### Senior Associate Editor

**Dr. Rajabali Askarzadeh Torghabeh**  
Ferdowsi University of Mashhad  
Mashhad, Iran

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dr. Roger Nunn</th>
<th>Dr. John Adamson</th>
<th>Professor Dr. Z.N. Patil</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The Petroleum Institute  
Abu Dhabi  
UAE                | Shinshu Honan College  
Japan           | Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages  
Hyderabad,  
India          |

### Senior Statesmen

**Professor Rod Ellis**  
University of Auckland  
New Zealand
Associate Editors

Professor Dr. Dan Douglas
Iowa State University
USA

Dr. Reza Pishghadam
Ferdowsi University of Mashhad
Mashhad, Iran

Dr. Behzad Ghonsooly
Ferdowsi University of Mashhad
Mashhad, Iran

Prof. Dr. Rana Nayar
Panjab University
India

Dr. Abdolmahdy Riazi
Shirza University
Iran

Dr. Masoud Sharififar
Bahonar University
Shahid Kerman, Iran

Dr. Masoud Sharififar
Shahid Bahonar University
Kerman, Iran

Editorial team

Dr. Pourya Baghaii
Islamic Azad University, Mashhad Branch, Iran

Dr. Zohre Eslami Rasekh
Texas A & M University, USA

Dr. Azizullah Fatahi
Shar-e Kord University, Iran

Dr. Mohammad Reza Hashemi
Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

Dr. Parvaneh Tavakoli
University of Reading, Humanities and Social Sciences Building Whiteknights, England

Dr. Seyyed Ayatollah Razmju
Shiraz University, Iran

Dr. Shamala Paramasivam
University of Putra, Malaysia

Dr. Manizheh Yuhannaee
University of Isfahan, Iran

Dr. Antony Fenton
Soka University, Japan

Dr. Esma’eel Abdollahzadeh
Iran University of Science and Technology, Iran

Dr. Ingrid Mosquera Gende
Bettatur University College of Tourism, Tarragona, Spain

Dr. Rajabali Askarzadeh
Torghabe,Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

Dr. Christopher Alexander
University of Nicosia, Cyprus

Dr. Robert Kirkpatrick
Shinawatra International University, Thailand

Dr. Abbas Zare’ee
Kashan University, Iran

Dr. Masood KhoshSalieh
Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

Dr. Masoud Sharififar
Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Kerman, Iran

Dr. Naser Rashidi
Shiraz University, Iran
### Table of Contents

**Foreword: Dr. Paul Robertson and Dr. Rajabali Askarzadeh Torghabeh**  
8 - 10

1. **Learning How to Learn: Sophomore University Students’ Learning Styles and Strategies in an Iranian Context**  
Mojgan Hamidnia, Azizollah Dabaghi and Saeed Ketabi  
11 - 39

2. **Translation of Euphemism: A Case Study of Translation of Euphemism from English into Persian**  
Najme Bahrami and Masoud Sharififar  
40 - 50

3. **Relationship between Social Competence and Iranian EFL Learners’ Academic Achievement across Different Levels**  
Mehdi Musavi, Ghaffar Tajalli and Mohammad Bagheri  
51 - 64

4. **Interlingual Interference in English Language Order of Prenominal Adjectives: A Context of Iranian Pre-advanced Learners**  
Rozana Shamsabadi and Daryoosh Nejadansari  
65 - 83

5. **Non-Equivalence in Technical Language of Cell Phones A Case Study of Persian and English Languages**  
Ghazal Saeedfar and Amir Hossein Mirsalehian  
84 - 101

6. **The Relationship between Self Esteem (global self-esteem and task self-esteem) and Speaking Skill of Female EFL Learners**  
Mojdeh Shahnama and Shahin Sheikh Sang Tajan  
102 - 123

7. **The Acquisition of Optional Infinitives by Persian EFL learners**  
Ali Akbar Jabbari and Hamide Behroueian  
124 - 147

8. **Mobile Learning: Using Cellphones and Its Effects on Listening Skill in Iranian EFL Intermediate Learners and on Their Motivation**  
Soraya Entezari, Habib Soleimani and Kamran Janfeshan  
148 - 165

9. **The Effect of Three Test Methods on Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL learners: Focusing on Multiple Intelligences Approach**  
Mahin Gholami and Azizollah Dabaghi  
166 - 184
10- A Critical Discourse Analysis of Press News on Syrian Unrest
Javad Hayatdavoudi
185 - 205

11- Enhancing Promotion through Generic Features: The Case of Blurbs in Hard versus Soft Science Textbooks
Davud Kuhi and Zeinab Iraji
206 - 225

12- The Effect of Foreign Language Anxiety on Listening Comprehension of Iranian EFL Learners
Fatemeh Mahmoudi Zarandi and Hamid Mohaghegh
226 - 240

13- The Role of Integrated Social and Cognitive Classroom Activities in Developing Oral Fluency and Naturalness in Iranian EFL Learners
Asgar Mahmoudi
241 - 262

14- I SWEAR BY GOD! Who Swears More, Men or Women? A Case Study of Iranian Male and Female Teachers’ Use of Swearing
Ayad Kamalvand, Mohammad Javad Mohammadi and Akbar Azizifar
263 - 280

15- Investigating the Effect of the Amount of Familiarity with Web on Iranian EFL Students’ Source-Based Writing
Mustafa Shahrokhi
281 - 289

16- Collocation learning: Direct or indirect written corrective feedback?
Farzaneh Solgi
290 - 304

17- Translation of Cognitive Schemata in Children Storybooks According to Cognitive Linguistics
Bijan Bateni, Behnaz Ebdali Takallu and Sharareh Sarsarabi
305 - 317

18- Translation of Extralinguistic Culture-Bound Elements in Missing Slouch a Persian novel translated into English
Najme Hamzehnejad and Masoud Sharififar
318 - 328

19- The Relationship between Iranian EFL learners’ Learning Styles and Their Perception of Error Feedback in Oral Activities
Malihe Afghari, Azizollah Dabaghi and Omid Tabatabaei
329 - 347
20- The Effect of Using Semantic Network of Word Net on Intermediate EFL Vocabulary Learning
Niloo Far Mansoory and Leila Armal 348 - 364

21- Beautification of Metaphor in William Shakespeare’s Sonnets
Mokhtar Ebrahimi and Maryam Ebrahimi 365 - 376

22- Translation Universals: A Case Study of Explicitation in Persian-English-Persian Translations
Masoud Sharififar and Seyed Mahmoud Reazi 377 - 388

23- Output-based Instruction: Investigating the Interaction between Pedagogy and Motivation in Iran
Majid Farshid, Azizollah Dabaghi and Mansoor Tavakoli 389 - 399

24- Moving Towards an Objective Scoring Assessment in Interpreting
Sima Ferdowsi 400 - 415

25- Similar Portrayal of Two Invulnerable Heroes in Homer’s Iliad and Ferdowsi’s Shah-nameh
Mohammad Ghazanfari 416 - 426

26- Image-Making as Exercised by Iranian Literary Translators
Hoda Hadipour 427 - 438

27- Improving the Proficiency of Iranian Students in Learning English by Using Games
Mohammad Reza Pahlavan Nezhad and Farzaneh Hassanzadeh Tavakoli 439 - 445

28- The Comparative Effect of Short Stories and Task-Based Reading on Intermediate EFL Learners’ Reading Comprehension
Mona Khabiri and Tannaz Jalayer 446 - 461

29- Critical Evaluation of Teaching ESP for Tertiary Level Iranian EFL Learners
Farah Shooraee, Azizollah Dabaghi and Saeed Ketabi 462 - 475

30- Generic Differences between Iranian Students’ Essays and a Standard Model Essay
Parisa Javani 476 - 494
Foreword

Welcome to volume ten and the fourth edition of 2014. We are happy to announce that our readership is increasing day by day. For a journal examining the topics of EFL/ESL, Literature and Translation studies, the growth and readership has been pleasing. Our bi-monthly Journal has attracted many readers not only from the Middle East but also from different parts of the world. In this third edition, we have presented thirty articles, discussing different issues of EFL/ESL, literature and translation studies. In the first article of the issue, Learning How - to - Learn: Sophomore University Students’ Learning Styles and Strategies in an Iranian Context is studied by Mojgan Hamidnia, Azizollah Dabaghi and Saeed Ketabi. In the second article of the issue, Najme Bahrami and Masoud Sharififar have studied Translation of Euphemism: A Case Study of Translation of Euphemism from English into Persian. In the third article of the issue, Mehdi Musavi, Ghaffar Tajalli and Mohammad Bagheri presented Relationship between Social Competence and Iranian EFL Learners’ Academic Achievement across Different Levels. In the next article, Interlingual Interference in English Language Order of Prenominal Adjectives: A Context of Iranian Pre-advanced Learners is presented by Rozana Shamsabadi and Daryoosh Nejadansari. In the fifth article of the issue, Ghazal Saeedfar and Amir Hossein Mirsalehian presented Non-Equivalence in Technical Language of Cell Phones A Case Study of Persian and English Languages. The next article which is The Relationship between Self Esteem (global self-esteem and task self-esteem) and Speaking Skill of Female EFL Learners is done by Mojdeh Shahnama and Shahin Sheikh Sang Tajan. In the seventh article of the issue; Ali Akbar Jabbari and Hamide Behroueian have studied The Acquisition of Optional Infinitives by Persian EFL learners. In the eighth article of the issue Mobile Learning: Using Cellphones and Its Effects on Listening Skill in Iranian EFL Intermediate Learners and on Their Motivation is studied by Soraya Entezari, Habib Soleimani and Kamran Janfeshan. In the next article, Mahin Gholami and Azizollah Dabaghi have presented The Effect of Three Test Methods on Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL learners: Focusing on Multiple Intelligences Approach.
In the tenth article, **A Critical Discourse Analysis of Press News on Syrian Unrest** is done by Javad Hayatdavoudi. In the eleventh article of the issue, **Enhancing Promotion through Generic Features: The Case of Blurbs in Hard versus Soft Science Textbooks** is presented by Davud Kuhi and Zeinab Iraji. In the twelfth article of the issue, **The Effect of Foreign Language Anxiety on Listening Comprehension of Iranian EFL Learners** is studied by Fatemeh Mahmoudi Zarandi and Hamid Mohaghegh. In the next article, Asgar Mahmoudi has presented **The Role of Integrated Social and Cognitive Classroom Activities in Developing Oral Fluency and Naturalness in Iranian EFL Learners.** In the fourteenth article of the issue, **I SWEAR BY GOD! Who Swears More, Men or Women? A Case Study of Iranian Male and Female Teachers’ Use of Swearing** is done by Ayad Kamalvand, Mohammad Javad Mohammadi and Akbar Azizifar. In the fifteenth article of the issue, Mustafa Shahrokhi presented **Investigating the Effect of the Amount of Familiarity with Web on Iranian EFL Students’ Source-Based Writing.** In the next article, **Collocation learning: Direct or indirect written corrective feedback?** is studied by Farzaneh Solgi. In the seventeenth article of the issue, Bijan Bateni, Behnaz Ebdali Takallu and Sharareh Sarsarabi have presented **Translation of Cognitive Schemata in Children Storybooks According to Cognitive Linguistics.** The next article which is **Translation of Extralinguistic Culture-Bound Elements in Missing Slouch a Persian novel translated into English** is done by Najme Hamzehnejadi, Masoud Sharififar. In the next article of the issue Malihe Afghari, Azizollah Dabaghi and Omid Tabatabaei have presented **The Relationship between Iranian EFL learners' Learning Styles and Their Perception of Error Feedback in Oral Activities.** In the twentieth article of the issue, **The Effect of Using Semantic Network of Word Net on Intermediate EFL Vocabulary Learning** is studied by Niloofar Mansoory and Leila Armal.
In the twenty first article of the issue, *Beautification of Metaphor in William Shakespeare’s Sonnets* is done by Mokhtar Ebrahimi, Maryam Ebrahimi. In the next article of the issue Masoud Sharififar and Seyed Mahmoud Reazi have studied *Translation Universals: A Case Study of Explicitation in Persian-English-Persian Translations*. In the twenty third article of the issue, *Output-based Instruction: Investigating the Interaction between Pedagogy and Motivation in Iran* is presented by Majid Farshid, Azizollah Dabaghi and Mansoor Tavakoli. In the next article, Sima Ferdowsi has studied *Moving Towards an Objective Scoring Assessment in Interpreting*. In the next article of the issue, *Similar Portrayal of Two Invulnerable Heroes in Homer’s Iliad and Ferdowsi’s Shah-nameh* is studied by Mohammad Ghazanfari. In the twenty sixth article of the issue, *Image-Making as Exercised by Iranian Literary Translators* is done by Hoda Hadipour. In the twenty seventh article of the issue, *Improving the Proficiency of Iranian Students in Learning English by Using Games* is done by Mohammad Reza Pahlavan Nezhad and Farzaneh Hassanzadeh Tavakoli. In the next article, Mona Khabiri and Tannaz Jalayer have presented *The Comparative Effect of Short Stories and Task-Based Reading on Intermediate EFL Learners’ Reading Comprehension*. In the next article of the issue, *Critical Evaluation of Teaching ESP for Tertiary Level Iranian EFL Learners* is done by Farah Shooraki, Azizollah Dabbaghi and Saeed Ketabi. In the last article of the issue, Parisa Javani studied *Generic Differences between Iranian Students’ Essays and a Standard Model Essay*.

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

Learning How - to - Learn: Sophomore University Students’ Learning Styles and Strategies in an Iranian Context

Authors

Mojgan Hamidnia (Ph.D Candidate)
English Department, Shahreza Branch, Islamic Azad University, Iran

Azizollah Dabaghi (Ph.D)
English Department, University of Isfahan, Iran

Saeed Ketabi (Ph.D)
English Department, University of Isfahan, Iran

Biodata

Mojgan Hamidnia, Ph.D student of TEFL at the University of Isfahan, Iran. Her research interests are issues on Tasked-based Language Teaching and Learning, Teaching Writing Skills, Learning Strategies/Pedagogies in specific and English Teaching Methodology in general.

Azizollah Dabaghi, Assistant Professor of TEFL at the University of Isfahan, Iran. He has published various articles in the area of English Language Teaching and Learning. His main areas of interests include Second Language Teaching and Sociolinguistics.

Saeed Ketabi, Associate Professor of TEFL at the University of Isfahan, Iran. He has published numerous articles in various journals in the area of English Language Teaching and Learning. His main areas of interest are English Teaching Methodology and Materials Development.

Abstract

Managing a class to suit students’ learning styles has been widely discussed by EFL scholars and a number of studies have investigated on students’ academic achievement. The purpose of this paper is to present the results of a comparative
investigation into the learning styles and strategies of the students, with different achievement levels, of Islamic Azad University (IAU), Shahreza Branch, IRAN. 50 second-year English majors were chosen from six classes on writing/grammar, reading, listening and speaking courses. They were categorized as High-achievers, Medium-achievers and Low-achievers, on the basis of their scores on TOEFL exam containing four parts, i.e. listening, reading, writing and structure, as a criterion taken for second language learning. The participants of the study were asked to complete Oxford’s (1993) Style Analysis Survey (SAS) and to attend a semi-structured interview. The data were analyzed using Chi-square Analysis. Findings revealed significant differences in patterns of language use of students with different learning styles. Teachers’ being aware of students’ learning styles and strategies in order to match teaching styles and teaching materials to the class can be considered as one of the most important implications of this study.

**Keywords:** Academic achievement, Learning Styles, Learning Strategies, SAS

### 1. Introduction

Incorporating learning strategies and learning-how-to-learn into language curricula has been of growing interest since late 1980’s. Such a focus helps students learn more efficiently and facilitates the activation of a learner-centered philosophy (Nunan, 1988, and 1995a, b). Generally speaking, learner’s being well-developed in learning-how-to-learn skills leads to their being more effective classroom learning opportunities and will then result in students’ being sufficiently prepared for keeping language learning outside of the classroom (Wong and Nunan, 2011).

Learning-how-to-learn rather mastery of bodies of factual information has increasingly been the focus of the university level instruction. Tsui (2006, p.1) stated that learning is not about cramming in information. It is about learning by doing. It is about looking at issues in various ways and developing capacities, especially the ability to dig below the surface to reach the truth .[……] That is why our goal is to teach students to learn how to learn rather than merely passing information to them […….].

It is believed that learning styles and preferred learning approaches influence students’ learning (Abu-Moghli, Khalaf, Halabi, and Wardam, 2005). This is the baseline for finding any
evident correlation between learning styles and learning outcomes (Cassidy and Eachus, 2000; Giordano and Rochford, 2005; Kia, Alipour, and Ghaderi, 2009; Marefat, 2007; Moeinikia and Zahed-Babelan, 2010; Ounwattana and Moungchoo, 2008; Sarıcaoğlu and Arikan, 2009). Many scholars tried to define the term “learning styles” in various ways. Learning styles can be the indicator of the way a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the environment and as a criterion for individual differences (Carson and Longhini, 2000). Loo (2004) cited a Kolb’s (1984) definition of learning styles as the ways through which people produce concepts, rules and principles which directs them in new situations. Pierce (2000) defines learning styles as the way student prefers in learning materials (cited in Seif, 2001). Hartley (1998) interpreted learning styles as the approaches in which each person deals distinctively with different learning tasks. Oxford (2003) introduced or defined learning styles as the common approaches students apply to learn a new language or any other subject.

Mid 1970s has been the starting point of substantial growth in the literature on learning styles (e.g., Oxford, 1993; Oxford et al., 1992; Oxford and Anderson, 1995; Reid, 1987, 1995, 1998; Wintergerst et al., 2001, 2003), on learning strategies (e.g., Anderson, 2005; Cohen, 1998; Naiman et al., 1978; O’Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990a, 1996; Oxford and Burry-Stock, 1995; Oxford and Ehrman, 1995; Rubin, 1975; Stern, 1975; Wenden and Rubin, 1987) and on the relationship between learning styles and strategies (e.g., Carson and Longhini, 2002; Ehrman et al., 2003; Ehrman and Oxford, 1990; Ely and Pease-Alvarez, 1996; Oxford, 1990b, 2001, 2003; Rossi-Le, 1995; Wong and Nunan, 2011). In these studies, there have been various descriptions and definitions of learning styles and strategies.

Comparatively speaking, learning styles are general approaches to language learning, while learning strategies are specific ways to deal with language tasks in particular contexts (Cohen, 2003; Oxford, 2003 cited in Wong and Nunan, 2011). Kinsella (1995) states that ‘Styles’ is the more general term, being “an individual’s natural, habitual, and preferred way of absorbing, processing, and retaining new information and skills” (p. 171). Learners deploy these styles which seem to be quite stable regardless of the subject being studied or the skill being mastered.

The concept of learning styles is embedded in different academic literature and researched from different approaches, including intelligent learning systems (Laureano-Cruces et al., 2006), a genetic algorithm approach to students' learning styles (Yannibelli et al., 2006), a
web-based education perspective on learning styles (Garcia et al., 2007), learning about and through aesthetic experience (Welsh et al., 2007), use of business case studies in the learning process (Duff et al., 2008), problem-solving strategies within learning styles (Metallidou and Platsidou, 2008), preferred learning styles (Peters et al., 2008) and an adaptive learning system perspective of learning styles (Tseng et al., 2008). Oxford (2005) claimed that learning styles and strategies are the main factors helping determine how language learners learn a second or foreign language.

Learning style is a group of interrelated characteristics in which the general is larger than the specific i.e. learning style is Gestalt in which internal and external operations are derived from individual's neural biology. It combines his personality and growth and shows them as a behavior (Keefe and Ferrell, 1990, cited in Moeinikia and Zahed-Babelan, 2010). Styles and strategies applied in language seem to be among the most important variables having impact on second language performance. Learning styles refer to “an individual’s characteristics and preferred way of gathering, interpreting, organizing and thinking about information” (Wang, 2008, p. 30).

