.

3.3. Data Collection and Data Analysis

All the participants of the research completed both English and Persian versions of DCT. At the end, a few of the participants were selected randomly and interviewed to shed more light on their responses.

According to Cohen (1996, p. 385), "the first concern of SLA researchers has been to arrive at the set of realization patterns typically used by native speakers of the target language." To uncover such sets of patterns, the collected data in this research were coded mainly on the basis of Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) CCSARP coding scheme with some modifications (following Afghari, 2007).

CCSARP coding scheme considered utterance(s) or sequences of utterances as the unit of analysis (Blum-Kulka & House, 1989). Afterwards, each utterance was analyzed into the following segments modified by Afghari (2007, p. 179): (1) "Address term or (Alerters)"; (2) "Head act"; and (3) "Adjunct(s) to head act." Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) defined head act as the minimal unit which can realize a speech act and alerter as an opening element which alerts the Hearer's attention to the ensuing speech act. Adjunct to head act or "supportive move," in Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989, p. 287) terms, is a unit external to the Head Act occurring either before or after it. Afghari (2007, p. 179) provided an example: "Mark, I'm sorry, I had to go to the hospital" in which "Mark" is address term, "I'm sorry" is head act, and "I had to go to the hospital" is adjunct to head act.

Therefore, the data collected through DCTs were analyzed with the use of the modified CCSARP coding scheme and the analysis was based on an independent examination of each response. Frequency of distribution of the strategies used in each speech act was reported as well (following Afghari, 2007). In line with Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and Barron (2003), misunderstood answers and non-completed items were discarded and treated as missing values. At the end of the research, a few participants were interviewed randomly. The filed notes, taken during the interviews, and received emails were classified for analysis. It is
worth mentioning that the Persian data were transcribed according to IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) symbols.

4. Results

The results of the research can be categorized into the two following sections: Discourse Completion Tests and interview.

4.1. Discourse Completion Tests

The results here are the ones based on the Discourse Completion Tests completed by English and Persian native speakers.

4.1.1. Persian-English Bilinguals

4.1.1.1. Strategies for Requesting

4.1.1.1.1. English Responses

The ability modal ("can/could"), willingness modal ("would it be possible/would it be ok"), possibility modal ("may"), and mind modal ("would you mind") were used to make indirect requests in question forms. Table 1 shows the frequency of each strategy. However, some direct requests were made too (e.g., "Listen I'm gonna need your laptop for a couple of hours"). In Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989, 280) words, such a strategy is preparatory which is "the utterance contains reference to a preparatory condition for the feasibility of the Request, typically one of ability, willingness, or possibility." The majority of the responses (65%) had "grounders" which are reasons, explanations, or justifications. The other adjunct was expressing gratitude ("thank you"). One of the male participants used the "politeness marker" of "please" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 277). Both female and male participants employed a more formal language (e.g., "would you mind" rather than "can/could") in formal situations and gender differences were considered by two female respondents and a more formal language was adopted when talking to the opposite sex. For the rest of the participants, gender differences were not of concern.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Frequency of Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can/could</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you mind</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would it be possible/ok</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.1.1.2. Persian Responses

The ability modal ("mitunæm" ["can I"]) and possibility modal ("momkene/emkanaf hæst" ["is it possible"] and "æge mifê" ["if it is possible"]) were employed to make indirect requests
in question forms. The most frequent modal was "mitunæm" (60%). Direct requests were used as well like in "bebin un lætpeto bede 2 sæt nijæzef daraem" ("look give me your laptop I need it for 2 hours"). Just one male participant provided explanation for his request. Other adjuncts were expressing gratitude ("deestet/tun deerd nækone" ["thank you"]), apologizing for disturbing ("bebæxid mozæhem fodaem" ["forgive me for disturbing"]) and promising to return the laptop as soon as possible ("særi bærmærdunæm" ["I will return very soon"]). Both females and males employed a more formal language (e.g., the use of "lotfæn" ["please"] as politeness marker and the use of "fomæ" [formal "you"] in formal situations. Gender differences were considered by two respondents, one male and one female, and a more formal language was adopted when talking to their opposite sex. For the rest of the participants, gender differences were not of concern.