In contrast to learning styles, learning strategies are “any set of operations, plans or routines used by learners to facilitate the obtaining, retrieval, storage and use of information” (Macaro, 2006, p. 324). Distinct as they are, learning styles and learning strategies have close relationship to each other. Brown pointed out that learning strategies do not operate by themselves, but rather are directly linked to the learner’s innate learning styles and other personality-related factors (Li, 2006, p. 68).

Learning is under the influence of individuals’ styles and learning outcome is higher for students who are able to use multiple learning styles (Felder, 1995; Reid, 1987; Reid, 1998; Claxton and Murell, 1985; Mulalic, Mohd Shah and Ahmad, 2009). Learning strategies are the specific mental and communicative procedures that learners employ in order to learn and use language (Chamot, 2005; O’Malley and Chamot, 1990, cited in Wong and Nunan, 2011). Although in most classrooms learners are unaware of these strategies, every task and exercise will be underpinned by at least one strategy. According to Macaro (2001), one of the hypotheses being tested by learning strategy researchers is that awareness and deployment of strategies will lead to more effective language acquisition. The goal of learning strategies, as mentioned by Weinstein and Mayer (1986) is to “affect the learner’s motivational or affective state, or the way
in which the learner selects, acquires, organizes, or integrates new knowledge” (p. 315). Learning strategies enable students to take more responsibilities of their own language learning and personal development. “Learners’ proactive contribution to enhancing the effectiveness of their own learning” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 166) is essential in developing skills in learning-how-to-learn.

Research concerned with the relationship between language learning styles and strategies was conducted by Li and Qin (2006, pp. 67-90). However, the focus of their research is put on the tertiary-level learners in China. The study presents two kinds of data: quantitative and qualitative. In the quantitative study, the subjects consist of 187 second-year undergraduates. Two self-reported inventories, the Chinese version of MBTI-G and a questionnaire on the use of learning strategies adapted from O’Malley and Chamot’s classification system, were used to examine the students’ learning styles and learning strategies respectively. Structured interviews have been performed among six high and low achievers in the qualitative aspect of the study. Their findings show that “learning styles have a significant influence on learners’ strategy choices” (p. 86). Judging scale correlates positively with seven sets of learning strategies. It also investigated the influence of the choice of learning strategies upon learning outcomes. Based on the results, it was proposed that “learning styles may influence language learning outcomes through their relationship with learning strategies”. There is a close relationship between learning styles and learning strategies (Ehrman, et al., 2003). For example, Li & Qin’s (2006) study strongly suggests that learning styles have a significant influence on learners’ learning strategy choices.

Felder et al. (2002) assured that “people have different learning styles that are reflected in different academic strengths, weaknesses, skills and interests”. Funderstanding (2008) said that learning styles are often influenced by heredity, upbringing and current environmental demands. Learners have a tendency to both perceive and process information differently. To Tripp and Moore (2007), “students tend to focus on facts, data and algorithms; some respond strongly to visual forms of information and many others preferred to learn actively”. Gilbert (2000) confirmed that “learning preferences facilitate the way individuals learn when the environment concerns with the various learning styles”.

More recent research included Wang’s (2007) attempt to employ Felder’s framework (Felder and Henriques, 1995), which found that university EFL learners in China showed a mild preference for Global, Visual and Sensing learning styles. Global learners tend to achieve
understanding in a holistic way. Visual learners prefer information to be present in the form of pictures or diagrams. Sensing learners are concrete and methodical.

Shakarami and Mardziha (2010) studied the language-learning styles and language-learning strategies of Iranian engineering and political science graduate students studying abroad. They employed Reid’s (1987) framework and found that political science graduates had major Tactile, Auditory, Group and Kinaesthetic learning styles, while engineering graduates had major Visual, Tactile, Group, Kinaesthetic and Individual learning styles.

Learners’ learning styles and their own preferences may differ in various situations. For instance, some learners, prefer to learn by reading textbooks, while others prefer a verbal explanation (Riazi and Riasati, 2007, cited in Shirani Bidabadi and Yamat, 2010). In addition, people may differ in how they most effectively show their understanding; either orally or in writing and through graphs or figures. Concerning the importance of learning styles in various contexts, and in order to explain individuals’ learning style preferences, several learning style models have been developed. The “Memletics Model” is one of the learning style models assessed by the “Memletics Learning Styles Inventory”, which is based on the concept that everyone has a mix of learning styles, classifying learning styles into seven different types of learners: visual, aural, verbal, logical, physical, solitary, and social (advanogy.com, 2003-2007).

One of these studies is the one by Ahmad (2011) which aimed at identifying the learning style preferences of 252 low level students at a local tertiary institution. His findings showed that the students did not have any major or even minor learning style preference. All six learning styles were negative learning style preferences and among six learning styles, individual learning was the least preferred learning style. Mulalic et al. (2009a) studied 160 students at the Department of Language and Communication in University Tenaga Nasional. The findings showed that those students preferred kinesthetic, individual and tactile learning styles as their negative preferences, and auditory, visual, and group learning styles were their minor preferred. Nurida Esmail and Azman (2010) identified the learning styles of adult learners in non formal education programs at selected Malaysian community colleges. A survey of 959 adult learners from 14community colleges was carried out to determine their learning styles using a modified version of Conti’s Principles of Adult learning scales.

An exception to the evidence of the existing major differences in learning styles among learners divided into groups according to their different majors or fields of study as reported by
the above studies is the study by Syafawani (2009) which investigated the learning style preferences of 80 first year students from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (both field of study) in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia according to Reid. This is because it was revealed that there was no clear difference between both fields of study, but there was a small difference in major and minor preferences of group learning style. Students from the Faculty of Arts liked to learn in groups, while students from the Faculty of Science preferred group style as their minor learning style preference. Alsafi (2010) investigated this area among 90 Saudi Second-year medical students at King Abdul-Aziz University, and revealed that in general, Kinesthetic, Auditory, and Tactile learning styles were preferred by the participants while they disfavored using visual, group, and individual learning styles.

In connection with language learning styles, Willing (1994) identified four major styles: communicative, analytical, authority-oriented and concrete derived from learner strategy preferences. According to Felder (1996), Kolb’ learning style model classifies students into four types of learners based on their preferences for how they take in and how they internalize information. Individual combinations of these preferences yield the following four learning styles: accommodator, diverger, assimilator, and converger (cited in Loo, 2004). The results of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) classify learners as extroverts or introverts, sensors or intuitors, thinkers or feelers, and judgers or perceivers. Christison (2003) distinguishes between cognitive style (field dependent versus field independent, analytic versus global, reflective versus impulsive); sensory style (visual versus auditory versus tactile versus kinesthetic) and personality styles (tolerance of ambiguity, right brain versus left brain dominance).

Tuan (2011) examined EFL students’ preferred learning styles, and the relationship between learning style preferences and individual attributes. The findings revealed that perceptual learning style preferences were impacted by some attributes, particularly fields of style and length of tertiary study. The higher levels of English EFL students preferred kinesthetic and tactile learning, whereas the students with the shortest length of studying English tended to be those with a variety of preferred learning styles, except individual learning style.

Oxfords’ (1993) study on the five learning styles contrasts identified in her Style Analysis Survey (SAS) is a research most closely related to the links between learning styles and strategies, including: visual versus auditory (the use of physical senses for study and work), extroversion versus introversion (dealing with other people), intuitive-random versus concrete-
sequential (handling possibilities), closure-oriented versus open (approaching tasks), global versus analytic (dealing with ideas). Each of the five style contrasts constitutes a comparative style continuum. Recognizing these learning styles, recognizing their strengths and thus expanding their learning potential learning styles of great is important to learners.

As noted by Oxford (1993), once learners are aware of their own learning styles, it enables them to adapt their learning strategies to suit different learning tasks in particular contexts. Learners can take advantages of their learning styles by matching learning strategies with their styles; similarly, learners can compensate for the disadvantages of their learning styles to balance their learning by adjusting learning strategies (cited in Wong and Nunan, 2011).

Learning Styles. Net (2008) (online learning style assessments and community; dedicated to the growth and development of Dunn & Dunn Learning Styles Model) identified the benefits of understanding the learning styles of students. These are as follows: (1) permits students to identify how they prefer to learn; (2) provides a computerized graphical summary of each student's preferred learning style; called the Individual Learning Styles Profile; (3) suggests a basis for redesigning the classroom environment to complement many students' needs for sound, quiet, bright or soft light, temperature, or seating design; (4) sequences the perceptual strengths through which individuals should begin studying; show to reinforce new and difficult information for various individuals; shows how each student should do his or her homework; (5) indicates the methods through which students are likely to excel; (6) extrapolates information concerning which students are conforming or nonconforming and how to work with those who are nonconforming; (7) pinpoints the best time during the day for each student to be involved in required difficult subjects and thus permits grouping students for instruction based on peak energy times; (8) itemizes the types of students for whom snacks while learning may accelerate the learning process; and (9) suggests for which students analytic or global approaches to learning new and difficult materials are likely to be important.

2. Learning styles / strategies and learners’ level of proficiency
Regarding the importance of knowledge of strategies, Nunan (1999, pp.171-2) argues that learning will be more effective, if learners have greater consciousness of what they are doing and if they are aware of the processes underlying the learning, leading to the students’ being highly motivated. Gan (2004) explored the relationship between language proficiency and self-directed
language learning (cited in Wong and Nunan, 2011). Through carrying out a qualitative investigation into the attitudes and strategies of nine successful and nine unsuccessful Chinese EFL learners, Gan et al. (2004) found that attitudes towards the learning of the target language rather than specific strategies seemed to differentiate the successful from the unsuccessful learners.

Since there is a paucity of data on the relationship between strategies and language proficiency (as noted in Wong and Nunan, 2011), the study reported hereafter, will attempt to shed light on both differences in strategy awareness and attitudes to learning (carried out by Jones et al., 1987 and Gan et al., 2004), on differences in the use of the specific strategies (as the comparative investigation of the strategy use of Effective versus Ineffective learners, accomplished by Wong and Nunan, 2011) and not only on Low and High achievers, but also on Medium achievers. Therefore, the following research questions were posed about the three aforementioned groups of learners regarding some aspects of language learning:

1) Are there any significant differences between the overall learning styles of High, Medium and Low proficient learners?
2) Are there any significant differences in the individual learning strategy preferences of High, Medium and Low proficiency levels?

3. The Study
3.1. Objectives
This study aimed at exploring if there are significant differences between High-proficient, Low-proficient and Medium-proficient learners and their learning styles, strategy preferences and patterns of practice and use, examined in four different classes including: writing, reading, listening and speaking courses at the tertiary level in IRAN, to cast light on the effect of learning styles and strategies on second language learning, and to explore any consistency with findings of studies in other contexts.

3.2. Variables
The grade obtained on TOEFL exam was the independent variable. The independent variable consisted of three levels:
“Higher proficient”, defined as those who were graded ‘A’ or ‘B’ on the examination, “Medium proficient”, as learners who obtained something in the middle (‘C’ or ‘D’ grade), and “Low
proficient” learners as ‘E’ or ‘F’ grade obtainers. The dependent variable consisted of the students’ responses to the questionnaire on strategy preferences, learning practices and attitudes.

3.3. Participants
The participants of this study were a group of 50 Iranian EFL Sophomore University students (both third and fourth semesters), majoring in Translation at the Faculty of Humanities, English Department, Islamic Azad University (Shahreza Branch), IRAN. They were selected from 6 classes on four different language skills, including: writing, reading, listening & speaking courses. Of these, 10 got ‘A’ or ‘B’(High –achievers), 22 got ‘C’ or ‘D’ (Medium-achievers),and the remaining 18 received ‘E’ or ‘F’(Low - achievers) on that exam.

3.4. Instruments
The instruments utilized in this survey consisted of 2 parts:

I. A forty- item questionnaire (actually a revised version of the Original Oxford’s (1993) Style Analysis Survey (SAS)), was the first part of the survey, through which the participants were asked to indicate their in-class and out-of-class strategy attitudes rated and scored on a five-point scale. The chosen list taken from the first five parts of the model out of eleven, was related to five learning styles contrasts identified as : visual versus auditory (the use if physical senses for study and work), extroversion versus introversion (dealing with other people), intuitive-random versus concrete-sequential (handling possibilities), closure-oriented versus open (approaching tasks), global versus analytic (dealing with ideas).

II. The second part was designed for some information to be orally solicited as:

* The amount of time (hours per week) to English practice (in-campus and off-campus),
* Regular classes conducted in English (in percentage),
* The importance of English,
* Self-evaluation of language proficiency level (knowing the vocabulary, expressions & grammar to talk about basic subjects in English),
* The degree of English learning enjoyment.

3.5. Procedures
The questionnaire was distributed and the data were collected and then analyzed. Four students were randomly selected from each High, Medium, and Low achievement group (N=12). A 10-to-15 minute person-to-person interview was also conducted including the twelve participants of aforementioned achievement groups.

4. Results and Discussion
In this section the results are going to be analyzed and displayed according to the following Tables (in %), considering the first research question.

4.1. Low, Medium and High proficient learners’ learning styles differences and contrasts

Table 1. Using physical senses for study and work (Visual vs. Auditory)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Style</th>
<th>Achievement Level</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>8.33</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>44.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>23.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>6.94</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>6.94</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>9.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Dealing with other people (Extroverted vs. Introverted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Style</th>
<th>Achievement Level</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extroverted</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>13.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>30.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Table (1), the dominant style of Low-proficient learners (44.4%) and Medium-proficient learners (41.7%) would have been Visual, whereas Medium learners had a higher tendency toward being an Auditory style than High and Low Proficient learners. Comparison of percentages indicates that High-proficient learners tended to be Auditory than Visual and this preference was felt for Low-proficient learners, as being Visual other than Auditory.
Table (2) indicates that Low-proficient learners preferred to be more Introverted (44.4%) than Extroverted (although the difference in the obtained percentages was not significant). High-proficient learners had a high preference over being Extroverted (30.56%) than being Introverted (4.16%). The big difference between the percentages of Extroverted - Medium learners (69.4%) and Introverted – Medium learners indicates that the learners’ highly-preferred style is Extroverted style instead of Introverted style in this respect.

Table 3. Handling possibilities (Random-Intuitive vs. Concrete-Sequential)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement Level</th>
<th>Random-Intuitive</th>
<th>Concrete-Sequential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (3) is indicative of the way the students try to handle possibilities to be classified as Random-Intuitive versus Concrete-Sequential. Low-proficient learners handled possibilities not intuitively since 51.4% of the answered the related questions extremely negatively. Medium-proficient learners (52.8%) outperformed High-proficient learners in intuitive handling of possibilities (22.22%). About 23.6% of the Low-proficient learners also reacted as to be Concrete-Sequential learners, showing their manner being involved in dealing with possibilities.
Medium-proficient learners tended to be more Concrete-Sequential (36.1%) than High-proficient learners (16.7%). High-achievers showed rare preference over being Concrete-Sequential style.

It can be inferred that Low-proficient learners like to be Concrete-Sequential (23.6%), and the willingness toward being Intuitive-Random was high for both Medium and High proficient learners, but with a significant difference in the percentage of the participants for the two levels (52.8% and 22.22%).

Table 4. Approaching tasks (Closure-Oriented vs. Open)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement Level</th>
<th>Closure-Oriented</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>6.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement Level</th>
<th>Open</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As it can be obtained from Table (4), High-proficient learners got some close percentages, with a slight difference (19.4% as Closure-Oriented learners, and 18.1%, as Open learners). Medium-proficient learners approached the tasks roughly the same, in a Closure-Oriented manner and also in an Open manner as well (30.6% and 29.2%). They were split between Closure-oriented and Open style, with the former style just edging out the latter style.

Table 5. Dealing with ideas (Global vs. Analytic)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Achievement Level</th>
<th>Global</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table (5) demonstrates that Low-proficient learners preferred to deal with ideas Globally other than Analytically (31.94%), while the Medium-proficient learners were split between Global style and analytic style, with Global students just edging out the Analytic learners (41.7%). The higher percentage was allocated to Analytic learners with high-proficient level (15.3%) than High-proficient Global learners (13.89%), with a not so that significant difference.

According to the above Tables, the dominant learning styles of Low proficient learners were exactly split between Visual style and Introverted style (44.44%) followed by Global (Holistic) style (31.94%). Their lowest preferred style was for Random-Intuitive style (51.4% responded “Never”). Medium learners showed preference for Extroverted style (69.4%) followed by Random-Intuitive style (52.8 5%) and Auditory style (46.8%). Their least preferred style was Open style (29.2%). The three top preferred styles adopted by High-proficient learners were Auditory (33.3%), Extroverted style (30.56%) and Random-Intuitive (22.22%). They showed the least amount of preference for Global (Holistic) style (13.89%).
Random-Intuitive Style and their highly significant difference between their proficiency level and adopted (preferred) learning style: for Low achievers: d.f. = 1, Chi-square = 48.611, at .000 level of significance, p < .05, and for Medium achievers: d.f. = 1, Chi-square = 25.568, at .000 level of significance, p < .05.

4.2. Low, Medium and High proficient learners’ learning strategy preferences
Strategy preferences lead to appropriate styles taken by the students. The most and least preferred strategies of all three achievement levels were as below (Considered as the obtained results referring to the second research question):

The **most** preferred strategies of **Low-proficient** learners:
- I prefer to learn with TV or video rather than other media.
- When I am in a large group, I tend to keep silent and listen.
- I follow directions carefully.
- I don’t worry about comprehending everything.
- I prefer short and simple answers rather than long explanations.

The **least** preferred strategies of **Low-proficient** learners:
- I need oral directions for a task.
- I want to understand something well before I try it.
- I trust concrete facts instead of new, untested ideas.
- I let things pile up on my desk to be organized eventually.
- I ignore details that do not seem relevant.

The **most** preferred strategies of **Medium-proficient** learners:
- I remember things better if I discuss them with someone.
- I learn better when I work or study with others than by myself.
- I try to find many options and possibilities for why something happens.
- I like to plan language study sessions carefully and do lessons on time or early.
- I ignore details that do not seem relevant.

The **least** preferred strategies of **Medium-proficient** learners:
- Charts, diagrams, and maps help me understand what someone says.
- I meet new people easily by jumping into the conversation.
- I like to discover things myself rather than have everything explained to me.
- My notes, handouts, and other school materials are carefully organized.
- I prefer short and simple answers rather than long explanations.

The **most** preferred strategies of **High-proficient** learners:
- I remember things better if I discuss them with someone.
- I experience things first and then try to understand them.
- I am open-minded to new suggestions from my peers.
- I pay attention to specific facts or information.
- I like to know how rules are applied and why.

The **least** preferred strategies of **High-proficient** learners:
- I understand lectures better when professors write on the board.
- I learn better when I work or study with others than by myself.
- I add many original ideas during class discussions.
- I let deadlines slide if I’m involved in other things.
- I’m good at catching new phrases or words when I hear them.

According to the above high and low strategy preferences of all three achievement levels, it can be inferred that strategies each individual student adopts, will be a reasonable determinant of his/her style(s) of leaning in the class or even in a natural setting and consequently, as a fruitful indicator for the teacher(s) to suit their teaching style(s) to the students’ learning styles.

For the remaining parts (other learning styles and their cross-effects with proficiency levels), the obtained statistics appeared to show no significant distribution and difference between learners’ levels of proficiency and their most preferred learning styles, since the Chi-squares taken from the cross-effects of all levels of proficiency and learning styles preferences were above P-value (sig> or = .05, p< .05, at 5% level of significance), hence turned to be insignificant and consequently ineffective.

It can inferred that learners’ most general preferred learning styles of whole learners were a mixture of different learning styles, depending on the nature of courses they have and most of the students preferred extroverted style as their primary or secondary style. Hence, it seems that learning styles are quite crucial during language learning process. Furthermore, learning styles are important factors influencing strategy use (in accordance with Li and Qin, 2006). In the same vein, more proficient learners make greater use of strategies than less proficient learners (Bruen,
Compared with more proficient learners, less proficient L2 learners use relatively few strategies and do so in a less effective manner (Anderson, 1991).

For the second part of the study, the participants took part in a person-to-person 10-15-minute interview, as a feedback to complement the findings of the study. In this follow-up interviews students said that one reason for their being passive during the class is because of lack of sufficient knowledge and awareness of how to manage to become active in class.

5. Conclusion

The present study aimed at investigating possible differences in learning styles and strategies to distinguish Iranian sophomore university students’ learning styles preferences. The dominant learning style preferences of Iranian EFL students revealed that the majority of them considered themselves social communicative extroverted learners characterized as field dependent and active (Willing, 1994; Nunan, 1999; Wong and Nunan, 2011; Gan, 2004 and others).

Since Iranian students come to university with diverse general English background (without any natural exposure to English), it is a must for college instructors to take the learners’ individual differences into account, not only in terms of their proficiency levels, but also in connection with student motivation, and student knowledge of styles and strategies. In the last decades, a considerable amount of research has been focused on investigating the relationship among teaching strategies, learning styles and academic achievement in higher education (Akdemir and Koszalka, 2008; Arthurs, 2007; ShiraniBidabadi and Yamat, 2010; Gan, 2009; Contessa, Giardiello, and Perlman, 2005). Effective matching between teaching and learning styles can only be achieved when teachers are aware of their student needs, capacities, potentials and leaning style preferences (Zhenhui, 2001).

In the Iranian context, several studies can be found with a focus on learning styles and their eminence in teaching English as a foreign language (Riazi and Riasati, 2007; Noora, 2008; Soltani, 2008; Zamanzade, Valizade, Fathi Azar and Aminaie, 2008). However, despite the crucial role of learners' learning styles awareness in providing a successful instruction, little if any attention has been paid to the students’ individual differences of learning styles in designing syllabi and EFL courses for the students studying English as a foreign language in both academic and non-academic language institutions. This can be deemed as one of the factors hindering ultimate goals of TEFL in Iran (cited in Shabani, 2012).
The findings of this study are in the same line with the findings of Wintergerst, Decapua, and Verna (2003) who detected the preferences of group activities of ESL/EFL students and the findings of Moeinikia and Zahed-Babelan (2010) who found a considerable importance of learners’ being social, verbal and aural, and the roles of these leaning styles in second language learning. The results of this study is also in accordance with McCarthy’s (1980) findings, pointing out that instructors should utilize a variety of activities and tasks to make it possible for the students to learn in their own preferred style(s) and also to get a chance to develop other styles as well.

6. Pedagogical Implications

Many research studies such as Smith (1985), Claxton and Murrell (1987), Willing (1988), and Riazi and Riasati (2007) claim that matching learning methods with learning style preferences lead to academic achievements. So, learners’ learning styles and teacher instructional methods should be matched in order to enrich the students’ learning outcomes(performances) and provide an everlasting flexible environment for the students.

In summary, considering variables influencing performance in a second language, language learning styles and strategies appear to be among the most important ones. Oxford (1993) notes that students’ being aware of their own learning styles make it possible for the learners to adjust their learning strategies in order to suitably match different learning tasks in particular contexts (cited in Wong and Nunan, 2011).

A learning-how-to-learn dimension into language pedagogy has always been incorporated and argued for a broad range of pedagogical contexts and situations. Teachers’/Researchers’ applying both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including questionnaire and interview are beneficial coupled with learner training and helping learners, especially less effective language learners, identify their weaknesses on one hand and their strengths on the other hand, could have a great positive impact on learning outcomes. Teachers should be fully aware of their students’ individual style preferences that consequentially offer significant strengths in learning and working. Learning will be enhanced by students’ being aware of the styles that they do not normally apply. Teachers, colleagues and peers in class must give a hand to take the best and the most out of teaching/learning program.
Students should be encouraged to explore their most or least preferred learning styles to be applied as a facilitator of their learning, which is the ultimate goal of teaching.

According to Nunan (1999), teaching learners the strategies underlying their learning results in students’ higher motivation (pp.171-2), since not all learners automatically know which strategies work best for them. Thus, training strategies explicitly, accompanied by the way each individual deals with learning and experimenting with different strategies can lead to more effective learning. Incorporating learner strategy training into learning programs has always been advocated by educators and researchers.

Here are some suggestions and tips for teachers. For instance, the teacher should enforce time limits in the L2 classroom to keep extraverts’ enthusiasm to a manageable level. As Oxford (2003) states, extraverts can also be rotated in charge of leading L2 discussions to get the chance of participating equally with extroverts. Offering variety and choice is the central point to teaching both intuitive-random and sensing-sequential learners. Highly organized structures and multiple options and enrichment activities are possible varieties to be implemented in class for sensing-sequential learners and for intuitive-random students, respectively.

Furthermore, for the closure-oriented and open learners, as suggested by Oxford (2003), skilled L2 teachers can provide a good balance for each learner in the classroom, and sometimes consciously create cooperative groups including both types of learners, even mixed with some other types of learners to make it possible for them to benefit from collaboration with each other. For global (holistic) and analytic students, there is a great need on part of the teacher to provide a balance between generality and specificity of the global and analytic learners to make the process of learning effective. Assessing leaning styles and strategy use of the students by teacher can benefit them to reach great understanding of their styles. On the other way around, not only students’ styles and strategies could be assessed by teachers, but also teachers’ styles and strategies need to be assessed (by themselves) to let them be aware of their preferences and avoid the possible biases in the L2 environment.

Teachers cannot systematically provide the needed instructional variety if they don’t obtain adequate knowledge about their individual styles preferences. Teachers should know that no L2 instructional Methodology single L2 methodology fits all students and classes. According to Oxford (2003), the best version of communicative approach could possibly fit a class with a variety of different stylistic and strategic preferences.
Teachers can use the book as a resource with helpful guidelines, as strategy instruction is necessary so that learners are able to avail themselves of appropriate strategies according to their needs (e.g., age, culture, interests). In the lead-up to empowering them, what needs to be done then is to “conduct a strategy instruction or brainstorming session with students to raise meta-cognitive awareness or (MAR) to help them organize information and take ownership of it” (Oxford, 2011, p. 178).

Efficient and effective practice under the guidance of the classroom teacher and frequent use of strategies can help learners to use them effectively and flexibly, and, more often than not, automatically (Zhang, 2008a) for optimal learning results. Strategies are neither totally fixed nor flexible and teachers can both build on existing strengths and develop additional competencies for their students (Boström and Lassen, 2006, p. 184), so teachers should pay attention to students’ learning styles in their teaching, and adopt relative teaching methods that are consistent with most students’ learning styles.

Finally, teachers should be road-map providers to approach learning styles systematically and create student-student and student - teacher collaboration and interaction consciously, deliberately and effectively.

7. Suggestions for Further research

In the present study, the focus was on overall effect of students’ learning styles and preferences on their leaning in general. Some more studies may be required to examine the influence of students learning styles and strategy preferences on different language skills (i.e. writing, reading, speaking, and listening in specific). Cultural differences could be another area of research since learners may show different modalities for their learning. For instance, students from Asian culture, are said to be often highly visual, with Koreans being the most visual, or Hispanic learners are frequently considered to be auditory. Iranian culture may be taken into consideration to identify students learning styles, as well.

Considering the way motivation relates to learning style and conducting a longitudinal study, when the present participants are asked to answer the same questionnaire after a month or even longer (a period of a year), could be another area of investigation.

References


Nunan, D. (1995a). Assessment and change in the classroom. In Nunan, D., R. Berry, & V. Berry (Eds.), *Bringing about change in language education* (pp. 31-54). Hong Kong: Department of Curriculum Studies, University of Hong Kong.


**Title**
Translation of Euphemism: A Case Study of Translation of Euphemism from English into Persian

Authors

Najme Bahrami (M.A)
Shahid Bahonar University, Kerman, Iran

Masoud Sharififar (Ph.D)
Shahid Bahonar University, Kerman, Iran

Biodata

Najme Bahrami is a lecturer of translation at Shahid Bahonar University, Kerman, Iran. Her research interests include translation studies, literary translation and descriptive approach.

Masoud Sharififar, assistant professor of translation at Shahid Bahonar University, Kerman, Iran. His research interests include translation studies, literary translation, prescriptive approach and semiotics.

Abstract

Euphemism is a cultural phenomenon, whose production and application has close connections with social culture. With the rapid development of cross-cultural communication, euphemism is more and more widely used in interpersonal communication. By carrying research on euphemism translation, this study aims at finding effective methods for the translation of euphemisms so as to boost the quality of translation. This paper aimed to adopt corpus-based research to the translation of euphemism. In this study, the parallel corpus consisted of “The treatment of Bibi Haldar” by Jumpa Lahiri (1967) which is translated by Mozhdeh Haghighi (2009) and “pride and prejudice” by Jane Austen (1983) and its translation form Reza Rezai (2006). In order to systematically study the translation solutions, a number of ‘coupled pairs’ consisting of source text and target text were extracted from the original text and its translations. The ‘coupled pairs’ were then analyzed in order to detect regularities in their translation solutions. Therefore; this paper explored and summarized the effective translation strategies for euphemism, that is, understatement, metaphorical transfer, litotes, semantic shift and indirection. These strategies provided the basis for the mutual translation of English and Persian euphemisms.
Key words: Euphemism, Translation, Understatement, Metaphorical transfer

1. Introduction

Euphemism is a common language phenomenon. In daily life, people often use more tactful and gentle words to replace the tabooed, harsh, private or vulgar things. It is a common method of communication used for transmitting ideas and exchanging feelings. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of Euphemism and its translation is becoming increasingly important. By carrying researches on euphemism and its translation from cultural perspectives, we can break the limitations of carrying research only from the linguistic point of view, thus broadening the horizon of research and exploring effective methods for the translation of euphemisms.

Nowadays, euphemism is widely used as a social tool to avoid offending other people and to be polite. Stern (1968) explains that euphemism is used for three reasons: These are to avoid taboo words, to create social politeness, and not to offend other people.

As a common linguistic phenomenon in all languages, euphemisms have been used in all times and all languages. The formation of euphemisms is influenced by the norms and structure of the language wherein they are used. Culture also exerts its influence on the use of euphemisms. Therefore, euphemisms used in one culture can be quite different from those used in another in terms of motivation, formation, and cultural connotation. Besides, situational factors also have an impact on the use of euphemisms. Thanks to linguistic and cultural differences, the translator will encounter various kinds of difficulties in understanding and translating euphemisms.

In addition, some people believe that euphemism can protect them from misfortune. Even more, the use of taboo words is banned in most societies and those who use them will be reprimanded. Euphemism is used in every level of society. Among proletarians, euphemism is employed when they have to speak to their employers. This is to show their respect, humility, and politeness. Also, the bourgeoisie opt for euphemism to make their language less domineering. This also creates a good relationship between the working class people and themselves. High-class people usually reveal and maintain their social status with the use of euphemism as it is regarded as a social norm that they use well chosen language.

Besides, the use of euphemism depends heavily on context. For instance, politicians employ euphemism in order to make eloquent language when they are in public or the assembly.
In diplomacy, euphemism helps maintain a good relationship between nations. Or even in everyday life, people use euphemism as an integral part of their language. Bureaucracies, such as the military and large corporations, frequently coin euphemisms of a more deliberate nature. For instance, militaries at war frequently kill people both deliberately and mistakenly; in doublespeak, the first may be called neutralizing the target and the latter collateral damage. Organizations spawn expressions to describe objectionable actions in terms that seem neutral or inoffensive, so industrial unpleasantness, such as pollution, may be toned down to outgassing or runoff — descriptions of physical processes rather than their damaging consequences (McGlone & Pfiester, 2006, p. 261). Some of this may simply be the application of precise technical terminology in the place of popular usage, but beyond precision, the advantage of technical terminology may be its lack of emotional undertones, while the disadvantage is the lack of real life context.

Words are used in certain situations depending on such factors as formality, speaker-listener relationship, and social norms. Take the three sentences below as an example.

Grandmother died years ago.
Grandmother earned her rest years ago.
Grandmother passed away years ago.

The word die is often used among friends or acquaintances in an informal setting, while the expression earn one’s rest, which has the same meaning as die, seems to sound more polite and acceptable. In a situation where high formality is required, pass away is the best substitute. This awareness is vital in every society, but most people ignore it. As a consequence, euphemism, the use of more acceptable words or expressions in place of unpleasant counterparts, should be systematically studied.

2. Literature Review

In this section, an overview of the previous researches that are considered relevant to the present investigation will be given. Euphemism is believed to date back to Ancient Greek (Neaman & Silver, 1983), where the principal purpose for its existence related to religion. Gods or other divines were words reserved only for the priest to utter in fear of blasphemy and supernatural danger. Therefore, the laymen resorted to using such words as the Thunderer, the Rock, and the
Lord. These words were derived from the god’s characteristics, such as the Thunderer—thunder being the mighty weapon which Zeus used to assume celestial sovereignty.

In the Anglo-Saxon era, the golden age in the expression of language and the source of four-letter words which were innuendos and direct references to sex (Williams, 1975), euphemism was in wide use, as evident in Geoffrey Chaucer’s The Canterbury Tales. The tales contain a range of euphemisms in place of taboo words, such as eyelash for a woman’s intimate part (sexual organ). Later in the sixteenth century, euphemisms proliferated, especially those associated with royalty, religion, and sexual affairs. Classic examples are to put one to misery, and put one to sleep, meaning death.

In the nineteenth century, euphemism had played a vital role for the middle- and lower-classes. The rhyming slang among Cockneys drew on common experience and canny observation. Hundreds of words were coined to replace negative concepts of labor, money, sex, death, and sin. For example, the word servant and garbage collector were euphemized to domestic engineer and sanitation engineer.

During the twentieth century, political and cultural influences had an enormous impact on language, especially American English. This led to a linguistic revolution lasting until the present time. One day it may amuse a linguistic historian to note the richest subjects for American euphemism were money, disease, politics, and war.

It appears that euphemism has long been in use as a social device for various purposes. Its principal objective is to avoid offensive words, however. Euphemisms also manifest the society and time in which they are used.

Ham (2005) diachronically studied the formation of English euphemism by extracting examples from three British novels: Jane Austen’ Emma, D. H. Lawrence’s Lady Chatterly’s Lover, and Fiona Walker’s Well Groomed. In studying euphemism formation, Warren (1992)’s Model of Classification of the Main Devices for Constructing Euphemisms is examined and the rules and categories suggested by this model are tested against euphemisms from the novels. It transpired that improvements were required of the model in order for it to account for all examples. A modified version of this model is proposed to encompass all of these euphemisms, as well as other examples from notable sources.

Fernández (2006) explored the euphemistic language on obituary pages from the mid-nineteenth century. The study traced an account of the different conceptual metaphors aiming at
substituting the notions of death and dying in Irish early Victorian newspapers within Lakoff and Johnson (1980)’s *Conceptual Metaphor Theory*. The results obtained supported the idea that there was a tendency to present sentimental obituaries in which the taboo of death can be accounted for by various conceptual metaphors, most of which view death as a desirable event under the influence of Christian beliefs.

The study by Hai-Long (2008) paid particular attention to two topics: the relationship between cross-cultural communication and euphemisms, and the necessity of learning and teaching euphemisms. The researcher studied the intercultural communication of English and Chinese by investigating how meanings changed, how they were coined, and how English euphemisms were assimilated into Chinese culture. Additionally, the application for teaching English euphemism was proposed as there are not enough instances of euphemisms in textbooks published in China. Teachers of English should provide additional materials to students. For example, teachers may have students watch a film full of euphemisms. This would be of great help.

3. Methodology

The term *euphemism* is derived from two Greek words, *eu* meaning *well* or *sounding good*, and *pheme* signifying *speech*. (Wikipedia) Many linguists have made an attempt to define this term for clarity. Euphemism refers to a kind of linguistic elevation or amelioration specifically directed toward finding socially acceptable words for concepts that many people cannot easily speak of Williams (1975), while this term, according to Neaman and Silver (1983), is a way to substitute an inoffensive or pleasant word for a more explicit, offensive one, thereby veneering the truth by using polite words.

Translation of euphemisms can be categorized into a variety of groups on the basis of semantic procedure, or how euphemistic words are linguistically created. Euphemism is classified into five types (Williams 1975; Neaman & Silver 1983; Shipley 1977. Et.al.) as follows:

3.1. Shortening

When encountering words we dare not mention, we replace them with a shortened word. There are a number of different processes such as abbreviation, apocope, backformation, diminutive, omission and clipping.
3.2. Circumlocution
Allan and Burridge (1991) call using longer expressions *circumlocution*. Euphemisms which have more letters and syllables are deployed in place of a single one.

3.3. Remodelling
The sound of words can be altered to conceal something that is offensive. This can involve a variety of processes of largely verbal play (Allan & Burridge, 1991, p. 3). There are number of different processes: phonological distortion, blending and reduplication.

3.4. Semantic Change
A number of semantic processes can be tools to create new euphemisms:

- 3.4.1. a. Semantic shift
Semantic shift, with reference to Rawson (1983), is the substitution of the whole, or a similar generality, for the specific part we do not choose to discuss. For example, *rear end* becomes *bottom*, or *to sleep with somebody* is transformed into *to go to bed with somebody*.

- 3.4.2. b. Metaphorical transfer
This procedure is a comparison of things of one order to things of another such as a comparison of one flower to another variety. Therefore, the word *pimple* is euphemized as *blossom* (Williams, 1975).

- 3.4.3. c. Widening
When becoming too painful or vivid, a specific term is moved up in the ladder of abstraction. According to Williams (1975), widening minimizes the impact of semantic features of a word by moving up one level of generality to name a super ordinate set, usually omitting the specific features that would unequivocally identify the referent.

- 3.4.4. d. Litotes
This type of euphemism is created by replacing a word with the negative expression of its opposite.

- 3.4.5. e. Understatement
Understatement reduces the risk in showing an apparent meaning. (Rawson, 1983).

- 3.4.6. f. Indirection
Too touchy topics and terms may be alluded to in various ways by mentioning one aspect of the subject, a circumstance involving it, a related subject, or even by saying what it is not. (Rawson, 1983).
3.4.7. g. Abstraction

Some words (it, problem, situation, and thing) help cast ideas in the widest possible terms and make ideal cover-up words. (Rawson, 1983).

3.5. Borrowing

Using words borrowed from foreign languages to function as euphemisms is a common characteristic of many languages and consists of external and internal borrowing.

4. Results and Discussion

This is a product-oriented study, which means that the object of investigation is an existing translation (see e.g. Munday 2001). The study follows the methodology of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), as described by Toury (1995).

In order to try to identify the strategies used to render the euphemism into the TT, the material will be broken down to a number of ‘coupled pairs’ consisting of ST and TT segments. To find the segments to be analyzed, the material will be limited to the parts of the corpus that contain representations of euphemism. The coupled pairs will then be analyzed with the purpose of finding regular patterns in the translation solutions.

The examples extracted from the book “interpretation of maladies” and its translation(ibid):

- **Scorn (page 176)**
  
  ایراد گرفتن (صفحه 351)
  
  According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of understatement for translating the mentioned item.

- **To plague her with such ferocity (page 175)**
  
  به او فشار می‌آورد (صفحه 351)
  
  According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of understatement for translating the mentioned item.

- **Mawkish (page 177)**
  
  پرسوز و گداز (صفحه 351)
  
  According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of metaphorical transfer for translating the mentioned item.

- **Embittered (page 177)**
  
  به شدت افسرده (صفحه 351)
  
  According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of understatement for translating the mentioned item.

- **Less disconsolate (page 177)**
  
  سرحالی‌تر (صفحه 351)
  
  According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of understatement for translating the mentioned item.
According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of litotes for translating the mentioned item.

- Outrageous (page 177)

According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of semantic shift for translating the mentioned item.

- Lost to this world (page 178)

According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of metaphorical transfer for translating the mentioned item.