4.1.1.2. Strategies for Apologizing

4.1.1.2.1. English Responses

The apologies were explicitly stated by all the respondents and "sorry" was the most frequent IFID (illocutionary force indicating device) with the frequency of 70%. The adjunct to the head act of "sorry" was mainly grounders such as traffic and accident. "Intensifiers" were utilized by both male and female respondents (such as "very sorry," "so sorry," "really sorry"). The "emotional expression" of "Oh my God!" was used by two female respondents when apologizing the friend of their same sex (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 290). "Please forgive me" and "I apologize" were used in formal situations. Gender differences did not create significant difference in the responses.

4.1.1.2.2. Persian Responses

"bebæxid" ("forgive me") was the most frequent head act (60%). The other head acts were "færmaænde" ("I'm embarrassed"), "mazeræt mixæm" ("I apologize"), "moteæsefæm" ("I'm sorry"), "ozr mixæm" ("I apologize"), and "ozrxæhi mikonæm" ("I apologize"). To apologize formally, "moteæsefæm," "ozr mixæm," and "ozrxæhi mikonæm" were employed. The intensifiers like "væææm" ("really") and "xeæli" ("very") were also used. In general, talking to the opposite sex, a more formal language was utilized by all the respondents. The emotional expression of "væi" ("oh") was used by a female respondent when apologizing the friend of her same sex. Nevertheless, generally, gender differences did not make any significant difference.

4.1.1.3. Strategies for Thanking

4.1.1.3.1. English Responses
"Thanks/thank you" were the head acts with the frequency of 85%. The main adjunct to the head act was hoping to do something in return (e.g., "I hope I can make it up to you" and "I hope I can return the favor"). Moreover, respondents expressed their inability to thank like in "I can't thank you enough for doing this" and "I don't know how I can thank you." In general, formality did not lead to any difference. However, "I appreciate" and "I would like to thank you" were more formal strategies employed to express gratitude. The gender differences were also not of concern.

4.1.1.3.2. Persian Responses

"mæmnun" ("thanks"), "mersi" ("thanks"), "daæstet dærd nækone" (the idiom meaning "thank you"), "moteʃækeræm" ("thank you"), "lof kærdid/kærdi" ("you did a favor"), and "sepæsgozæram" ("I appreciate") were the head acts. The most frequent of these IFIDs was "mæmnun" (45%). "dustæm" ("my friend") was used as an alerter by a female respondent talking to her friends. "æzizæm" ("my dear") was another alerter used by a female participant thanking her same sex friend. "mæmnun," "mersi," "daæstet dærd nækone," "lof kærdi" were used to thank informally. "moteʃækeræm," "sepæsgozæram," and "lof kærdid" were formal strategies to thank in formal situations. Gender differences were not highly considered; however, one of the female participants used "elæhi fædæt faæm" when thanking the friend of her same sex. This is an expression employed by females literally meaning that "I die for you."

4.1.1.4. Strategies for Suggesting

4.1.1.4.1. English Responses

Most of the suggestions (60%) were in question form with the use of "want statements" (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, 279) such as "would you like" in formal situations and "do you want" in informal situations. The informal strategies to make suggestions were in imperative form as well like in "Let's go to cinema." "Humor" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 294) was also used by a female respondent: "Cinema is a great place to get some good sleep." No gender differences were found.

4.1.1.4.2. Persian Responses

Half of the suggestions (50%) were direct when talking to the friends of both same and opposite sex with the main head act of "biʃæ berim sinæmæ" ("Let's go to cinema") with the frequency of 80%. Want statements ("dust darin" ["do you like"]) were used to make indirect suggestions in question form in formal situations. Gender differences were not of concern and created no significant difference.
4.1.1.5. Strategies for Congratulating

4.1.1.5.1. English Responses

Exclamation mark as the orthographic emphasis was used by the majority of the participants. "Congratulations" was the head act with the frequency of 65%. The adjunct to the head act was expressing the happiness of the speaker for the hearer (e.g., "I'm so happy for you") and wishing happiness for the hearer such as "I do wish you all the best," "I hope God blesses this marriage and it lasts forever," and "I wish you happiness and a satisfying life together." In informal situations, "congrats" was used. The emotional expression of "Ahhh!" was mentioned by a female congratulating to the friend of her same sex. Humor was also used by a male respondent when talking to the friend of his same sex: "You finally got caught." On the whole, gender differences were not considered. Less formal language was utilized when talking to the friends.