- Exasperate (page 178)

According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of understatement for translating the mentioned item.

- Indignation (page 196)

The examples extracted from the book “pride and prejudice” and its translation (ibid):

- How can you be so tiresome (page 3)

According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of understatement for translating the mentioned item.

- Nonsense (page 3)

According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of metaphorical transfer for translating the mentioned item.

- Mean understanding (page 4)

According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of litotes for translating the mentioned item.

- Scold (page 4)

According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of understatement for translating the mentioned item.

- It would not be a punishment to me. (page 7)

According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of litotes for translating the mentioned item.
• If you dare (page 31)
• He should be in some danger (page 31)
• Vice (page 34)
• Foolish (page 73)
• Flirt (page 127)

According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of semantic shift for translating the mentioned item.

According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of metaphorical expression for translating the mentioned item.

According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of indirection for translating the mentioned item.

According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of understatement for translating the mentioned item.

According to the above explanations in this example the translator used the strategy of semantic shift for translating the mentioned item.

As is shown above the translators just used one of the strategies for translation of euphemism and do not pay attention to the rest of the above mentioned strategies.

5. Conclusion

This research has demonstrated the range of strategies employed in translating euphemism from Persian into English. However, as shown above all categories presented above, were ignored by the translators except semantic change. In this category also just some of the sub-categories were used.

The data have shown that translators mostly took the advantage of understatement procedure; then they benefited from metaphorical transfer, litotes, and semantic shift and at last indirection. From the discussions and data mentioned above one can conclude that for translating euphemisms from English into Persian understatement use mostly by the translators. However, the data have shown a wide range of strategies open to translators of novels and especially euphemism and that each of these strategies can result in fully legible translations; to claim that one strategy is more effective than another is to impose a structure on this genre which is
untenable. Translators, the experts in both source and target languages and cultures, should be given the freedom to select the most appropriate translation strategy for the translation of euphemisms.

References


Title

Relationship between Social Competence and Iranian EFL Learners’ Academic Achievement across Different Levels
Authors

Mehdi Musavi (M.A)
Shiraz Azad University, Shiraz, Iran

Ghaffar Tajalli (M.A)
Shiraz Azad University, Shiraz, Iran

Mohammad Bagheri (Ph.D)
Shiraz Azad University, Shiraz, Iran

Biodata

Mehdi Musavi, M.A in TEFL from Shiraz Azad University.

Ghaffar Tajalli, M.A in TEFL. He is professor of TEFL at Shiraz Azad University.

Mohammad Bagheri is an assistant professor of TEFL at Shiraz Azad University. His research interest includes psycholinguistics, testing and sociolinguistics.

Abstract

The concept of social competence has attracted a great deal of attention in psychology in general and language teaching in particular. Socially competent learners have shown to be generally in a better position to establish a friendly rapport with their peers, parents, siblings and teachers and also achieve social and academic success. The nature of social competence, its constituent components and its effect on a number of variables have been the focus of a good number of studies. The current study aimed to investigate the relationship between social competence and academic achievement in EFL learners. It also sought to find out whether or not learners’ social competence and their academic achievement differ across levels. 66 male EFL learners in three groups of young beginners, teenage elementary and adult advanced participated in this study. According to the results, learners’ social competence did not have any effect on their academic achievement and their social competence and their academic achievement did not differ across levels.

Keywords: Social Competence, Academic Achievement, Iranian EFL Learners
1. Introduction

1.1 Social Competence

Socially competent learners have been shown to enjoy a number of advantages compared to those lacking it. They generally are able to interact more effectively with others (Waters & Sroufe, 1983; Landau & Milich, 1990; Raver & Zigler, 1997; Rose-Krasnor, 1997; Rubin et al., 1998; Bukowski, Rubin & Parker, 2001), form and maintain friendly relationships with peers (Hartup, 1989, 1992; Raver & Zigler 1997), and they have social information processing skills (Dodge et al., 1986; Goldfried & D'Zurilla, 1969; Spivack & Shure, 1974). Despite its importance, social competence as a human construct is far from being understood as a clear concept. The construct has even failed the researchers’ attempt to reach an agreed-upon definition of social competence. “Although the term Social Competence is widely used in developmental literature, there exists a variety of published definition” (Blumberg, et al., 2008: 177).

Different scholars have proposed a number of key factors which should be taken into account in providing a definition of social competence; for LaFreniere and Cauano (1997) and Raver and Zigler (1997) a general adjustment or adaptation to demands is a key factor that is required to be taken into consideration in any proposed definition of social competence, for Guralnick and Nevile (1997) problem solving skill and for Foster and Ritchey (1979), Rubin and Rose-Kranson (1992), Rubin et al. (1998) effectiveness or successfulness in terms of reaching one’s goals are determining criteria for suggesting an appropriate definition for social competence. Despite the variety of conceptualizations, most definitions of social competence emphasize the importance of effectiveness in interaction as well as knowledge or awareness of the environmental demands of any given situation (Putallaz & Sheppard, 1992; Rubin, et al., 1998).

According to Green and Rechis (2006), Social competence encompasses a variety of social behaviors and capacities that enable individuals to interact more effectively with others (Rose-Krasnor, 1997; Rubin et al., 1998; Bukowski, Rubin & Parker, 2001). These behaviors and capacities have been conceptualized in a number of ways, including specific social skills (Cillessen & Bellmore, 2002; Waters & Sroufe, 1983), friendship formation and maintenance (Hartup, 1989, 1992), peer status (Coie & Dodge, 1983) and social information processing skills” (Dodge, 1986; Goldfried & D'Zurilla, 1969; Spivack & Shure, 1974).

Cavel (1990) views social construct as a multilevel construct which consists of social adjustment, social performance and social skill. He sees social performance and social skill as
two distinct constructs and specifies the difference between them through the following statement: “The difference between social skill and social competence is that social skills are behaviors that have to be acquired and performed, whereas social competence represents the environments values and judgments of these presented behaviors” (Gresham, Sugai & Horner, 2001, cited in Lillvist et al. 2009: 55). Lillvist et al. (2009: 55) point out that “A person can have the necessary social skills to engage in social tasks, but might not know how to coordinate the different skills and execute the task”.

Raver and Zigler (1997) examine social competence from the view point of Gresham (1986) and Cavel (1990) as consisting social skill that the child may utilize in emotional, social, and cognitive domains, and social performance, such as being viewed by teachers, parents and peers as socially mature. They, then, go on to enumerate the criteria that are believed to make up each construct and review the various research dealing with each one. Social skill, they argue, is composed of three skills: a) regulation of one’s own emotions, b) social cognition, and c) social interactions with peers. A number of proposed definitions of social competence have been given in Table 1 taken from Lillvist (2009: 56).

2. Review of the Related Experimental Studies
In his study, Shernoff (2010) operationalized social competence as a construct made of multiple dimensions. A total of seven items, according to him, comprise a scale of social competence which he claimed enjoy acceptable factorial validity and internal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition of social competence</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition of social competence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guralnick, (1990).</td>
<td>The ability of young children to successfully and appropriately select and carry out their interpersonal goals.</td>
<td>White (1959)</td>
<td>An organism’s capacity to interact effectively with its environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raven and Ziegler, (1997).</td>
<td>We often define the capability to feel positively about oneself and to fit in well within a network of positive relationships with family and peers as social competence.</td>
<td>Goldfried and D’ Zurrila (1969)</td>
<td>The effectiveness of adequacy with which an individual is capable of responding to various problematic situations which</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubin and Rose-Kransor, (1992)</td>
<td>The ability to achieve personal goals in social interaction while simultaneously maintaining positive relationships over time and across situations.</td>
<td>O'Mally (1977)</td>
<td>Productive and mutually satisfying interactions between a child and peers or adults.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster and Ritchey, (1979).</td>
<td>Those responses which, within a given situation, prove effective or, in other words, maximize the probability of producing, maintaining, or enhancing positive effects for the interactor.</td>
<td>Waters and Sroufe (1983)</td>
<td>The competent individual is one who is able to make use of environmental and personal resources to achieve a good developmental outcome.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hubbard and Coie, (1994).</td>
<td>Being well-liked by peers” or “being able to influence peers and direct their activities effectively, regardless of liking.</td>
<td>Rubin and Rose-Kransor (1992)</td>
<td>The ability to achieve personal goals in social interaction while simultaneously maintaining positive relationships with others over time and across settings.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

consistency. These dimensions include (a) goal setting and planning (b) conflict resolution, (c) non-conformity, (d) teamwork and (e) perspective-taking. In Shernoff (2010)’s study the relationship between the quality of experience gained in extracurricular activities and social competence and academic achievement was investigated. The results of his study indicate a positive relationship between attending after-school programs and social competence. McCabe (2004) investigated the hypothesis that children with language impairment are not
socially as competent as normal children. In his study two groups of normal and speech impaired children were rated on a number of measures specified as the social competence criteria. The results provided some support for the hypothesis that social skills are somewhat less well-developed in children with speech impairment.

Welsh et al. (2001) set out a longitudinal study to investigate the existence of a reciprocal relationship between social competence and academic achievement. In their study, social and academic measures of competence were accumulated from 163 school-age children in three years from first to third grade. Consistent with previous studies their findings indicated that academic competence in first-grade influenced second-grade social competence, with academic competence being positively related to positive social competence. Lower academic competence in first grade also influenced social competence in second grade, with academic competence being negatively related to negative social competence.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study were 66 male EFL learners studying English in one of Shiraz, (Iran) language schools. They belonged to three different age groups: Group 1: young learners, Group 2: teenagers and Group 3: adults. These learners were randomly selected from three different levels of education who, according to the syllabus of the institution, were perceived as beginning, intermediate and advanced respectively.

22 participants constituted Group 1 (i.e. young beginning learners); their mean age was 11.57 years old and their age ranged from 9.5 to 13.

22 participants constituted Group 2 (i.e. teenage intermediate learners); their mean age was 13.68 years old and their age ranged from 13 to 17.

And finally 22 participants constituted Group 3 (i.e. adult advanced learners); their mean age was 17.23 years old and their age ranged from 13 to 25.

3.2 Materials

Two types of instruments were used to collect data on social competence and academic achievement variable. The first employed instrument for collecting data on learners’ social competence was a 25-item questionnaire developed by Corrigan (2003). The questionnaire tapped into different aspects of social competence. The other instrument which was used to
collect data on academic achievement was their preceding final test scores. Since the participants’ semester had just finished (a session prior to the one in which the questionnaires were distributed) it was possible to use their previous final scores as the criterion for measuring their academic achievement.

3.3 Procedure

Sixty six participants of the study were selected from six classes. Classes A and B constituted of young beginner learners (aged 8-13), Classes C and D, teenage intermediate learners (aged 13-20) and Classes E and F adult advanced learners. From each class the first eleven names in the list were called out to participate in the research (making a total of 66 learners). If a student whose name appeared on the list happened to be absent the one following immediately after him was called. Among these participants only the data of sixty participants were required for analysis. The reason for asking six extra participants was twofold: First, to prevent the outliers negatively affecting the result of the research and second, the sample represents a greater population this way.

Required data regarding participants’ social competence was collected through asking them to fill out a 25-item questionnaire tapping into and probing different dimensions of social competence developed by Corrigan (2003) (Appendix A). The questionnaires were filled out first by young beginner learners (G1) then, teenage intermediate learners (G2) and finally adult advanced learners (G3). They were asked to carefully and patiently read each prompt and select the appropriate responses which mostly characterized them. Because of their limited language knowledge, G1 and G2 were provided with a translated version of the questionnaire (Appendix B). Considering the fact that G1 constituted of learners whose cognition had not fully developed, all prompts were accompanied by researcher’s explanation and paraphrase. G3 received the original questionnaire though the researcher was available to explain every prompt which learners had found difficult to understand.

Data on academic achievement was collected through participants’ performance in their final previous semester tests. Their tests are standardized tests developed by respective curriculum developers. In these tests the utmost attempts have been made to tap into learners’ receptive and productive knowledge in an integrated approach.

4. Results
Once the test was administered and the corresponding data was gathered, data analysis was carried out using the SPSS package. To investigate whether there is a relationship between learners’ social competence and their academic achievement a correlation coefficient test was run and in order to find out whether or not learners’ social competence and their academic achievement differ across levels, one way ANOVA test was run.

In order to investigate the relationship between two variables of social competence and learners’ academic achievement and answer the first research question of the research (i.e. Does social competence have any significant effect on learners’ academic achievement?) correlation coefficient test was employed. The results of the analysis are given in Table 2.

**Table 2** Social competence and academic achievement correlation coefficient

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Correlation coefficient</th>
<th>Alpha level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social competence</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70.11</td>
<td>0.215</td>
<td>0.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic achievement</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>86.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 2 shows the alpha level produced by the employment of correlation coefficient test is 0.099 which is greater than the pre-specified meaningful alpha level of the test which was 0.05. It can be concluded that learners’ social competence does not bear any influence on their academic achievement.

The second research question asked whether learners’ social competence and their academic achievement differ across levels or not. In order to answer the above research question, and by considering the fact that more than two groups of language proficiency learners were involved, the F test or one way ANOVA was employed. The results of the test are provided in Table 3.

**Table 3** The result of F or one way ANOVA test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social competence</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Degree of Freedom</th>
<th>Alpha level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>1.837</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenagers</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young learners</td>
<td>73.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Achievement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Degree of Freedom</th>
<th>Alpha level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>67.6</td>
<td>1.837</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenagers</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young</td>
<td>73.95</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Discussion

A good number of studies done in the field of teaching and psychology with a focus on social competence indicate in general a positive relationship between social competence and other addressed constructs. For example, investigating the degree of social skills in children with speech/language impairment and non-language-impaired children, McCabe (2004) found that social skills are generally less-well-developed in children with language impairment. Also in Welsh et al.’s (2001) longitudinal study a positive relationship between social competence and academic achievement was observed.

However, the results of the current study run against those of others which had had social competence as their focus of study. For this lack of congruity between the results of the current research and those of other research certain possible explanations could be suggested. The first and most important explanation which could be put forward for this contrast could be attributed to the method of collecting data on social competence variable and the way it was measured. In the current research, participants’ social competence was assessed only through a questionnaire which seems not to be effectively capable of assessing participants’ social competence per se.

In most of the studies which had had social competence and its assessment as their focus of study a multitude of methods were employed to collect data for this variable. The application of varying but relevant methods for data collection seems to yield a more comprehensive and therefore more precise assessment of this construct. It seems that assessing so complex a feature like social competence calls for the application of a variety of methods and instruments.

Each method and instrument can tap into a different aspect of a complex construct such as social complex. As far as young children are concerned the importance of collecting data on social competence through other methods gains significant importance. Other methods of data collection include consulting other informants like young children’s parents, teachers and older siblings. The importance of consulting other informants for data collection and deficits of collecting data by means of questionnaire from young children has been captured by Caselman and Self (2008: 108) when they suggest “A multimethod, multisource, and multi-informant
approach is ideal in the early childhood setting because of the importance of home and school settings as well as the child’s inability to provide self-report”.

The other explanation which could be suggested regarding the results of this research pertains to the nature of using the questionnaire as a means of data collection. People generally dislike being judged negatively. They like to reflect a positive image of their character to others. For example, when answering the questionnaire items, they come to questions like “I work/play well without adult support” (prompt No. 5 of the questionnaire) they tend to reply in a way that their answers do not pose a potential threat to their reputations. Participants may find it a damage to their reputation if they choose Not at All item so they prefer to choose items which convey a less negative connotation such as A Little or Moderately Well or even Well items even though they may be completely dependent on their parents in doing their daily activities.

Another reason which may have had a contribution in the observed results relates to the other variable of the study i.e. academic achievement. In the current study, academic achievement was measured by means of participants’ language scores. An individual may receive a high score in language not because of the fact that he possesses features which make a person more successful in language learning for example social skills, rather he may receive a high score because he had attended language class earlier than other learners or he may have had an extra language exposure beside his regular English class. In assessing academic achievement, other researchers like Welsh et al (2001) and Shernoff (2010) used mathematics grades along with language scores as their criterion for academic achievement. Therefore it seems reasonable to use more than one subject score as the criterion for assessing language achievement.

6. Conclusion

A good understanding of the nature of social competence and its characteristics along with the awareness of the ways it can be enhanced can come to our aid in helping people especially young children with socializing problems. We can help them interact more constructively with peers and sublimate their energies to more positive feelings and activities which could otherwise be directed to deconstructive ones. For example, we can help them better understand the feelings of another peer or sympathize with their friends when they are in trouble.

We, as language teachers, are constantly reminded of the importance of affective domain as well as the cognitive one (Piaget1929; Vygotsky 1978; Brown 1994; Brown 2001; Lantolf
the significance of creating a happy context for learning in which learners lower their defenses and do not bring their undue inhibitions and fears with them to the context of learning (Brown 2001). How possibly could learners feel happy and secured without being able to communicate freely with their peers and teachers? Without being able to initiate a conversation, maintain it and terminate it appropriately? Without being able to solve their problems in a classroom context? And finally without being able to set some goals for themselves to achieve in the long run?

Part of our duty as language teachers is to develop social skills in those individuals who completely lack them and enhance them in those whose social skills are not fully developed. From time to time we should relinquish our roles as language teachers, as deliverers of knowledge and assume more of a consultant role who after diagnosing a behavior problem tries to cure it through consultation and guidelines with his client.

References


APPENDIX A
(The original questionnaire developed by Corrigan, 2003)

Social Competence Scale

Please rate each of the listed behaviors according to how well it describes you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>A little</th>
<th>Moderately well</th>
<th>Well</th>
<th>Very well</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) I function well even with distractions.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) I can accept things not going my way.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) I cope well with failure.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) I am a self-starter.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) I work/play well without adult support.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) I accept legitimate imposed limits.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) I express needs and feelings appropriately.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) I think before acting.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) I resolve peer problems on my own.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) I stay on task.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) I can calm down when excited or all wound up.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12) I can wait in line patiently when necessary.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) I am very good at understanding other people's feeling.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) I am aware of the effect of my behavior on others.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) I work well in a group.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) I play by the rules of the game.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) I pay attention.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18) I control temper when there is a disagreement.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19) I share materials with others.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20) I cooperate with peers without directions.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21) I follow teacher's verbal direction.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22) I am helpful to others.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23) I listen to other's points of view.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24) I can give suggestions and opinions without being too bossy.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25) I act friendly toward others.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B
(The translated version of the questionnaire)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>هرگز</th>
<th>کمی</th>
<th>تا حدی خوب</th>
<th>خوب</th>
<th>خیلی خوب</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>با وجود موانع کارم را خوب انجام می‌دهم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>می‌ترکم انجام کارهایی را که مورد دلخواه من نیست پایدارم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>شکست را را می‌پذیرم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>آدم مستقل و خودجوشی هستم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>بدون کمک یکی می‌توانم ما کارم را خوب انجام می‌دهم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>محدودیت‌های تحمیلی و قانونی را می‌پذیرم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>نیازهای و احساساتم را به نحو مشابهی ای بپنام می‌کنم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>قبل از هر کاری فکر می‌کنم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مشکلاتی را که از طرف هم سال‌های خودم به وجود می‌آیند خودم حل می‌کنم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>کارم را به تمامی می‌رسانم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>وقتی که هیچ‌یک زده و عصبانیتی هستم آرامش خودم را حفظ می‌کنم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>وقتی لازم باشد حس اینی در صفح می‌ایستم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>احساسات دیگران را به خوبی درک می‌گنم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>از تاثیر رفتار خود بر دیگران کاملاً آگاه هستم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>کار گروهی را خوب انجام می‌دهم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تازگی و انرژی در مراها می‌کنم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>وقتی اخلاقناب‌هست از کروه در نمی‌روم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>در استفاده از چپ‌ها یا رسوم دیگران از رسمیم می‌گویم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>بدون گرفتن دستور از دیگران با همکاران‌ام همکلاسیان جویم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>همکاری می‌کنم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>گفتگو به و دستورالعمل‌های معلم را می‌گذارم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>به دیگران کمی می‌کنم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>به دیگران کمی می‌گویم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>می‌توانم بپیشنهداشم و نظراتم را به‌دنی که رئیس مانند باشد ارائه دهم.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Title

Interlingual Interference in English Language Order of Prenominal Adjectives: A Context of Iranian Pre-advanced Learners

Authors

Rozana Shamsabadi (Ph.D Candidate)
University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

Daryoosh Nejadansari (Ph.D)
University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

Biodata

Rozana Shamsabadi, Ph.D. candidate of TEFL at University of Isfahan, Iran and is currently teaching various courses at different Faculties of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences. Her present research aims at investigating the interference of L1 (Persian) syntactic structures on L2 (English) Order of Prenominal Adjectives amongst Iranian learners of English.