4.1.1.5.2. Persian Responses

"mobæræke" ("congrats") with the frequency of 15% and "tæbrik migæm/aerz mikonæm" (literal translation is "I congratulate") with the frequency of 65% were the head acts. The adjunct was mainly wishing happiness such as "xoʃbæxtʃi" ("you will be happy"). Humor was used by one of the female respondents when talking to the colleague of her same sex: "qeøme æxæretun bʃe!!" (this expression is used to condole and here it is ironically used as humor). Gender differences made no significant difference for the majority of the respondents. However, the alerter of "æzizæm" ("my dear") was employed by two female participants when congratulating the friend of their same sex. Formality of the situation caused some differences in the responses; for instance, "tæbrik ærz mikonæm" and "tæbrike sæmimæneje mæræ bepæzirid" ("accept my sincere congratulations") were stated in formal situations.

4.1.1.6. Strategies for Complaining

4.1.1.6.1. English Responses

All the respondents made direct complaints when talking to their friends regardless of their gender like in "You are always late, it frustrates me." All the male participants employed direct complaints when talking to their colleagues of both same and opposite sex as well. Indirect complaints were used by female participants in formal situations (e.g., "What time were we supposed to meet?"). Humor was a tool for complaining for a female respondent when talking to the friend of her opposite sex: "Why is it that women are always on time and men aren't?" So, formality of the situation created difference only for responses provided by female participants. Gender differences were not of concern.

4.1.1.6.2. Persian Responses
All the respondents directly made their complaints when talking to the friends of their same sex like "bæz ke to dir umædi" ("You are late again"). The responses of one female respondent were all direct regardless of gender and formality of the situation. However, the language of the direct complaints was more formal (e.g., the use of "lotfæn" ["please"]) when talking to the colleagues. On the other hand, a male respondent provided indirect responses to complain regardless of gender and formality of the situation. It is worth mentioning that most of the indirect responses were ironic like "bele haemîfe dir tærif mijarin" ("yes you are always late"), "beleæare tærif avordin?" ("at last you come"), and "æz didæretun här tfiend haemtfoň haemîfe dir xofhalem!!" ("I'm happy to meet you though as usual it is late!!"). The most indirect complaint was mentioned by a female participant: "I do not say anything. I just look at my watch." Gender differences were not considered except by one female respondent providing an indirect complaint with the use of formal language when talking to the friend of her opposite sex. Formality of the situation caused the use of a more formal language but it did not completely prevent from direct complaints. It is worth mentioning that one female respondent used English vocabulary in her Persian response: "mîfe lotfæn on time tær bșfiđ?" ("Is it possible to be more one time?") which is called "code mixing" (Hudson, 1996, p. 53).

4.1.1.7. Strategies for Condoling

4.1.1.7.1. English Responses

"I'm sorry," with the frequency of 65%, was the head act mentioned by both male and female respondents and mostly intensified by "so," "very," "terribly," "truly," and "really." The adjunct to the head act was the offering of any help (e.g., "I'm here for you" and "Anything I can do for you?"). No significant difference was observed regarding gender. However, one female respondent used "Ohhh myy God" as emotional expression and mentioned that she would hug and kiss when condoling the friend of her same sex. Some of the respondents used a more formal language when commiserating with their colleagues: "My condolences to you and your family."

4.1.1.7.2. Persian Responses

"tæslijæt migæm" (the literal translation is "I condole") was the most frequent IFID (45%). Other strategies were: "xoda ræhmæte(fun) kone/biamorzæte(fun)" ("God may bless her"), "qæme æxæretun bșfe" (the literal translation is "hope this be your last sorrow"), and "moteæsefæm/moteæser fðæm" ("I'm sorry"). Formal language was used when talking to the colleagues of both same and opposite sex. On the other hand, both male and female respondents employed a more intimate and sympathizing language with the friends of their same sex. For instance, a female respondent mentioned that she would hug and kiss when
condoling the friend of her same sex. The alerters "dustæm" ("my friend") and "æzïæm" ("my dear") were used by female respondents when talking to the friend of their same sex. Thus, in general, gender differences created some difference in the responses.

4.1.1.8. Strategies for Giving Bad News

4.1.1.8.1. English Responses

All the respondents, except one male participant who gave the bad news by asking questions ("How is your brother? Heard from him lately?"), directly delivered the bad news. The adjuncts were "Don't worry," "Don't panic," "He is ok," and "Fortunately he is well." Both gender differences and formality of the situation did not create any significant difference.

4.1.1.8.2. Persian Responses

The majority of the bad news was delivered directly by both males and females. Only one male respondent indirectly delivered the bad news in question form: "æz bæråææ xææær dæri?" ("heard from your brother?"). The main adjunct was "negær ʌn næʃo/næʃid" ("don't worry"). One of the female participants refused to perform any speech acts to give bad news to the colleagues of both same and opposite sex. Thus, formality of the situation created difference in the responses. Not only did it cause a respondent not to perform any speech act, it also made responses to be more formal. Gender was not of great concern. It is worth noting that one of the male participants used "tæs ʌdof dæʃæn" instead of "tæs ʌdof kærdæn" which is the literal translation of "have an accident" from English into Persian. Another female respondent code-mixed and used "ok" in her Persian response: "vaæli hæme ok hæstæn" ("but everybody is ok").

4.1.1.9. Strategies for Declining an Invitation

4.1.1.9.1. English Responses

The invitation was directly declined by all the participants like "I can't make it." Thanking for being invited (e.g., "Thank you for inviting me"), congratulating (e.g., "Congratulations"), wishing happiness (e.g., "I wish you the best"), apologizing (e.g., "I'm afraid"), justifying (e.g., "I'm not in town that day"), and expressing pity by female respondents (e.g., "Ahhhh. This always happens to me," "oh no," "no no nooooooo" followed by a sad emoticon) were the main adjuncts. In general, gender differences did not create significant difference; however, female respondents used a more intimate and emotional language when declining the invitation of the friend of their same sex. For example, a female participant mentioned "tears" when talking to the friend of same sex. A more formal language was adopted in formal situations like "my sincere apologies."

4.1.1.9.2. Persian Responses
The invitation was directly declined by all the participants like "nemitunæm bijam" ("I can't come"). The adjuncts were apologizing, expressing pity, thanking for the invitation, and congratulating with wise happiness. Gender differences caused no significant difference in the responses. Formality of the situation however created difference and the respondents used a more formal language to decline the invitation in formal situations.

4.1.1.10. Strategies for Disagreeing

4.1.1.10.1. English Responses

The disagreements were mostly direct (60%) like in "No way, houses are way better." Reasons were provided to persuade the hearer such as "Over time the house will appreciate whereas the value of an apartment might devalue." Formality of the situation created a significant difference. "Insults" (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, 288) were even used when talking with a friend of same sex by a female participant ("You must be crazy!"); whereas, when talking to a colleague, a more formal, polite, conservative, and indirect language was employed like "I don't think I agree with that...." Considering gender, no significant difference was found.

4.1.1.10.2. Persian Responses

Direct disagreements were provided for the friends of both same and opposite sex like "mæn intor fekr nemikonæm" ("I don't think like that"). Insults were used too such as "divunei?" ("Are you crazy?"). The majority of indirect disagreements (70%), when talking to the colleagues, were provided by offering the opposite view without mentioning the direct disagreement like "be næzære mæn..." ("in my opinion..."). The adjuncts were justifications and providing reasons to persuade the hearer like "Houses are more convenient and much bigger." Gender differences were generally not of concern. However, insults were used when talking to the friends of the same sex. So, formality of the situation led to some difference in the responses.

4.1.2. English Majors

4.1.2.1. Strategies for Requesting

4.1.2.1.1. English Responses

The majority of the requests was indirect (75%) and made via the use of ability modal ("can/could"), willingness modal ("would you possibly..." and "is it possible"), and mind modals ("would you mind"). Two male participants used direct requests and one of them added the politeness marker of "please": "Please lend me your laptop for two hours." Grounder was only used by a few of the participants to explain their request. Gender
differences were not of concern. Formality of the situation led to the use of a more formal language like "would you mind."

4.1.2.1.2. Persian Responses
Most of the requests were indirect and in question form (95%). To make the indirect requests, the ability modal ("mitunæm" ["can I"]), willingness modal ("æge momkene" ["if it is possible"] and "mife" ["is it possible"]), and mind modals ("would you mind") were used. Just a female respondent provided grounder for her request. Humor was utilized by a male participant regardless of gender and formality of the situation; for example, "læptpepeto edzare midi?!" ("Do you rent your laptop?") when talking to the friend of his same sex and "læptpe fomaro ye raz bedozdim tfi mife? ("If I steal your laptop for a day, what will happen?") when talking to the colleague of the opposite sex. However, for the rest of the participants, formality of the situation made responses to be more formal and polite. For all the female respondents, gender created difference too and they used formal language when talking not only to the colleague but also to the friend of the opposite sex. To male participants, gender was not of concern.