Daryoosh Nejadansari, assistant professor and academic member of the University of Isfahan. He has been teaching at different levels in English Department of the Faculty of Foreign Languages. His areas of interest are issues in second language acquisition and translation.

Abstract

In their study of English as a Second or as a foreign Language, students learn that some adjectives can be used to modify a subject in a sentence. So, they must be very careful in using the adjectives in correct order in the sentence. Because there is the issue of wrong ordering of adjectives, learners of English as a Second Language well must learn the standard order of adjectives in English language such as articles, judgment, size, shape, age, color, nationality, material, purpose, etc. This study aimed at investigating the interference of L1 (Persian) syntactic structures on L2 (English) Order of Prenominal Adjectives amongst Iranian learners of English. The focus of the study was on the errors committed by Iranian EFL learners in using one special order within simple sentence structure. To find out the impact of their L1 adjective order on their L2 choice of adjectival structures, the errors committed by two groups of EFL learners were investigated. To achieve these objectives, a multiple-choice test was utilized in this study. The findings of the study suggest that
the subjects committed a total of 360 interlingual errors with respect to English sentences adjective order. Based on these findings, pedagogical implications such as the major causes of such errors in classroom and communication contexts for language instructors and material designers are discussed. This way, useful and applicable decisions to detect these errors and erroneous structures can be made so that the percentages of errors in this specific case of English structure can be reduced. The implications for material developers are mostly to draw their attention toward designing more tasked-based course books for Iranian English learners, so that this approach becomes the dominant one in teaching contexts and classrooms. The findings also suggested that instructing the adjective order of English using some task-based practices such as role playing and accomplishing some tasks in the form of real life scenarios would help learners accomplish the objectives of learning English grammar.

**Keywords:** Interlingual, Interference, Prenominal, Adjectives order, task-based practices

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

##### 1.1.1 EFL in Iran

In Iran, English is considered as a foreign language (FL) and taught at guidance school and university. Persian is the lingua franca so it is not commonly used in our country. In fact, in all schools and for all academic subjects and university majors except English language as the major, Persian is the medium of instruction and English is considered as a foreign language. English is only taught as a subject. As a result, there is not much opportunity for Iranian EFL learners to speak and communicate in the target language outside the classroom. In Iranian schools, teaching English is not included in the teaching process and schedule. The fundamental aims of teaching English at the secondary level are to enable learners to read and speak in English in a way which will enable them to communicate in a fluent way but not much fluent, to translate their major’s texts to Persian for academic purposes such as gaining a better mark on a course. As a result of not much importance given to English curriculum, it is generally observed that students are unable to write a simple meaningful sentence without committing an error. In
fact, there is a predicted deterioration in the standards of English language proficiency in
schools. Teachers, university professors, and educators in Iran have frequently reminded this
problem. As a result, the need for more planned studies to acknowledge particular areas of
difficulty that Iranian students face in their acquisition of English is deeply felt.

Consequently, existence of such a situation in Iran causes Iranian English learners to
commit many syntactic errors while learning English. So, it is intended in this study to explore
the carry-over of syntactic structures from L1 to L2 by Iranian EFL learners, closely focusing on
order of prenominal adjectives in English and their occurrences in Persian. Persian EFL
learners’ errors have been researched much, but the literature suggests that there is limited
research on adjective order errors. Surprisingly, prenominal adjective order differences
between Iranian and English represents one of the problems faced by Iranian learners of
English. To reach the goals of the study, the frequent errors with respect to prenominal adjective
order in English sentences made by the participants are investigated.

1.2. Adjective Order in Persian and English
Al-Khresheh (2010) states that “word order could be defined as the syntactic arrangement of
words in a sentence, clause, or phrase or more simply the order in which words occur in
sentences”. Furthermore, the different ways in which languages place the constituents of their
sentences next to each other is regarded as word order (O’Grady, 1996).  Word order differences
in Persian and English represent one of the causes of the problems encountered by Iranian EFL
learners in producing structures containing a number of prenominal adjectives. Persian shows
more flexibility in the movement and arrangement of its components .In other words; Persian is
more tolerant of variations in adjective order. In another word, Persian has a relatively free word
order. In the arrangement of a large number of prenominal (presence of age, color, material etc.
prenominal) in Persian syntactic structures, it usually shows high flexibility while imposing no
modification semantically in the speech of the speaker or writing of the author. It means that “all
different adjective orders are possible”.

In contrast, prenominal adjective order in English is articles, judgment, size, shape, age,
color, nationality , material and purpose and any modifications to this order can cause an
utterance to be ungrammatical from an English grammarian’s point of view. For instance, a
sentence like “Genny left this foul rotten two-week old banana” can only be stated in one way. In
Persian, however, the same meaning could be conveyed using different adjective orders. Table 1.1 includes some various Persian adjective orders of the same English sentence.

Table 1.1. Some various Persian adjective orders of the above English sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure:1</th>
<th>Genny in moze gandideye kharabo k male do hafte pishe gozashte inja</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genny this banana foul rotten two-week old left</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure:2</td>
<td>Genny in moze kharab k male do hafte pishe o gandide ra inja gozashto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genny this banana rotten two-week old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure:3</td>
<td>Genny in moze k male do hafte pishe o kharab o gandidast o gozashto inja</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Genny this bannana two-week old rotten</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Except so many mistakes of English Language Learners (ELLs) in putting adjectives in their appropriate position in the sentence structure that are based on learners’ country of origin, there are some common universal mistakes. Word order for non-native speakers of English is confusing. Many languages like Persian simply do not have equivalent word order to that found in English. As a result, they produce so many strange sentences at beginning levels of learning the language. For instance, in Persian, the adjective often comes after the noun, but in English that is not the norm. So, they might say:

a. Man golhaye banafsh ra dust daram
   I. the flowers purple like

b. I like the purple flowers

As Linda white (2003:221) claimed, “in Romance languages such as French and Spanish as well as East Asian languages such as Persian, Chinese, Japanese and Korean, number features are strong and nouns must raise overtly from N to Num for feature-checking purposes, over any adjectives that may be present”. These results in the noun adjective (NAdj) order typical of Romance, as shown in the Spanish example. In English, on the other hand, Num features are weak, nouns do not raise and the word order is adjective noun (AdjN).

a. la blusa roja the blouse red
b. the red blouse

In other words, parallel to the situation with respect to the position of the verb in the clause, cross linguistic differences in the position of the noun in the DP are determined by feature strength (white 2003).
In brief, there is the possibility for existence of a variety of word-order differences if this fact that features strength in functional categories is different, is assumed. So strong or weak features behave differently with respect to word order. According to White (2005:230),” various word-order alternations between French and English (including others that have not been mentioned here) can be accounted for by one parametric difference between the two languages, namely the strength of V-related features in I”. A range of differences between languages like German and English can be accounted for by two properties; the underlying position of the verb and the strength of features in C. Differences in adjective placement between Romance languages and Germanic languages can be accounted for in terms of the strength of features inNum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVALUATION</th>
<th>APPEARANCE/QUALITY</th>
<th>AGE/PERIOD</th>
<th>ORIGIN/MATERIAL</th>
<th>TYPE/FUNCTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table. 1.2. English pronominal adjective order

Based on many language teachers’ experience, learning has been regarded as a challenging task by many EFL learners. They find many aspects of English as a second language so much confusing and difficult. So this news that they are capable of utilizing many available resources helpful in exploring the world of language learning toward becoming a perfect language user is so amazing for non-native speakers of English. To solve the problem of many L2 learners, it is worth announcing that there are variety of websites that can aid by providing tips and strategies of learning and applying Correct Order of Adjectives in L2. Producing written forms of language, they feel like having enough knowledge of the L2 adjective system but may find it difficult to implement their declarative knowledge when it comes to practice. That is the reason for making this area open to research.

This is apparently evident that there are some similarities between Persian and English. Consequently, Iranian EFL learners transfer certain forms from their own language to English. Investigating Persian-speaking students’ English essay, the over use of adjective word order is
evident. Based on this view, prenominal adjective order in written form of production of Iranian EFL learners is extremely common but English native speakers rarely utilize it (Ostler, 1987). Whilst there is much research done on Persian EFL learners’ errors, the literature suggests that there is limited research on adjective order errors. This is surprising given that prenominal adjective order differences between Iranian and English represents one of the major problems faced by Iranian learners of English. Language instructors and teachers can make use of the information provided by awareness of the errors committed by students so they can diagnose the weaknesses of Iranian students. In addition to this point, as this study concentrates on the concept of Inter language interference, it is regarded as an unfamiliar concept to EFL Iranian teachers in the process of teaching English. Consequently, the results of the present study may be helpful to Iranian English curriculum designers, as they can make use of this data to evaluate and review the objectives of teaching English at university level. The data from this study can also aid language instructors and material developers to reflect on teaching grammatical rules to the learners, especially prenominal word order resulting in fundamental revisions to lead to more effective teaching and learning processes to take place.

To add to the previous points, this study mainly aims to shed light on the interference of Persian syntactic structures into English by Iranian EFL learners with respect to prenominal adjective order as this syntactic category has been rarely investigated. More specifically, this study has three main objectives: (1) to investigate the frequency of interlingua errors committed by Iranian EFL learners with respect to prenominal adjective order formula of English language, (2) to explore the causes of these interlingual errors committed by Iranian EFL learners, (3) to find out how differently task-based practices and explicit instruction affect Iranian EFL learners in committing interlingual errors with respect to prenominal adjective sort of English.

2. Previous studies on Order of Adjectives

Variety of researchers with different positions toward knowledge of English syntax has tried to investigate the learners’ development of order of adjectives systems. Studies of order of adjectives acquisition were fundamentally part of research into L2 acquisition (Cinque, 1994). Researchers in this domain were mainly into testing the syntactic proposal. According to Cinque (1994:98)’s syntactic proposal, “plain adjectives are generated in the Specifier position.
of dedicated functional heads, and the order of these with respect to each other is a principle of universal grammar”. For example, if there is an adjective of color, it will take the Specifier position of a Color P; if it conveys size, it will occupy the specified of a Size P; and the grammatical restriction imposes that Size P dominates Color P. In other words, there is a putative correlation between the lexical semantics of a given adjective and its syntactic representation, which guarantees that plain adjectives will always be strictly ordered. Under the Clinquant approach, plain adjectives are generated as specifies of dedicated functional projections. Since the order of functional heads is established by the universal grammar and therefore is unique, plain adjectives are predicted to always be strictly ordered. However, we have seen above that this class of adjectives is not homogenous. Plain adjectives actually come in two flavors: operator adjectives and non-operator ones. The first class of adjectives shows free orderings, while the second shows fixed orderings. In several studies, it has been argued that AO is solely “determined by the pragmatic demands of the communication situation” (Danks & Glucksberg 1971: 66; cf. also Danks & Schwenk 1972, 1974), i.e. by a pragmatic communication rule which states that adjectives are primarily ordered according to the adjectives ’ discriminative potential: more discriminating adjectives precede less discriminating ones. However, Martin and Ferb (1973; cf. also Richards 1974) object to Danks and Glucksberg’s view that the semantic and psychological factors influencing AO only constitute the high-frequency case of a purely pragmatic principle, arguing for the existence of two fundamentally different kinds of AO, normal AO (as investigated here) and contextually/pragmatically constrained AO, along the following lines: (i) whereas in normal preferred order the syntax is multibranching , in contextually constrained preferred order it is right-branching (cf. above); (ii) juncture between the adjectives is observable only with contextually constrained preferred order (cf. also Martin 1970: 382); (iii) in contextually constrained preferred AO, stress is on the first adjective, whereas in normal preferred order, stress remains constant or increases slightly from the first to the last adjective in a string (cf. also Teyssier 1968: 236); (iv) in contextually constrained preferred order, sequencing is “constrained by the contextually determined order of the sub-classification of the denotation of the noun” (Martin & Ferb 1973: 75), in normal preferred order, other factors like semantic closeness etc. influence the arrangement; Much linguistic research has investigated the semantic constraints behind prenominal modifier orderings. One common line of research suggests that modifiers can be organized by the underlying semantic property they describe and
that there is an ordering on semantic properties which in turn restricts modifier orderings. For instance, Sproat and Shih (1991) contend that the size property precedes the color property and thus “small black cat” sounds more fluent than “black small cat”. Using > to denote precedence of semantic groups, some commonly proposed orderings are: quality > size > shape > color > provenance (Sproat and Shih, 1991), age > color > participle > provenance > noun > denominal (Quirk et al., 1974), and value > dimension > physical property > speed > human propensity > age > color (Dixon, 1977). However, correctly classifying modifiers into these groups can be difficult and may be domain dependent or constrained by the context in which the modifier is being used. In addition, these methods do not specify how to order modifiers within the same class or modifiers that do not fit into any of the specified groups.

In addition, a variety of corpus-based, computational approaches have emerged. Mitchell (2009) uses a class-based approach in which modifiers are grouped into classes based on which positions they prefer in the training corpus, with a predefined ordering imposed on these classes. Shaw and Hatzivassiloglou (1999) developed three different approaches to the problem that use counting methods and clustering algorithms, and Malouf (2000) expands upon Shaw and Hatzivassiloglou’s work. This approach has not been used before to solve the prenominal modifier ordering problem, and as we demonstrate, vastly outperforms the state-of-the-art, especially for sequences of longer lengths.

Mitchell (2009) orders sequences of at most 4 modifiers and defines nine classes that express the broad positional preferences of modifiers, where position 1 is closest to the noun phrase (NP) head and position 4 is farthest from it. Classes 1 through 4 comprise those modifiers that prefer only to be in positions 1 through 4, respectively. Class 5 through 7 modifiers prefer positions 1-2, 2-3, and 3-4, respectively, while class 8 modifiers prefer positions 1-3, and finally, class 9 modifiers prefer positions 2-4. Mitchell counts how often each word type appears in each of these positions in the training corpus. If any modifier’s probability of taking a certain position is greater than a uniform distribution would allow, then it is said to prefer that position. Each word type is then assigned a class, with a global ordering defined over the nine classes. Given a set of modifiers to order, if the entire set has been seen at training time, Mitchell’s system looks up the class of each modifier and then orders the sequence based on the predefined ordering for the classes. When two modifiers have the same class, the system picks between the possibilities randomly. If a modifier was not seen at training time and thus cannot be said to belong to a
specific class, the system favors orderings where modifiers whose classes are known are as close to their classes’ preferred positions as possible. Shaw and Hatzivassiloglou (1999) use corpus based counting methods as well. For a corpus with w word types, they define a $w \times w$ matrix where $\text{Count}[A, B]$ indicates how often modifier A precedes modifier B. Given two modifiers A and B to order, they compare $\text{Count}[a, b]$ and $\text{Count}[b, a]$ in their training data. Assuming a null hypothesis that the probability of either ordering is 0.5, they use a binomial distribution to compute the probability of seeing the ordering $<a, b>$ for $\text{Count}[a, b]$ number of times. If this probability is above a certain threshold then they say that a precedes b.

Shaw and Hatzivassiloglou also use a transitivity method to fill out parts of the Count table where bigrams are not actually seen in the training data but their counts can be inferred from other entries in the table, and they use a clustering method to group together modifiers with similar positional preferences.

Stefanie Wulff (2003) in his paper "a multifactorial corpus analysis of adjective order in English" is concerned with the question of which factors govern prenominal adjective order (AO) in English. In particular, the analysis aims to overcome shortfalls of previous analyses by, firstly, adopting a multifactorial approach integrating all variables postulated in the literature, thereby doing justice to the well-established fact that cognitive and psychological processes are multivariate and complex. Secondly, the phenomenon is investigated on the basis of a large corpus, rendering the results obtained more representative and valid of naturally occurring language than those of previous studies. To conclude, its analysis has shown that AO, although superficially a purely syntactic phenomenon, was shown to be determined by a variety of variables from different levels of linguistic analysis. Moreover, the corpus based methodology adopted here was demonstrated to be a widely applicable tool for linguistic analysis; the corpus-linguistic operationalization found for some of the variables which were included may be employed for the analysis of various other phenomena. They could also be relatively easily applied automatically to other texts, as they – with the exception of the semantic classes – exclusively rely on information that can be directly extracted from the corpus (annotations).

3. Purpose of the research

Getting involved in the boring process of memorizing grammatical rules like the present study’s case of order of adjectives by FLLs in our English classes, promotes many language instructors
and material designers to look for new gates toward recognizing students’ requirements for having a better comprehension of the grammar rules with not much effort to utilize from their memories or get influenced by their L1. The current study aims at acknowledging particular areas of difficulty that Iranian students face in their acquisition of English prenominal word order. This study has tried to investigate the interference of L1 (Persian) syntactic structures on L2 (English) Order of Prenominal Adjectives amongst Iranian learners of English. The focus of the study is on the errors committed by these EFL learners in using one special adjective order within adjectival phrases and sentence structure. As the objective of the study, the errors committed by these EFL learners are investigated, so we can find out the impact of their L1 adjective order on their L2 choice of adjectival structures. Besides, this study has tried to investigate the role of the modern approach of task-based toward teaching and learning English grammar rules.

As a result, from a pedagogical point of view, there is a need for research that helps to identify the best ways to integrate English structure teaching with the new and innovative approaches to language teaching such as task-based one. All teaching techniques utilized in language teaching classes, aim to facilitating and internalizing the new structures specially those which look much different from students’ L1. In the case of the present study, interference of L1 in learning prenominal adjective order, few studies have been conducted. This study also intended to shed light on the extent to which pre-advanced level Iranian EFL learners commit interlingual errors with respect to prenominal adjectives order of English and the causes of such interlingual errors. It was also designed to identify how the proper activities and task-based practices provide optimal opportunities for English adjective order learning and retention in foreign language learning context of Iran. Hence, the following research questions were addressed:

Q1: To what extent do pre-advanced level Iranian EFL learners commit interlingual errors with respect to prenominal adjectives order of English?
Q2: What causes Iranian EFL learners to commit interlingual errors with respect to prenominal adjectives order of English?
Q3: How differently do task-based practices and explicit instruction affect Iranian EFL learners in committing interlingual errors with respect to prenominal adjectives order of English?

4. Methodology
4.1. Participants
Thirty learners including two equal groups of 15 students in each group (the total of 16 male students and 14 female students) participated in this study. They were all students of Medical University of Esfahan, Iran, majoring in technical orthopedics with just the prior knowledge of English at high school level and not any participation in English institutes except high school classes (pre-intermediate level students). They were enrolled in an ESP course taught by the author. To select the sample of the current study, intact sampling method was used since it is considered as one of the best methods to obtain a representative sample and usually involves less time and expense. ‘Persian’ is the common language spoken at their homes and schools. The subjects are homogeneous in terms of their linguistic, educational, and socioeconomic background. They live in an exclusively Persian-speaking community where colloquial Persian is their medium of instruction, and the only way to learn and speak English is through formal instruction at schools and at most 6 units at universities.

4.2. Instrumentation and Procedure
To fulfill the main objectives of this study as measuring the influence of inter lingual interference of Persian on learners’ knowledge of English prenominal word order structure as well as the frequency of the committed errors, 20 multiple choice questions which require answer choices were designed and employed in the study. The mentioned groups received a pre-test a week prior to the instruction sessions and a post-test, immediately the day following the second instruction session was finished. The time allocated or the answering test was 30 minutes. After it was done, the mean score for the subjects’ responses were calculated and the total score for each subject is from 0–20.