4.1.2.2. Strategies for Apologizing
4.1.2.2.1. English Responses
The most frequent head act was "sorry" (75%). Only two male participants provided adjunct to the head act which was the reason for being late, traffic, in formal situations. Intensifiers were utilized by both male and female respondents (such as "really sorry," "so sorry," "very sorry," and "terribly sorry"). One of the female participants acknowledged her responsibility through the "explicit self-blame": "I'm late. I know." Another female respondent "concerned for the hearer": "Did I keep you waiting for long?" (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, 290-293). Gender differences did not create significant difference in the responses. Formality of the situation did not create any difference too; however, one female respondent used a more formal language when apologizing the colleague of her opposite sex: "I do apologize to keep you waiting so long." It is worth noting that there were some grammatical mistakes (e.g., a* bad traffic) and misspellings (e.g., stock* in traffic) in the responses. "I'm shameful" was used by a male respondent which is the literal translation of "ʃærmændæm" from Persian into English.

4.1.2.2.2. Persian Responses
"bebæxfid" ("forgive me"), "mæzeræt mixæm" ("I apologize"), "ʃærmændæm" ("I'm embarrassed"), and "ozr mixæm" ("I apologize") were the head acts to make explicit apologies. The most frequent head act was "bebæxfid" (54%). The grounders were used to
justify the delay such as traffic by some of the male and female respondents. One of the female respondents concerned for the hearer: "omidvaram zijad moaetel naeode bʃid" ("I hope you have not been waiting so long"). In formal situations, a more formal language was adopted like "ozr mixam." Gender differences did not cause significant difference.

4.1.2.3. Strategies for Thanking

4.1.2.3.1. English Responses

"Thanks/thank you" were the head acts with the frequency of 91%. The adjuncts were: "It was of great help," "It was very kind of you," and "I owe you a favor." Gender differences did not make significant difference. However, female respondents used a more intimate language when thanking the friend of their same sex; for instance, one female used "honey" as alerter. Formality of the situation did not lead to any difference in the responses. Just a female respondent used "I'd like to express my gratitude" when talking to the colleague of her opposite sex.

4.1.2.3.2. Persian Responses

The head acts were "maemnum" ("thanks"), "mersi" ("thanks"), "daestet dærd nækone" (an idiom meaning "thanks"), "lotf kærdi/kærdin" ("you did a favor") and "moteʃekekerem" ("thank you"). The most frequent head act was "lotf kærdi/kærdid" (54%). The main adjunct was: "dʒobran mikonæm" ("I will do something in return") with the frequency of 29%. Gender differences were considered by the respondents. Female participants used a more formal language when talking to the opposite sex. Male respondents used a more intimate language when thanking the friend of their same sex. Formality of the situation also caused difference in the responses. "lotf kærdid" and "moteʃekekerem" were employed in formal situations.

4.1.2.4. Strategies for Suggesting

4.1.2.4.1. English Responses

Most of the suggestions (75%) were indirectly made in question form such as "What do you think of going to the cinema?" "How about the cinema?" and "Do you like films?" However, the suggestions were directly made by all the respondents when talking to the friend of their same sex: "Let's go to the cinema!" So, gender differences and formality of the situation caused some difference in the responses.

4.1.2.4.2. Persian Responses

Both male and female respondents made their suggestion directly when they talked with the friend of their same sex and the main head act was "berim sinæm" ("Let's go to cinema") with the frequency of 65%. Regarding the friend of their opposite sex and their colleagues,
they asked about their opinion (e.g., "ناژئرتن راژه بسینما تفیه؟" ["What's your opinion about cinema?"]). Formal language and indirect suggestions in the form of questions were mainly found in responses to the opposite sex.

4.1.2.5. Strategies for Congratulating

4.1.2.5.1. English Responses

"Congratulations" was the main head act with the frequency of 54%. The adjunct to the head act was wishing happiness such as "I wish you a happy, long-lasting marriage." Exclamation mark was used in most of the responses and a female participant used a smiling emoticon when congratulating her friends of both same and opposite sex. Formality of the situation created difference; for instance, "congrats" was used in informal situations and "congratulations" and "Please accept my warmest congratulations on your marriage" were some examples of congratulating in formal situations. Gender differences affected the answers too. Both male and female respondents employed a more intimate and informal language when they congratulated the friend of their same sex. One of the male respondents even used humor: "You are dead, you are gone!" Another male respondent used emotional expression of "oh" followed by the humor: "Finally you got into it." Nevertheless, for a female and a male respondent, neither formality nor gender created any difference in the responses. It is worth noting that some of the respondents did not use "s" after "congratulations" and "congrats."

4.1.2.5.2. Persian Responses

The head acts were "مبارک/مبارک بَش" ("congrats") and "تبریک/تبریک ارزبارک" (the literal translation is "I congratulate"). The adjunct was mainly wishing happiness. Gender differences were considered by both male and female participants. A female participant used the alerter of "آزیم" ("my dear") and emotional expression of "وات" ("oh") when congratulating the friend of her same sex. A male participant also used humor when congratulating the friend of his same sex: "اذا تبریک، تسلیت، طلیت، هَلوا!" (the literal translation is "Mr! Congrats, condolences, sweet, halwa" meaning that by getting married you get into trouble). Formal language was used in formal situations like "تبریک ارزبارک." 4.1.2.6. Strategies for Complaining

4.1.2.6.1. English Responses

All the respondents made direct complaints when talking to their friends of both same and opposite sex like "You are always late." A male participant even threatened the friend of his same sex: "I won't wait a minute next time!" His complaint was ironic when talking to the
friend of his opposite sex: "Come on! I have time yet! I can wait more!" A female respondent used a sad emoticon when complaining to her colleagues. Formality of the situation led to providing indirect complaints especially in question forms like "It seems a bit late. Don't you think so?"

4.1.2.6.2. Persian Responses

The majority of the complaints were directly made (58%) regardless of the formality of the situation and gender differences. However, although the complaints were direct, the language became formal and more polite in formal situations. Male participants used ironic language when talking to their friends: "hαλα βudίm mοntæezεrε džεnαbetuν!" (meaning that we can still wait) and "fεkr kοnαm dιr kεrđi, nε!" ("I think you are late, aren't you!"). Gender did not create any significant difference.

4.1.2.7. Strategies for Condoling

4.1.2.7.1. English Responses

"Sorry" was the most frequent head act (50%). "Please accept my sincere condolences" was mainly used in formal situations though a female respondent used it in informal situations as well. Gender differences were not of concern. A male respondent refused to express his sympathy with the friend of his same sex by speech acts. He preferred "silence" and conveyed his sympathy through the "gestures" of his face. Grammatical mistakes were also found in the responses such as "I really* am sorry about that." The emotional expression of "oh" was utilized by a male respondent when condoling the friend of his same sex. Intensifiers were utilized by both male and female participants (such as "so sorry" and "really sorry").

4.1.2.7.2. Persian Responses

"ταεσλίατ mιγαμ/αεξ mικοναμ" (the literal translation is "I condole"), "xοδα bιβαμορζε" ("God may bless her"), "qαμε Χαξερετυν bαζε" (the literal translation is "I hope this be your last sorrow"), and "mοτεςεςεμ" ("I'm sorry") were the head acts. The most frequent IFID (45%) among these head acts was "ταεσλίατ mιγαμ/ αεξ mικοναμ." The adjuncts to head acts were provided just by females and they were asking to share the sorrow ("mα ρο haεm tu qαμe xoδeτυν fεrικ bεdυνιδ") and offering any help. The intensifier of "ναqεεν" ("really") and "xeελι" ("very") were employed by both male and female respondents. The emotional expression of "ναη" ("oh") was utilized by a female respondent when condoling the friend of her same sex. A male participant preferred "silence" and conveyed his sympathy through the "gestures" of his face. In formal situations, participants used a more formal language: "qαμε Χαξερετυν bαζε" and "ταεσλίατ αεξ mικοναμ." Gender caused some difference in the
responses; for instance, a more formal language was adopted when talking to the opposite sex.