The control group did just receive explicit instruction by the author. The experimental group participated in a two-session instruction of adjectives order in English sentences. In addition, they were instructed to participate in activities including some task-based practices by role playing and accomplishing some tasks in the form of real life scenarios such as, one participant asking another participant playing the role of a shop keeper to bring a shirt with some specific features such as a special color, material, nationality, etc.

A 20-item test is considered more than sufficient for the objectives of the present study since it is evident in the literature that other studies concerning the issue of word order have used 10-item tests. Participants were given an adjective order task in the form of multiple choices,
developed by the researchers. The task was adopted from two online English teaching and testing websites.

There was variety of reasons behind choosing a multiple choice test in this study. Lim (1998:103) claims that “it saves time and therefore avoids need less disruption of normal schedules as the test could be concurrently presented to the subjects of the study”. Moreover, it reduces the risk of “learners’ poor proficiency” as they are less likely to commit errors resulting from poor listening and oral skill.

Harmer (2002:76) also points out that “multiple choice items could be considered as an ideal test to measure students’ knowledge of grammar and they are easy to analyze”. So for subjects of the present study, Iranian university students, who face much difficulty in writing in English, a multiple-choice test was used to facilitate the process of achieving the objectives of this study. The items in the multiple-choice test are based on Persian and English adjective orders and their relevant sentence structures. The items contain three options or answer choices. These three options are constructed as follows: two options are based on Persian structures (two different adjective order structures possible in Persian), and the other is the correct option. In other words, each of the 20 test items consists of two distracters (based on Persian structure) and the correct option (based on English structure). A three-option multiple-choice is regarded more reliable than four-option multiple-choice tests. Cashin and Theis (1993:777) state that “students perform considerably better on three options items than four option items, and that this improves validity of the test items. Three-option multiple-choice tests could be considered better measure of students’ knowledge and students are less distracted in the three option situation and can complete the items more quickly than with four options”.

5. Findings

In this study, thirty learners including two equal groups of 15 students in each group participated in the test which was designed to measure the pre-intermediate level students’ knowledge of English prenominal adjective word order. As a result 600 answers were obtained in this study. Standard deviation, incorrect answers and percentage errors were calculated. To show descriptive analysis of the errors committed by the subjects Tables 5.1 and 5.2 are drawn.
The obtained results from the total of responses to the test items show that the total number of errors by students is 360 out of 600 possible answers, which makes 60% of the whole answers by them. Additionally, the total average number of errors committed by students is 18 and the standard deviation is 3.11. The results show that item 2 is the most and item 9 is the least problematic one for the students with maximum value of 90% and minimum value of 20%.

Table 5.1: Descriptive analysis of the scores on prenominal adjective order test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Of Scores</th>
<th>20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Standard</td>
<td>3.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance (SD)</td>
<td>9.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So investigating the present study data, we find out that standard deviation is a small one which results in a high reliability. The results are illustrated in figure 5.1 diagrammatically.

Figure 5.1: The percentages of simple sentence structure word order errors for each item
After illustrating the percentages of errors concerning English prenominal word order committed by 30 pre-intermediate level students, we find out that item 2 has the highest percentage (90%) and item 9 has the lowest percentage of errors (20%).

This data indicates that the occurrence of interlingual errors from L1 causes 60% of the answers to be incorrect. Evidently the probability for choosing the two wrong Persian like choices by the learners is proved to be higher than that of choosing English correct choice. This indicates that there is a significant difference between their wrong and right answers that consequently result in the errors due to the influence of the students’ L1. (P<0.05)

6. Discussion
To sum up the whole point of the study, it is worth reminding the differences between Persian and English with regard to prenominal adjective word order. For example, Persian shows more flexibility in the movement and arrangement of its components. In other words; Persian is more tolerant of variations in adjective order. In another word, Persian has a relatively free word order. In contrast, prenominal adjective order in English is articles, judgment, size, shape, age, color, nationality, material and purpose and any modifications to this order can cause an utterance to be ungrammatical from an English grammarian’s point of view.

As a result of these differences the EFL students’ L1 seems to have an impact on their L2. Further elaboration and explanations are found in the discussion of research questions below.

6.1. Data Analysis and Discussion
In this section of the study, it is tried to answer three research questions in details:
Q1: To what extent do pre-advanced level Iranian EFL learners commit interlingual errors with respect to prenominal adjectives order of English?
Based on the obtained results of the study, 30 of the participants in the study committed a total of 360 errors with regard to the prenominal adjective order of English which is more than 59% of the whole number of 600 answers obtained in the data collection.

Besides, item 9 had the lowest percentage of 20% which was mostly attribute to the influence of their knowledge of English grammar with regard to the grammar word last. This item was scored with the smallest percentage of errors 20% which was due to the low interference from their first language, Persian. This indicates that the smallest number of the subjects selected the wrong answer represented by options b and c. This item is as follows:
9. The ……….. visitors were Japanese.
   a. last two late ……….last + number + adjective (the correct option)
   *b. two last late ……….number + last + adjective
   *c. late two last ………. adjective + number + last

   Furthermore, item number 2 had the highest percentage of errors, with a percentage of 90%. Vividly, this proves the fact that this item was wrongly answered by students who chose either a or c options. The percentage of 90% was mostly attributed to the influence of their L1, Persian.

2. It is ………. company.
   *a. an old famous family
   b. a famous old family …….(the correct option)
   *c. a family famous old

Discussion of Research Question 2:
In this section of the study, it is tried to answer the second research question:

Q2: What causes Iranian EFL learners to commit interlingual errors with respect to prenominal adjectives order of English?

According to the data obtained from this study, the results indicate that the focused errors of the participants of the study with respect to the English prenominal adjective order are attributed to the impact of their L1, Persian. Additionally, their errors can be due to the interference of L1 structures to the acquisition of their L2, English.

To sum up these findings on the errors committed by Iranian university learners, it can be assumed that interlingual errors with respect to English prenominal adjective order were caused as a result of word-for-word translation (literal translation) from Persian sentences. The ultimate result was that the learners combined the English sentence words with Persian structures as a result of not being able to imagine, concentrate, live and think in English.

Their attempts to understand English, communicate in it and take English tests by a spontaneous reliance on their L1 creates the source of their errors since their L1 is totally different from English especially in the present case of adjective order.

So it can be concluded that these interlingual errors of ordering adjectives in English by pre advanced learners in the present study are as a result of their L1 habits. The study and its data analysis suggests that the students’ knowledge of Persian affects their
understanding of English adjective order too much. The results seem to indicate the students lack of knowledge of English adjective order of articles, judgment, size, shape, age, color, nationality, material and purpose. It is also suggested that the influence from Persian`s word order specially the order of adjective which is the main point of this study is strong.

This section discusses the answer to the third research question the research question:

Q3: How differently do task-based practices and explicit instruction affect Iranian EFL learners in committing interlingual errors with respect to prenominal adjectives order of English?

Comparing the scores obtained in two control and experimental groups, it can be implied that the latter group outperformed the former one. Table .6.1 shows the means and standard deviations of each group in the multiple choice test. As it is obvious, the mean scores of tests revealed a sharp decline in control group whose members received the teacher`s instruction but no task-based practices was included in the teachers ` instruction.

**Table6.1. Means and Standard deviations of the two groups in multiple choice test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEST</th>
<th>Group A (Instruction)</th>
<th>Group B (Instruction+ Task-Based Practices),</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n=15</td>
<td>n= 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>10.08</td>
<td>14.250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>2.54032</td>
<td>3.02827</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To analyze the data, an independent t-test to compare the mean scores and significance level of experimental and control groups on multiple choice tests was used. The results demonstrated that T is 4.17 and two groups are different at p<.05 level. According the result of this study, task based practices can enhance and improve EFL learners capacity for learning English adjectives order. Based on the obtained results, the students who were taught the focused structure of prenominal word order using task-based significantly performed better than students who were taught by the traditional direct instruction. As the results of this study indicate, task-based practices and explicit instruction in combination creates
a positive effect on learners capacity for learning skills such as knowledge of language structure.

7. Implications of the Study

In this study, it was aimed to study syntactic category of prenominal adjectives order and the relevant interlingual errors made by Iranian EFL learners. Since these errors are committed by Iranian EFL learners at pre-intermediate level studying in an Iranian university, the results of the study obtained after the data analysis offer logical explanations for the occurrence of such errors as one of the most frequent experienced erroneous structures in the process of second language acquisition among this group of learners and other similar ones at the same or similar level of English learning in Iranian university contexts. Considering the results of the study, it plausibly has implications for about the major causes of such errors in classroom and communication contexts for language instructors and material designers. This way, useful and applicable decisions to detect these errors and erroneous structures can be made so that the percentages of errors in this specific case of English structure can be reduced. Additionally, it was aimed to highlight interlingual interference from learners’ L1 prenominal adjective order, resulting to be different from other studies done in the same area. The focused errors in this study are regarded as one of the major linguistic factors which may affect foreign language acquisition. The implications for material developers are mostly to draw their attention toward designing more task-based course books for Iranian English learners, so that this approach becomes the dominant one in teaching contexts and classrooms. It consequently would lead to minimizing L1 interference as much as possible.

The researchers suggest here some pedagogical implications which should be taken into account with reference only to the Iranian EFL context. First, it is suggested that syntactic category such as word order structure should be given much attention while teaching EFL learners. This can be achieved by providing learners with boundaries and margins while teaching such syntactic category. Second, EFL Iranian teachers should be aware of areas of similarities and differences between Persian and English in order to avoid the areas of differences and enhance their teaching by using the areas which are similar. Third, teachers should give confidence and persuade their students to learn most of the syntactic rules which make them able to write English successfully without committing errors. Finally and based on the analysis of the errors committed in the current study, it is suggested that material developers insist more in preparing more task-based approaches in
designing course books for Iranian EFL learners to minimize L1 interference as much as possible.

Regarding the implications, suggestions and recommendations presented by the author, some useful recommendations for further research are suggested. Taking the results of the study into account, interference from Persian has been recognized as the most affecting factor in causing university students errors. Consequently, future interested researchers in the area of English structure teaching and its obstacles are recommended to conduct a study to show the possibility of decreasing interference by attracting the teachers to pay a closer attention to teaching and highlighting English in different stages of primary, guidance school and high school in Iranian educational system. Second, it is also beneficial for improving the Iranian youth general English knowledge if we invest more on research projects on other syntactic categories such as conditionals, coordination, noun phrase, verb phrase, copula, subject-verb agreement, and pronouns. Third, it is also recommended that extra study on inter lingual prenominal adjective order errors should be conducted on speakers of other languages with different cultural backgrounds. Fourth, conducting studies in semantic errors of university students is recommended.

All we hope is future studies of linguistic errors to give more useful insights into the strategies that Iranian students utilize in the acquisition of English as a foreign language.

References


Title
Non-Equivalence in Technical Language of Cell Phones
A Case Study of Persian and English Languages

Authors

Ghazal Saeedfar (M.A)
Amin Institute of Higher Education

Amir Hossein Mirsalehian (M.A)
Amin Institute of Higher Education

Biodata

Ghazal Saeedfar, M.A in translation studies graduated from Sheikh Bahaee University, Isfahan, Iran in 2010. Currently she is working as an English teacher in a number of Iranian universities and also as a freelance translator. Her research interests include translator training, philosophical and functional theories to translation and cultural studies.

Amir Hossein Mirsalehian M.A in English translation from Sheikh Bahaee University in 2010. He is an instructor in Amin Institute of Higher Education and Payam-e Noor University of Shahinshahr. His research interests include translation studies and discourse analysis.

Abstract
The more technology develops, the more need for new technical terminology arises and so does the need for translating these technical words from the source language into other languages. The Persian terms chosen as equivalent to English terms in a cell phone, as the case of study, is the focus of this article. In order to study different translation strategies, a sample of 2 cell phone's (Nokia and Sony Ericsson) technical terminology was gathered, then instances of non-equivalence (according to Baker's (1996) definition) were elaborated and the procedures to deal with such non-equivalents, suggested by Baker (1996), have been evaluated in detail. It was concluded that choice of equivalence was not accurate and the most often used strategy is word for word, disregard to matters of collocation, frequency of use and understandability.

Keywords: Cell phone, Equivalent, Non-equivalence, Technical terminology, Translation, Translating strategies,

1. Introduction
Finding equivalence is a primitive difficulty area in translating process. Equivalence can be at the level of words, phrases, sentences and texts and even contexts. The purpose of translation and the text type are considered as effective factors in finding equivalents at various levels. Strategies to Finding equivalence also differ on the basis of the type of linguistic meaning a semantic unit bears. The broad concept of meaning attracted the attention of many linguists who categorized meaning differently although there are similarities in their classifications, too.

In Cruse’s study (as cited in Munday, 2001), the lexical meaning is categorized into four distinct types of propositional meaning, expressive meaning, pre-supposed meaning and evoked meaning (mentioned in).

Propositional meaning of each word is the causal meaning of that word which could be seen as the first meanings in the entries of dictionaries. According to Baker (1992), the prepositional meaning is the relationship between the word as the linguistic sign and the realization of the concept in real world. Baker (1992, p. 13) believes that expressive meaning "relates to the speakers' feelings rather than to what words and utterances refer to." Presupposed meaning is defined regarding the context which surrounds the lexical unit. According to Curse (1986), this type of meaning is restricted by two kinds of selectional and collocational limitations. Selectional restriction is the function of the propositional meaning, gender and aspect of the word while the collocational restriction signifies what words or phrases should precede or follow the specific term or utterance whose meaning is intended. And finally evoked meaning is derived from the dialect and register varieties.

Nida (1964), the pioneer linguist in equivalence, also distinguished three types of meaning as follows: linguistic, referential or denotative meaning and emotive or connotative meaning. The referential meaning is the same as propositional meaning of Cruse, while emotive meaning is a paraphrase for the representative meaning defined by Cruse (1986).

Regarding the defined meanings, equivalence is also broken down into different types. Several linguists lexicalized these types differently. Koller (1979) referred to "denotative", "connotative", "text-normative", "pragmatic" and "formal' equivalences as the five different types of equivalence.

In his opinion, denotative equivalence is meaningful in the extralinguistic contexts of a specific text (in Munday, 2001). While connotative equivalence means choosing words especially in the cases of near-synonyms, which he called "stylistic equivalence". In different text types, 'text-normative" equivalence makes sense. "Pragmatic" equivalence or "communicative" equivalence tends to TT reader rather than the intention of the ST writer.
The aesthetics of a text and style of the writer is what should be regarded and preserved in the "formal" equivalence which is also called as "expressive equivalence".

Nida (1964a) also divided the equivalence into two groups of "formal" equivalence and "dynamic" equivalence. In his definition, formal equivalence tends to transfer the style of ST while the dynamic equivalence orients toward the TT reader to make an effect as equivalent as the effect the ST has on the ST audience. Newmark (1981) who leads the translation training also proposed two types of equivalence including "communicative translation" and "semantic translation" resembling respectively the Nida's dynamic and formal equivalence (Munday, 2001). Other linguists and translation researchers also made attempt to classify the equivalence or discuss it; one of them is Mona Baker who wrote a book on equivalence on different levels of word, above word, grammar, text and pragmatics. She debated on the equivalence problems and the strategies to deal with them. Baker (1996) studied the non-equivalents at word levels in the first chapter of her book which is the focus of this study and the strategies suggested by her are also reviewed, in this article, to see which of those strategies have been applied by the translators who transferred the English items in mobile sets into Persian.

The lexis of each language is composed of semantic fields and lexical sets. A concept in any language may be referred to by various words; the collection of words referring to a single concept is called semantic field and the words which differentiate between various aspects of the concept are called lexical sets.

The cases of non-equivalents studied by Baker (1996) are as following some of which are found in mobile sets' language.

1) When SL word is expressive of a cultural concept which is unknown in TL.
2) When SL word is expressive of a concept which TL speakers understands but there is no specific word in TL which represents such concept.
3) When SL word is composed of several semantic components which should be expressed in TL not in a single word but in a phrase or even sentence.
4) When a SL word and its conventional equivalent TL word have less or more semantic components. In Baker's opinion, "what one language regards as an important distinction in meaning another language may not perceive as relevant." (2001, p.22)
5) When there are hyponyms in TL without superordinate.
6) When there are superordinates in TL without the same hyponyms as exist in SL.
7) When the pair of words representing the physical relation of things or people to other things or people or to a place, are different in SL and TL.
8) When SL and TL casual equivalents have a similar propositional meaning but a different expressive meaning.
9) When SL word is composed of the semantic morphemes which TL lacks.
10) When the frequency and collocation of SL and its casual TL equivalent are different or a SL morpheme is used for other purposes other than the ones in TL.
11) When the loan words with their special semantic value cannot be used in the same value in TL.

Having mentioned types of non-equivalents, Mona baker (1996) extended the discussion by proposing the strategies to tackle these problems:
1) Translator can use a more general word in TL for the SL word.
2) Translator can use a TL word which is neutral or different expressive meaning compared to the SL word.
3) Translator can substitute the cultural SL word with the correspondent TL cultural word which is definitely different from TL word from some semantic components perspective but bears the same cultural concept or influence the TL readers the same as the SL readers.
4) Translator uses the loan word in TL or transcribes the SL word in TT or if it seems not fully understandable by the TT readers, s/he clarifies the meaning of the loan word by adding descriptive phrase or sentence. Here a rank shift may occur.
5) Translator paraphrases the SL word which is not lexicalized in TL.
6) Omitting the non-equivalent word in TT is the last resort although it may be dreadful.
7) In some specific genres, the translator may substitute the SL word with an illustration or image in TT. It should be emphasized that this strategy is not useful for all types of text.

2. Materials
This study aims at finding non-equivalents in the English-Persian word pairs in cell phones (NOKIA and Sony Ericsson), each of which is represented also by iconic signs in the cell phones as well as the strategies used for choosing some words as equivalents for these words and the extent of awkwardness of the equivalents or quasi-equivalents.

3. Procedure
At first, the words represented by icons in the English language in different classes of non-equivalent are categorized and then the Persian equivalents proposed for them and the strategies used in finding these equivalents are studied. It is worth noting that the words
studied in this paper are just a sample of the whole corpus which is chosen by totally random selection.

4. Data Analysis
To analyze data, first the non-equivalent types of the selected corpus are discussed and then, the strategies to deal with them are studied. Finally, the inaccurate equivalents used in the selected corpus are elaborately examined.

4.1. Non-equivalent Types
According to non-equivalents proposed by Baker (1996), a host of Persian terms and phrases as equivalents to English terms are categorized as follows:

1) When SL word is expressive of a cultural concept which is unknown in TL.
   The word which appears in the technical texts of electronic devices' software includes no cultural term indeed; however they are technical or general terms.

2) When SL word is expressive of a concept which TL speakers understand, they are not lexicalized in TL.
   *The word "Log" is "a regularly kept record" according to Concise American Heritage Dictionary. This word has no single word as equivalent in Persian.
   * The words "outbox" and "inbox" are neologisms, which were made by derivation word formation process, have been added to the lexical reserve of English language after invention of electronic messaging and mailing. Therefore, there is no single word as equivalent in the Persian language.
   * The word "equalizer" in the electronic devices means the software which adjusts the balance between frequency components within an electronic signal and here it relates to musical tones. In fact, this software strengthens or weakens the energy of specific frequency bands. This complicated concept has no exact equivalent in the Persian language. This word is classified in that category of words whose meaning has been expanded by passage of time and the Persian language has no specific word to introduce this technology-related concept to the Persian speakers.
   * The word "theme" in this context signifies a concept totally different from the first meaning shown in the entry of this word in dictionaries, i.e. topic and subject. The graphic background in cell phones or electronic apparatus is called "theme". Persian language offers no possibility to represent this technical meaning.
* The word "profile" in the context of cell phones springs a meaning to the minds of the audience which varies from the definition given in Concise American Heritage Dictionary (1983) as "a brief biographical essay". The settings of different profiles in any cell phone include a change in settings of sound, vibration options, themes, alerts, etc. This broad concept doesn't have at present any equivalent in the Persian language.