4.1.2.8. Strategies for Giving Bad News

4.1.2.8.1. English Responses

All the female respondents directly delivered the bad news regardless of gender differences and formality of the situation. The adjuncts were "Don't be worried," "Sorry," and "Apparently, everything is ok." A female respondent refused to give the bad news to the friend of her opposite sex. Two male participants provided indirect responses: "I gotta tell you something. Will you come here please?" However, a male respondent gave the bad news directly regardless of gender differences and formality of the situation: "Your brother had an accident."

4.1.2.8.2. Persian Responses

All the female respondents directly delivered the bad news regardless of gender differences and formality of the situation. However, the language was formal when giving the bad news to the colleagues (e.g., by the use of "ʃomə" (formal "you"). The adjuncts, used by both male and female respondents, were "xodeto narahat nækon" ("Don't worry yourself"), "vaëlī torī næfode" ("But nothing has happened"), and "ʃīfize mohemi nist" ("It is not serious"). Two male participants gave the bad news indirectly to their friends and directly to their colleagues. Gender did not create any difference but formality of the situation made the language more formal.

4.1.2.9. Strategies for Declining an Invitation

4.1.2.9.1. English Responses

All the respondents directly declined the invitation like "I can't come." The adjuncts were explaining the refusal of the invitation ("Unfortunately I'm abroad"), apologizing ("I'm so sorry"), expressing pity ("That's a pity"), congratulating ("Congratulations"), and wishing happiness ("Hope have a happy new life"). The emotional expression of "oh" was used by a female and a male respondent when declining the invitation of the friend of their same sex. The sad emoticon was used by the female respondent too. Formality of the situation was not of concern for the female respondents; however, male participants used a more formal language when declining the invitation of their colleagues: "Please accept my apologies, I will not be in Iran at that time."

4.1.2.9.2. Persian Responses

All the participants directly declined the invitation except one male respondent who stated: "omidværæm betunæm bijâm æmæ motmæen nistæm" ("I hope to come but I'm not sure")
when talking to his colleagues. The adjuncts were explaining the refusal of the invitation ("un moqe iran nistem" ["That time I'm not in Iran"], apologizing ("færmaende" ["I'm embarrassed"]), expressing pity ("heif foda" ["That's a pity"]), congratulating ("taebrik migem" ["I congratulate"]), and wishing happiness ("bærstun behтарingly arezu darem" ["wishing you the best"]). The emotional expressions of "va" ("oh") and "nae" ("no") were used by a female and a male respondent when declining the invitation of their friends. Gender differences were not of concern but formality of the situation made responses more formal.

4.1.2.10. Strategies for Disagreeing

4.1.2.10.1. English Responses

All the disagreements were direct regardless of the formality of the situation and gender differences like "I don't think so," "You are wrong," and "I don't agree." The adjunct was reasons provided to persuade the hearer such as "Living in a house is much more comfortable than living in a flat" or "House is a center of calmness." Gender did not create any difference; however, the formality of the situation made participants use a more formal language. For instance, insult was utilized by a male respondent when disagreeing with the friend of his same sex: "That is nonsense."

4.1.2.10.2. Persian Responses

Although all the disagreements were direct, a more polite, conservative, and formal language was adopted in formal situations. Insult was used by a male participant when disagreeing with the friend of his same sex: "to æz ævælef æql nædæftii" (meaning that you are crazy). Gender in general created no significant difference.

4.2. Interview

In order to shed more lights on the responses provided by the participants, a semi-structured interview was conducted randomly with a few of the participants in both groups. It was assumed that the interviews can make the results more understandable.

Iranian English majors considered Persian a more formal language in comparison with English. This formality was evident in gender differences as well. One of the participants said:

Persian language is much more formal and has a lot of tarof. The gender of the addressee affects the diction. I used a more formal language when talking to the opposite sex.

It is worth explaining that tarof is "compliment(s), ceremony, courtesy, and flattery" or "a formalised politeness" in the Iranian culture (cited in Sharifian, 2007, pp. 38-39).
Likely, to Persian-English bilinguals, gender differences and formality of the situation were more effective in Persian language comparing to English language. The participants declared that they have to be cautious of cultural differences. One of them stated:

I know very well that in Persian language, a more formal language should be used in formal situations and when talking to the opposite sex; however, I do not know the common expressions and thus I do not use them. So, in my responses, there is no difference though it should be.