3) When a SL word is semantically complicated and composed of several semantic components which should be expressed in TL not in a single word but in a phrase or even sentence.
   * "configuration" is a word used in different registers with different meanings. But the additional meanings of this word relates to configuring the initial settings for the computer programs or applications which are supported by telecommunication companies around the world. As it can be seen, it is a very broad concept composed of several semantic components and finding a Persian word as its equivalent is not an easy task, although the translators often uses its first propositional meaning in Persian, i.e. "پیکر بندي" (pekærændi:)

4) When a SL word and its conventional equivalent TL word have less or more semantic components. In Baker's opinion, "what one language regards as an important distinction in meaning another language may not perceive as relevant." (2001, p.22)
   * the intended meaning of the word "artists" in cell phones is the "creators of the musical works" but its equivalent in the Persian language, i.e. "هنرمِندان" (honærmanda:n) has more general meaning referring to the "people relevant to artistic works of any kind and not just of music".
   *the word "personal" in cell phones is applied in the folder of settings and means "the settings and changes each individual user prefers" but the Persian equivalent of this word, i.e. "شخصی" (ʃӕkhsi:) has a broader meaning referring to an adjective which can be used with any noun.
   * the word "callback" in terminology of telecommunications means that "the caller person is immediately called back in a second call as a response"; however it is impossible to translate this concept to Persian by a single word and the translators have to use a rank shift as a translation strategy by using a verb phrase instead of noun. As it can be seen in frequently proposed translations of this word, the chosen equivalent "پاسخ به تماس" (pa:sokh be tӕma:s- response to a call) lacks some semantic meanings for SL word and it is similar in sense to "answering a call".

5) When there are hyponyms in TL without superordinate. such non-equivalents in the data collection under study were not found.

6) When there are superordinates in TL without the same hyponyms as exist in SL.
* "application" in modern electronic apparatus covers all software programs with a purpose for performing a specific task. But its common equivalent in Persian is classified under superordinate heading "برنامه" (bærna:me-program)

* "template" in cell phones applied to call a "prepared message which can be sent by its own or can be edited to be sent as a new message". Its equivalent in Persian "الگو" (olgu:) covers a more general concept, i.e. "default pattern".

* "converter" represents a software or device which converts the measurement units to each other but its conventional Persian equivalent "مبدل" (mobædel) is a word which refers to the device or software whose job is converting and it isn't clear that what is being converted by this software or device.

* "paste" in this kind of text and in computer texts refers to "adhering a part of text to another text", while its Persian equivalent, i.e. "چسباندن" (tʃæsba:ndæn) covers a broader semantic area and is a general word.

7) When SL and TL casual equivalents have a propositional meaning in common but a different expressive meaning.

Some examples categorized in this type are the same as those in other types of non-equivalents which were discussed above: "artists", "personal", "paste" and gallery".

In addition to these items, the word "font" and its conventional Persian equivalent, i.e. "قلم" (qælæm) don't have the same expressive meanings. The English word is often used as a technical term in computer texts representing the line styles used for typing the alphabet letters and numbers while the Persian equivalent is used as a symbol of intellectualism and as a metaphor for writing. The Persian word simply covers a broader semantic area.

8) When SL word is composed of the semantic morphemes which TL lacks.

There are many examples of this kind of non-equivalent between English and Persian.

One suffix which is very useful in word forming of the English language is the subject creator derivational morpheme "-er". This suffix in fact changes the verb to noun. The Persian language also has not an individual but different suffixes acting as equivalent in the role this English suffix plays. Some of these Persian subjects making suffixes are "کننده" (konænde), "گر" (gar), "ساز" (sa:z), "دهنده" (dehænde), "کن" (kon), etc. All of them can be used as equivalents to the suffix "-er" depending on the free stems to which they attach. Many words in the English language are formed by this bound morpheme and selecting the proper equivalent for it is a delicate task and demands much preciousness because the Persian language doesn't propose a single suffix for it. Many samples of application of this suffix
can be seen in our corpus. For example: "Organizer", "player", "recorder", "equalizer", "editor", "timer".

Another useful suffix in English is "-ing" which has different roles. One is changing verbs to nouns, and the Persian translators usually choose the infinitive for equivalents of the words containing such suffix. In fact there is no individual morpheme as equivalent of this suffix in Persian; however, with combining free morphemes, the translators transfer the meaning to Persian. The words "messaging", "running", "writing", etc. are the instances of application of this suffix in the sample data.

Another suffix in English language is "-y" whose equivalent in Persian language is different based on the stem morpheme adhering to it and meaning of the original morpheme. In most cases, the suffix "-ی" (i:) is applied for its translation. The word "telephony" in our sample data failed to be translated as a single word in Persian language and the phrase "آن طریق تلفن" (æz tæri:q-e-teléfono- by telephone) replaced it in TT.

Two prefixes were also used in the studied data including "in-" and "out-" whose Persian equivalents are "درون-" (dær:n) and "پرون-" (boru:n) which are usually used in formal language. In the cases "inbox" and "outbox", using their Persian equivalent prefixes does not produce a meaningful term as a matter of register. That is, the words "درون صندوق" (dær:n sændoq) and "پرون صندوق"(boru:n sændoq) don't make sense for the Persian speakers. The two-part terms are used instead of "inbox" and "outbox", i.e. "صندوق ورودی" (sændoq voruːdiː- the received message box) and "صندوق خروجی" (sændoq khoruːjiː- the sent message box).

9) When the frequency and collocation of SL and its casual TL equivalent are different or a SL morpheme is used for other purposes than in TL.

Most of the cases mentioned as examples above are also categorized in this class some of which are:

* "template" is used in a technical text while its Persian equivalent "الگو" (olgu:) can also be surrounded by general texts.

* "Converter" refers to a software or device converting the measurement units but its Persian equivalent "مبدل" (mobædel) has a more general meaning and so its collocational choices are greater in numbers than the English word.

*In Sony Ericson cell phones, the English word "log" is translated to "گزارش" (gozaːref) without any descriptive phrase. Since the Persian word has a general meaning compared to the original word, their collocational options also differ.
*the folder "media" in cell phones contains the "picture and video" cameras, "radio", "music" and like that. The Persian equivalent "رسانه" (resa:ne) which is frequently chosen for it has a broader meaning in Persian and therefore the context in which it occurs is greater and its frequency of use also varies.

*"artists" and its Persian equivalent "هنرمندان" (honærmanda:n) are different in collocation possibilities and frequency of use since they are different expressive meanings.

*"application" and its Persian equivalent "برنامه" (bærna:me) as a word with a general sense are different in frequency of occurrence in texts.

*For the word "font", the same happens because the expressive meaning of its Persian equivalent "کلم" (qælæm) is totally different and the Persian equivalent word can even be used in literary contexts and texts while the English term is a technical term as it was described above.

*Since the word "personal" and its equivalent meaning "شخصی" (ʃækhsi:) have different expressive meanings, they are also considered as non-equivalents from the collocation occurrence perspective.

*"alarm" in cell phones and the Persian equivalent usually chosen for it, "هشدار" (hoʃda:r), vary from each other from the expressive meaning and connotation point of view. Therefore, their collocational choices are also different. The Persian word often connotes a negative concept.

*"profile" and its Persian equivalent, "نمایه" (næma:ye), differ in frequency of use. The Persian equivalent is rarely used by Persian speakers.

10) When the loan words with their special semantic value cannot be used in the same value in TL.

Most of computer software programs have been transferred to the Persian language with no change in pronunciation. They are verily the borrowings some of which are frequently used by the Persian speakers. Those loan words that are most often applied in daily speeches and conversations, sound so normal that sometimes the Persian speakers don't notice that they are borrowed terms and phrases like "copy", "gallery", "film", "google", "theme", "radio", "album", "web", "list", "internet", "menu", "video", "graphic". On the other hand, some of them are not familiar for the Persian audience and the cell phone or computer user may not understand what that application or software can do, like: "Podcasts", "packet data", "roadsync", "track ID™". Names of some of these programs are made according to the name of the inventor of the software or its producer company name and some names imply the general applicability of the program and are composed of meaningful morphemes. The
equivalents of the programs with the names of the second group are not usually the loan-translations but in most cases they are transliterated to TL. These Persian loan words indeed don't have the same semantic value as the SL terms because the Persian speakers don't perceive the real meanings of the borrowed terms and just articulate them.

Now, after considering the non-equivalents, taking a glance on the strategies used in translation for these non-equivalents can be useful.

4.2. Translation Strategies

Considering the Persian equivalents presented in cell phones, we notice that combination of different strategies including shift, pragmatics, loan words, equivalents, etc are used.

In this section, those non-equivalents discussed above are studied to see if the Persian translators applied the strategies Baker (2001) proposed for non-equivalents.

1) Translator can use a more general word in TL for the SL word.

This strategy is frequently used by the translators of the cell phone languages:

*"application" and "برنامه" (bærna:me), "template" and "مدل" (mobædel), "log" and "تاریخ" (tæra:x), "web" and "شیبکه" (jæbæke), "video" and "فیلم" (fi:lm), "paste" and "چسباندن" (tʃæsba:ndæn), "stopwatch" and "زمان سنگ" (zaema:nsænj), "themes" and "مضمون" (mæza:mi:n), "callback" and "پاسخ به تماس" (pa:sokh be tæma:s), "mailbox" and "صندوق پستی" (sændoq posti:) (it should be noted that "mailbox" in cell phones refers to the box of the emails while "post" (پست) covers all types of mail). , all of these examples are the cases in which the translator replaced the SL word with a specific meaning by a TL word with a more general meaning.

2) Translator can use a TL word which is neutral or has different expressive meaning compared to the SL word.

*"template" and "الگو" (olgu:), "converter" and "گزارش" (mobædel), "log" and "رمز" (goza:ref), "media" and "رسانه" (resa:ne), "artists" and "فلم" (qælæm), "personal" and "شخصی" (jækshi), "connectivity" and "اتصال" (etesal), "alarm" and "هشدار" (hofda:r), "paste" and "پخش رسانه ای" (pa:khʃ e resa:nei:) (it should be added that regardless the fact that "media player" is "a software playing the music or video files", the translator used the word for word translation strategy. As it was discussed above, such kinds of programs whose names represent the applicability are transliterated.

"clip" and "قطعه" (ghæte), "themes" and "مضمون" (mæza:mi:n), "tones" and "نواحی" (naeva:khtha:), "recordings" and "نواره" (naeva:rha:), "profiles" and "نمایه ها" (naema:yeha:), "shortcut" and "نواره" (naeva:rha:).
Some of these equivalents chosen by the translator even don't have the same componential meaning as the original words.

3) The translator can substitute the cultural SL word with the correspondent TL cultural word which is definitely different from TL word from some semantic components perspective but bears the same cultural concept or influence the TL readers the same as the SL readers. The cultural words don't exist in the language of cell phones because this register is technical.

4) The translator uses the loan word in TL or transcribes the SL word in TT or if it seems not fully understandable by the TT readers, s/he clarifies the meaning of the loan word by adding descriptive phrase or sentence. Here a rank shift may occur.

For many of the Persian equivalents, such strategy was used: "copy", "gallery", "film", "google", "theme", "radio", "album", "web", "list", "internet", "menu", "video", "graphic", "Podcasts", "packet data", "roadsync", "track ID™", "Bluetooh", "Adobe PDF", "Quick office". Since there is no space for adding any descriptive word or phrase in the small phone's display monitors, the translator avoids clarifying the meaning by extra words. The Persian audience understands some of them which are frequently applied in daily conversation and some of them may appear unfamiliar for the Persian speakers and they should explore through the folder or read the manual to be aware of the applicability of the program.

5) The translator paraphrases the SL word which is not lexicalized in TL.
"log" and "دفترچه ثبت تماس" (daftærte sæbte tæma:s- contact recording notebook), "push to talk" and "مکالمه گروهی" (moka:leme goro:hî- group conversation), "to" and "گیرنده"(gi:rende- receipient), "inbox" and "صندوق دویام" (sændoghe dærva:ft- receipt box) as well as "صندوق ورودی" (sændoghe voru:di:- entrance box), "outbox" and "صندوق ارسال" (sændoghe ersa:l- sent box) as well as "صندوق خروجی" (sændoghe khoru:ji:- output box), "recorder" and "ضبط صوت" (zæbte sot- sound recorder), "log list" and "لیست تماس" (li:ste tæma:s- call list), "callback" and "پاسخ به تماس" (pa:sokh be tæma:s- response to call), "telephony" and "از طریق تلفن" (æz tær:i:qe telefon- by telephone), "connectivity" and "قابلیت اتصال" (qa:beliye tæsa:l-ability to connection), "to-do-list" and "لیست کارها" (li:ste ka:rha:-tasks list)

As it can be seen, the translator of Nokia cell phone applied this strategy more than the Sony Ericson' translator. It is worth noting that some equivalents suggested by this strategy are not necessarily true.

6) Omitting the non-equivalent word in TT is the last resort only if it is not harmful to the whole meaning.
The nature of this context doesn't allow the translator to omit any word because the words are separate from each other and they don't form a coherent text and if any of these components of this non-coherent text is missed, a part of meaning is lost totally. In fact, this method is commonly used for the non-equivalents in the cohesive and coherent texts.

7) In some specific genres, the translator may substitute the SL word with an illustration or image in TT.

It should be emphasized that this strategy is not useful for all types of text.

For the names of individual folders and subfolders, there are iconic signs in the cell phones which can help understanding the meaning.

4.3. Inaccurate equivalents

In the studied data, it can be seen that some chosen equivalents fail to communicate the intended meaning; that is, some Persian words are ambiguous, a number of them are meaningless and some other are basically incorrect for semantic, terminological or morphological reasons. A number of these cases are mentioned below:

*messaging*  
پیام رساله (پاءایم رساله: message sending)

The translator tried to use a suffix as the equivalent of the English suffix "-ing"; as it was described earlier, the Persian translator has several choices for equivalent of this suffix based on the stem of the word. In this case, s/he has chosen the Persian suffix "رساله" (رساله:ni:) which is a free morpheme and is formed of the verb "رساندن" (رساندن:ndænsending). But this equivalent is not at all appropriate because it covers just one part of act of messaging, i.e. "sending messages", while this English word implies "sending, receiving, editing and in general processing the e-mail".

*gallery*  
گالری (گالری: gallery)

"gallery" in this genre means the collection of the recorded or received pictures and films. While its Persian equivalent in terms of the loan word has different expressive meaning and collocation and even different frequency of use. In Persian, this word is commonly used as the "saloon or pathway for showing the artistic works or the showrooms of the luxurious goods."

*log*  
دفترچه ثبت تماس (دفترچه ثبت تماس: call recording notebook)

"log" is used here in the sense of "report of the calls" and the Persian translator used "دفترچه ثبت تماس" as the equivalent. The translator in fact paraphrased the English word to clarify the meaning. Anyway, regarding the necessity of shortness in cell phone texts, the word "دفترچه ثبت تماس" (دفترچه ثبت تماس: notebook) seems not to be essential in transferring the meaning and the translator

Iranian EFL Journal 95
can use "اطلاعات تماس" (etela:'a:te tema:s- call information) or "گزارش تماس" (goza:refe tema:s- call report) instead.

*Organizer ——— سازمان‌گر (sa:zma:nær- organizer)

"Organizer" is composed of the verb "organize" and the suffix "-er" which here caused again the problem for the translator to find its equivalent. This suffix which makes a noun from the verbs has several equivalents in Persian depending on the stem it adheres to. In "Nokia" cell phone, the translator used "سازمان‌گر" (sa:zma:nær) as the equivalent; that is, the suffix "-گر" (gær) was proposed as the equivalent of the English suffix while this composition is unfamiliar for Iranian audience. And the translator of the "Sony Ericson" cell phone used the word "سازمان دانه" as the equivalent which is a better choice because in Persian language, the word "سازمان" (sa:zma:n) occurs with "دانه" (da:daen) and make a verb "سازمان دانه" from which a noun (سازمان‌گر) (can be created.

*contacts ——— مخاطبان (mokha:taːbiːn- audiences)

The other flaw in translation of cell phone words is choice of "مخاطبان" (mochatæb:ini) as equivalent to the word "contacts". This Persian word, with the sense of "audience", is not the propositional meaning of "contacts" but, the word "تاماسها" (tema:sha:) transfers the meaning intended in this register. The folder "contacts" containing the contact information act as an address book.

*media ——— رسانه (resa:ne)

Propositional meaning of "media" is "ارسانه" (resa:ne), but the expressive meaning especially in this context is different. The folder "media" covers the mediums of filming and picture taking or sound recording and not the mass media including newspapers, TV, etc. The equivalent in the cell phones communicates such meaning as "mass media".

*video ——— فیلم (fi:lm)

The translator in one cell phone selected a loan word, i.e. "film" as equivalent of "video" which is not evaluated as accurate translation, because the English word "video" in the folder of "media" indicates the "video camera" as the other item in this folder is "camera" representing "picture camera". Therefore, the translator can use "دوربین فیلم‌برداری" (du:ri:ne fi:lmærda:ri:- video recording camera) or "فیلم‌برداری" (fi:lmærda:ri:- video recording); the word "فیلم" may make the audience confused and they think that the file contains the recorded or received films and not the "video recording" application.

*media player ——— بخش رسانه‌ای (pækhʃe resa:nei- media playing)

"media player" is a software showing the video or music files but the translator tried to translate it word by word which made an awkward combination not transferring the intended
meaning and makes no sense to the audience. As discussed earlier, transliterating such word and adding it as a loan word to the lexical reserve of Persian language is a better choice as its equivalent.

*recorder  ضبط صوت (zæbte sot- sound recorder)

"recorder" in cell phones means a software recording sounds and it has been translated as "ضبط صوت" (zæbte sot) whose propositional meaning is equivalent to that of the original word, but its expressive meaning differs from that of the original one. "صدای صوت" (sot) and "صدای صوت" (sedā:) are synonymous in Persian but what makes "ضبط صوت" (zæbte sot) as awkward translation is a matter of collocation. When "ضبط صوت" is applied with "ضبط". the resulted combination reminds the audience of the apparatus, and not the application or electronic program, which records sounds; therefore the phrase "ضبط صدا" (zæbte sedā:) is a better choice.

*equalizer  همان ساز (hæmsa:n sa:z)

"equalizer" is composed of the verb "equalize" and the suffix '-er". In cell phones, it is used for referring to the software which chooses the right mode for the music such as hip hop, jazz, etc. The Persian translator tried to use the strategy of word for word translation for finding equivalent. That is, he made a word by adding the suffix "ساز" (sa:z) to the noun "همان" (hæmsa:n). This combination may not be meaningful to the audience. They cannot understand what is equalized by this application. Using a word implying the task of the program is a better idea.

*paste  چسباندن (tʃæsbændæn- adhering)

The propositional meaning of "paste" in this text is "adhering part of a text or a picture or something else to another text". The equivalent chosen for it is "چسباندن"(tʃæsbændæn) which has the same propositional meaning as "paste" but they differ in expressive meaning and collocational choices. The Persian word covers a greater semantic area.

*packet data connection timer  شمارشگر پسته ای (foma:refgære bæste1)

"packet data connection timer" has been translated to "شمارشگر پسته ای "shmaršægær pæste1". It can be seen that just two words "packet" and "counter" have been translated and the other words are missed. The Persian reader cannot perceive the actual meaning of this phrase and what the task of the folder is.

*video clip  فیلم ویدئویی (qæte vi:de1)

The equivalent chosen for "video clip", i.e. "فیلم ویدئویی" does not sound normal to the Persian speakers and this awkwardness is just caused by inappropriate collocation of the two
words in this combination. This English word is used as a loan word by Persian speakers and there is no need for translating the individual words.