Another participant mentioned:

Because in English culture gender differences are not of concern, I do not consider them too. But when speaking Persian, I do consider them.

In general, all the participants were aware of the differences between English and Persian language and they stated that when they speak Persian, they are more conservative to observe the differences.

5. Discussion

Having reported and presented the findings of the research, in this part, the researchers discusses the results, answers the research questions, and compares and contrasts them with other available and relevant findings found in the literature.

As regards the first research question, the use of English words in Persian sentences and literal translation from English into Persian were found in the responses of Persian-English bilinguals. Similar to English and Persian native speakers, as shown in the research of Authors (2012), they also utilized formulaic expressions in the speech acts of requesting, apologizing, expressing gratitude, congratulating, commiserating, and declining an invitation. In the speech acts of suggesting, complaining, giving bad news, and disagreeing, direct or indirect strategies were used. Moreover, the same as Persian native speakers, formality of the situation was highly observed. However, gender differences were not considered as they were observed by Persian native speakers. So, in regard to gender, Persian-English bilinguals treated like English native speakers and in regard to formality, they were similar to Persian native speakers.

Regarding the second research question, grammatical mistakes, misspelling, literal translation from Persian into English, and code mixing of English and Persian languages were found in the responses of Iranian English majors. Similar to English and Persian native speakers, as shown in the research of Authors (2012), they also utilized formulaic expressions in the speech acts of requesting, apologizing, expressing gratitude, congratulating, commiserating, and declining an invitation. In the speech acts of suggesting, complaining, giving bad news, and disagreeing, direct or indirect strategies were used. However, in some cases, a few of the participants did not know the formulaic expressions and they used an
expression just to convey the meaning. In addition, the same as Persian native speakers, formality of the situation and gender differences were observed especially in Persian responses. In general, formality of the situation was more discernible in comparison with gender differences.

Concerning the third research question, in line with Authors (2012), for both Persian-English bilinguals and Iranian English majors, formality of the situation created difference. A more polite, indirect, and formal language was employed when the addressee was a colleague. However, formality was more evident in the Persian responses with more variety due to grammatical features (e.g., "fomk/to") and the use of tarof.

With regard to the fourth research question, gender differences were more considered by Iranian English majors especially in their Persian responses. To Persian-English bilinguals, gender differences created less difference. On the whole, both Iranian English majors and Persian-English bilinguals were aware of the cultural differences between English and Persian in regard to gender differences. So, the lack of observing sex differences in the Persian responses of Persian-English bilinguals did not mean that they were not aware of the differences. Persian-English bilinguals know the differences but they did not know how to show such differences in their responses.

In short, this research indicated a number of trends. Both Persian-English bilinguals and Iranian English majors used formulaic expressions and sets of strategies in performing in performing the speech acts of requesting, apologizing, expressing gratitude, suggesting, congratulating, complaining, commiserating, giving bad news, declining an invitation, and disagreeing. However, in some cases, a few number of the participants did not know the formulaic expressions and they used an expression just to convey the meaning. Formality of the situation and gender differences were observed by Iranian English majors especially in Persian responses. In the same vein, formality of the situation was highly observed by Persian-English bilinguals; however, gender differences were not considered.

Like other studies (e.g., Barron, 2003; Cheng, 2003; Ellwood, 2008; Murphy & Neu, 1995; Yian, 2008), this research had some limitations. First, similar to Barron's (2003, p. 251) study, there were some methodological limitations like simplified situational descriptions in the DCTs. Second, the number of participants in the sampling groups was relatively small. Hence, research with a larger number of participants is necessary to confirm the findings of the present research. Third, care should be taken not to generalize the results of this research to other nationalities and Persian-speaking countries. Fourth, the age variable was not controlled in this research. Social class was also not considered in this research as an
intervening variable (Mackey & Gass, 2005). Last but not least, there was the possibility that some of the English major participants of this research had technical knowledge of speech act theory as remarked by Liu (2011) which may affect the results.

The current research investigated the effect of bilingualism. A study can be carried out to find out the effect of knowing more than two languages on the use of speech acts. Other types of speech acts such as warning, promising, ordering, etc. can also be studied as well. Moreover, to verify the results of this research and generalize the findings, this research can be replicated by carrying out studies across other languages and cultures. As Chen (2010, p. 95) stated, "more languages and cultures await exploration."

References