*themes  
 مضامین (mæza:mi:n- contents, subjects)

One meaning of "themes" is "subject" and based on this meaning, the Persian translator has chosen the word "مضامین" (mæza:mi:n) as equivalent and he didn't regarded the different meaning of this word in texts of cell phones, i.e. the graphical background of display and the settings related to it. The Persian language took over this word as a loan word and in technical registers, such borrowed term is used extensively by the speakers. As it can be seen, the translator of "Sony Ericson" cell phone language also used the strategy of transliteration.

*tones  
 نواختها (næva:kthha:)

The equivalent chosen for the word "tones", that is "نواختها"(næva:kthha:), has the least frequency of use among Persian speakers. It may be applied in literary texts. The word "نواه" (næva:ha:) or "آهنگ" (a:hængha:) fits better to this context. The translator has used the word "آهنگ" elsewhere.

*file  
 پرنده (pærvaende)

In "received files" the word "file" is translated as "پرنده" (pærvaende) whose expressive meaning is different from that of the word "file" in this text. However, elsewhere, the word "file" has been transliterated and indeed its application as a loan word in this text is a better strategy.

*stopwatch  
 زمان سنج (zæma:n sænj- time counter)

Both "stopwatch" and "timer" has been translated to زمان سنج (zæma:n sænj). Both of these software programs measure the time passed; however timer acts it downward and stopwatch does it upward. Although their task is the same, their equivalent should not be the same; otherwise, the Persian speakers are confused and don't identify the variations between them. The Persian speakers sometimes use the word "گونومتر" (kornometr) as an equivalent for "stopwatch".

*synchronize  
 هم‌گام سازی (hæmga:m sa:zi:)

"synchronize" in the folder "contacts" was translated to "هم‌گام سازی" (hæmga:m sa:zi:), which is the meaning of this word in the music register and not in this technical text of telecommunication. The intended meaning of this word in this folder is "using the same settings for the items in the list" and therefore the word "هم‌شکل کردن" (hæmʃekl kærdaen) can communicate the sense better.

*profile  
 نمایه‌ها (næma:yeha:)

Iranian EFL Journal 98
"profile" was translated to "نمایه ها" (næma:yeha:) which makes no sense to the Persian audience since its frequency of use is very low. The meaning of this English word is complicated and cannot be transferred to Persian audience by a single word. It refers in fact to "management of settings related to display, sounds, themes and graphics of the cell phone" and this word of rare application is not an appropriate equivalence for this concept.

*security ḥفاژت (hefa:zaet- protection)

"حفاظت" is considered as the equivalent of the word "protection" and not "security". Usually the translators apply the word "امنیت" (æmni:æt) or "ایمنی" (i:meni:) as the equivalent for "security".

*artists هنرمندان (honærænda:n)

"artists" in this text is used for "the singers or the creators of the music works". The word "هنرمندان" (honærænda:n) bears the propositional meaning of "artists", but the expressive meaning of this word is different in the Persian language.

*play list لیست پخش (li:ste pækhʃ)

"play list" is translated to "لیست پخش" which is a literal translation of this phrase, but it has the collocational problem so that this combination sounds awkward to the Persian audience. The translator can translate this noun phrase regarding what is included in the folder under this name, i.e. "لیست آهنگ" (li:ste a:haeng- song list).

*web publishing انتشار وب (entefæ:re web)

"انتشار وب" (entefæ:re web) was proposed as the equivalent of "web publishing" which is the literal translation. This folder in the cell phones contains "the social networks on the World Wide Web like facebook, twiter, youtube, etc." and the literal translation cannot communicate the actual meaning.

*personal شخصی (ʃækhsi:)

"personal" was translated to "شخصی" whose collocational and expressive meaning of this word in Persian is different from that of the original word in this register. Adding the word "تنظیمات" which means "setting" can clarify the meaning.

*telephony از طریق تلفن (æz tærı:qe telefon- by telephone)

The equivalent which was proposed for "telephony", i.e. "از طریق تلفن" is totally inaccurate because it doesn't transfer the correct meaning of this word. The translator might not understand the intended meaning. This English word in this register means "the equipment which provides voice communication over distances especially by connecting telephones". The translator divided the word "telephony" to two components of noun and suffix "-y" and
he tried to translate each of these components regardless of the general meaning of this word as a whole.

*converter* → مبدل (mobædel - converter)

"converter" is "a software which converts the measurement units to each other" and we can see in both cell phones that the equivalent used for it is "مبدل" (mobædel) without any descriptive phrase to narrow down the meaning. Adding a descriptive word like "واحدها" (va:hedha:- units) seems necessary.

*alarm* → هشدار (hoʃda:r - warning)

The Persian word which was selected as the equivalent for "alarm", i.e. "هشدار" doesn't bear the same expressive and even propositional meaning. This Persian word with a negative connotation is equivalent to "warning". Addition of descriptive word can solve this problem.

5. **Conclusion**

Finding equivalents in all levels is one of the most problematic and the most important areas of translation. Usually the co-text helps the translator deal with this difficulty. But in cell phones, lack of cohesive devices and cohesion duplicates the equivalent problem. The co-text in the cell phones includes the iconic signs representing the main capability of the folder in addition to the content of the folders and subfolders. Lack of coherent text, a great number of jargons and technical terms as well as public audience are the main reasons which require translator to preserve delicacy and subtlety during translation process. The translator is supposed to analyze non-equivalents and technical terms semantically and morphologically. S/he must make use of componential, hierarchical and semantic structure analysis. Just by combination of different translation strategies, proposing an acceptable translation is possible.

In this study, the non-equivalents in two models of "Nokia" and "Sony Ericson" cell phones and the strategies used for them and the inaccurate equivalents were studied. As it can be seen the translator used the strategies proposed by Baker (2001) to find equivalents, some of which were applied mistakenly and made flaws and ambiguity in the translated version. The word for word translation was the major strategy applied and the translators ignored the shift strategy in many cases wherever necessary. There were also morphological problems especially in use of affixes; furthermore, expressive meaning and frequency of use were not regarded in some cases. Excessive attention to morphological structure of the phrases and words and concentration on literal translation led in some cases to missing propositional meaning of the technical terms. Some cases of collocation problems were also evident. Conclusively, it should be focused on this fact that the translation of many cell phone terms is
unacceptable so that some users prefer working with English language version of their phones.

References


The Relationship between Self Esteem (global self-esteem and task self-esteem) and Speaking Skill of Female EFL Learners

Authors

Mojdeh Shahnama (M.A)
Payam-e- Noor University, Rasht, Iran

Shahin Sheikh Sang Tajan (Ph.D)
Assistant Professor of Payam-e-Noor University, Rasht, Iran

Biodata

Mojdeh Shahnama, M.A. in TEFL from Payame Noor University, Rasht, Iran. Her research interests include linguistics, English Teaching, psychology of language learning. She is also interested in Translation. She has translated five tourism books from Persian to English, all of which are published.

Shahin Sheikh Sang Tajan, assistant professor of TEFL at Payame Noor University, Rasht, Iran. Her main research interests include linguistics, English Teaching.

Abstract

The present study aimed at investigating the relationship between self-esteem (global and task self esteem) and Iranian intermediate female EFL learners’ oral proficiency. For this purpose, based on an OPT test, 40 intermediate female EFL students were selected among 100 English students in Parsa English Institute in Shahrood. Two raters evaluated the speaking ability of the participants by asking 11 questions chosen from TOEIC book. The raters used TOEIC speaking scale which measures Pronunciation, Intonation, Stress, Grammar, Vocabulary, Cohesion, Relevance of content and Completeness of content. Two questionnaires of self-esteem including global self-esteem (SLCS-R; Tafarodi & Swann, 2001) and a researcher- made task self-esteem questionnaire were also administered to the participants. The results of the two Spearman rank order correlation tests performed to the results of the both questionnaires and speaking test showed significant correlation between these variables. The association between “self competence” and “speaking score” (rho= .677) as well as the association between “self liking” and “speaking score” (rho= .576) were fairly strong (P<.05).
results also showed a significant relationship between the two dimensions of the global self esteem, task self esteem, and different components of the TOEIC test (p≤0.05). Positive correlation was found between task self esteem and speaking proficiency, (rho = .379, p< .05). The results of the two series of Spearman rank order showed that the association between global self esteem and speaking ability was slightly stronger than the association between task self esteem and speaking proficiency.

**Keywords:** Global self-esteem, Self-Liking, Self-Competence, Task self-esteem, Speaking Skill

### 1. Introduction

The history of self-esteem as a concept began with known theorists in psychology. William James (1890) and Mead (1962) were among the first ones. They postulated that self-esteem was equivalent to success of a person divided by his or her pretensions. One’s self-esteem would be academic success divided by how well one thinks he/she ought to be doing. To increase the sum total of one’s self-esteem, one needs to boost successes or diminish expectations for achievements. This continues to influence the understanding of self-esteem (Wickline, 2003). The self psychologist, Rogers (1959) was concerned with the general nature of subjective experience of the individual’s acceptance of his/her experience. Bednar and Peterson (1999) believed that each person constructs his/her unique view of reality through the creative self. Self-esteem is considered as one of the important affective factors because success or failure of a person depends mostly on the degree of one’s self-esteem. Self-esteem has multi-dimensions which are *global self-esteem* which means general assessment a person makes of one’s self, *situational self-esteem* which means a specific situation such as foreign language context and *task self-esteem* that means a particular task within a situation e.g., writing or speaking in an EFL context (Brown, 2000).

Some studies (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Nogueras & Rosa, 1997; He,1996) found that self-esteem is a very important factor in second/ foreign language success. It is a requisite for successful language learning. Therefore, if students lack the confidence in their abilities and feel unable to do certain tasks, they will not be able to learn SL/FL successfully. Students with low self-esteem have negative attitudes such as worthlessness and uselessness about themselves, therefore they do not focus on learning (He, 1996; Stevick, 1990; Brown, 2000). Besides, learning a second or foreign language is difficult for many students especially when they believe that they can’t learn well. Those students have less chance to succeed than
those who do not have such negative beliefs about themselves. Furthermore different aspects of learning language skills are affected by self-esteem. A number of studies (Heyde, 1979; Hassan, 1992; Truitt, 1995; Shumin, 1997; Timothy et al., 2001) concluded that self-esteem is strongly associated with oral communicative proficiency and low self-esteem students can’t express themselves with confidence. Different dimensions of self esteem and their relationship with language skills may have important roles in learning a language especially in countries in which English is considered as a foreign language. There is a growing interest of learning foreign languages especially English in Iran (Williams & Burden, 1997). Among language skills, the relationship between self esteem and speaking skill was investigated in this study. Of all the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing), speaking seems intuitively the most important: people who know the language are referred to as “speakers” of that language, as if speaking included all other kinds of knowing; and many if not most foreign language learners are primarily interested in learning to speak. (Ur, 2000, p. 120). Brown and Yule (1983) believed that many language learners regard speaking skills as the criteria for knowing a language. They defined fluency as the ability to communicate with others much more than the ability to read, write, or comprehend oral language. Most researches on relationships between self esteem and speaking so far insisted on studying self esteem as a uni-dimensional entity or as a generalized self esteem or didn’t use standard tests to measure speaking skill. In the present study, self-esteem was considered as multidimensional entity and its global self-esteem aspect was also considered as a two dimensional construct. Its relation to speaking skill was investigated by conducting a standard speaking test to achieve better conclusions.

2. Review of Literature

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in learning foreign languages. Many people want to learn a foreign language in order to be able to communicate with native speakers in real life situation. They wish to interact with the speech community in such a way that they are accepted as a member of that community.

Among different areas of speaking, pronunciation and intonation are considered to be difficult to master completely. According to Spolsky (1989) only 5% of nonnative speakers can achieve perfect mastery of these two features of language in speaking. This means that in order to arrive at an acceptable level of near native communication, L2 learner must possess certain biological, cognitive, affective and socio-cultural variables. Affective variables are
considered as inhibition, risk taking, anxiety, extroversion/introversion, motivation and self-esteem. (Celce-Murcia (ed.), 1991; Stern, 1983; Nezu & Nezu, 2003). Recently, self-esteem has attracted the attention of many scholars in psychology and education and many studies have been conducted to show the contribution of this characteristic to the learning of different subject matters including the learning of English (Kamarzarrin, 1994; Carter & Nunan, 2001).

A number of studies found that self-esteem affects academic performance in English among EFL students positively (Liu, 2008; Chapman & Tunmer, 1997; Choi, 2005; De Fraine, Van Damme, & Ongheda, 2007; Kurtz-Costes, & Schneider, 1994; Marsh, 1990; Marsh & Yeung, 1998). On the other hand, some studies showed that it is the English achievement that positively affects English self-esteem (Marsh, Kong and Hau, 2001). Helmke and Van Aken (1995) suggested that, although there is no agreement about the direction of causal ordering between academic self-esteem and academic achievement, one thing is certain that academic self-esteem is formed at least in part as a result of prior academic achievement. Considering the relationship between self-esteem and oral communication, Niki Maleki & Mohammadi (2009) found that the more successful learners had higher self-esteem than the less successful ones in performing oral communication tasks.

3. Purpose

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between self esteem (global and task self esteem) and speaking skill of female EFL students. Hence, the following questions and null hypotheses have been the central concern of the present study. The 5 research questions are as follows:

1. Is there any relationship between global self esteem dimensions (self competence and self liking) and speaking skill of female EFL students?
2. Is there any relationship between task self esteem and speaking skill of female EFL students?
3. Which components of speaking skill are more related to global self-esteem’s dimensions?
4. Which components of speaking skill are more related to task self-esteem?
5. Is there any difference between global self esteem and task self esteem in relation to speaking skill?
The 5 null hypotheses are as follows:

1. There is no relationship between global self esteem dimensions (self competence and self liking) and speaking skill of female EFL students.
2. There is no relationship between task self esteem and speaking skill of female EFL students.
3. None of the components of speaking skill are related to global self esteem’s dimensions.
4. None of the components of speaking skill are related to task self esteem.
5. There is no difference between global self esteem and task self esteem in relation to speaking skill.

4. Method

In order to decide whether or not the null hypotheses formulated could be rejected, the following steps were taken for the selection of participants, materials and procedures used in the study.

4.1. Participants

40 female EFL students studying English in Parsa English institute in Shahrood were selected among 100 female students in terms of their proficiency level which was considered as intermediate.

4.2. Instruments

1. An OPT test (Solutions 2nd Edition placement test. ©Oxford University Press) was administered to determine the language proficiency of the learners. The test contained 50 multiple choice questions which assess students’ knowledge of key grammar and vocabulary, a reading text with 10 graded comprehension questions. Based on the scoring table of the test, the students who had +31 correct answers in grammar and vocabulary part and +8 correct answers in reading part were considered to be as intermediate level of language proficiency.
2. Global Self esteem questionnaire (SLCS-R; Tafarodi& Swann, 2001) to determine the self-evaluation of students about themselves and their abilities in general.
3. Task self esteem questionnaire developed by 10 English Teachers and 3 psychologists to determine the students’ feeling about speaking task in class.
4. Speaking test of TOEIC (Test of English for International Communication) (Collins Skills for the TOEIC® Test) to determine the speaking ability of students. TOEIC speaking test format includes 11 questions that measure different aspects of speaking ability. Questions
contain specific tasks that are supposed to evaluate certain criteria. The test has its own scoring scale for questions. The scale measures the participants' speaking ability in terms of the following components: pronunciation, intonation, stress, grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, relevance of content and completeness of content. The test lasts approximately 20 minutes.

4.3. Procedures
1. In order to choose the participants, an OPT test was administered among 100 female EFL students studying English in Parsa English Institute. Based on OPT test direction, 40 intermediate students whose score was 31+ in grammar and vocabulary and 8+ in reading section were selected as the main sample for the present study.
2. The Persian versions of the two questionnaires were given to students to fill out in order to ensure their understanding.
3. Because there was time limitation in the Institution, the researcher decided to take speaking test during the class time. For each student the test took 20 minutes. Two raters, one of whom was the researcher were both present in speaking test process.

It should be mentioned that a pilot study was conducted to determine the extent of time required for the completion of the questionnaires and OPT and also to decide whether or not the items require any modifications and to find out the method of asking questions i.e. to find out how to ask questions in a way that they would be understandable to participants.

5. Results and Discussion
In the present study, as mentioned before, an attempt was made to find answers to the five questions concerning the relationship between Self Esteem (global self-esteem and task self esteem) and Speaking Skill of Female EFL Students. Appropriate statistical procedures were followed to obtain the required responses for each question. Below each null hypothesis and its results will be discussed separately. Descriptive statistics including Measures of central tendency, dispersion along with measures of distribution were computed for the OPT test to select a homogeneous sample for the main study. The reliability of self-esteem questionnaires’ statements and opt questions were estimated by Cronbach alpha.

It is noteworthy that the reliability of the global self esteem which had 16 statements was separately measured for both self competence (8 statements) and self liking (8 statements). Acceptable reliability indexes of .757 for self-liking and .804 for self-competence were estimated which were again higher than minimum required. Cronbach's Alpha model of internal consistency based on the average inter-item correlation, showed acceptable index of
for the reliability of the task self-esteem in the main study. The OPT also showed an acceptable reliability index of .786. The reliability of speaking test was measured through test-retest method using Pearson Correlation to examine inter-rater reliability through administering the test of English for International Communication test (TOEIC) to main group twice (as well as to pilot study group) and the correlation between those two sets of scores obtained from the two administrations was calculated. The total score for each participant on the TOEIC test was the mean of the two raters’ scores in each administration. In using test-retest method, the assumption was that no significant change occurs in the examinees’ knowledge during the determined interval between the two administrations since there was a reasonable amount of time between the two administrations (20 days). The reliability or the extent of the consistency of TOEIC scores over time was estimated by computing the correlation coefficient between the two sets of scores obtained from the two administrations of the TOEIC test to the same group. The reliability of the TOEIC test was estimated through test-retest method in the main study and resulted in acceptable reliability index (Pearson correlation= .931, P<.05). The result of the reliability analysis of speaking test was presented in Table 1.

| Table 1: The Correlations between the First and the Second Administrations of TOEIC test |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| Final speaking score (first administration) | Pearson Correlation | .931** |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 40 |

Since the scores of speaking skill of participants were given by two raters, estimating the inter-rater reliability was necessary to determine whether or not their given scores were reliable. The Bivariate Correlation procedure (Pearson correlation) computed the pair wise associations for the scores suggested by the two scorers in the first and the second administration of the TOEIC test in the main study. It was used to determine the strength and direction of the association between the two raters’ scores for the TOEIC test. The inter-rater reliability measured by the Pearson correlation for the first administration of the TOEIC test was .856; that for the second administration was .870, which were both considered to be acceptable.

| Table 2: Correlations for Inter-rater reliability analysis of the speaking test (the first administration) |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Rater A | Pearson Correlation |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |
| N | 40 |
Table 3: Correlations for Inter-rater reliability analysis of the speaking test (the second administration)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rater</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>.870**</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was a significant and fairly strong positive correlation between the two raters’ scores for the TOEIC test on the first and the second administrations (P<.05). The results were displayed in tables 2 and 3.

The first null hypothesis formulated in this paper was:

1. There is no relationship between global self esteem dimensions (self competence and self liking) and speaking skill of female EFL students.

Concerning this main question the following result is obtained: Summaries of the two dimensions of the global self esteem namely self competence and self liking along with the summary of speaking scores were presented to provide the important information of the data. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: The Statistics of Global Self-esteem and Speaking Skill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self competence</th>
<th>Self liking</th>
<th>Speaking score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.6125</td>
<td>4.0375</td>
<td>33.9188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>3.6875</td>
<td>4.1250</td>
<td>33.5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>29.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>.60962</td>
<td>.66939</td>
<td>2.65445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>.372</td>
<td>.448</td>
<td>7.046</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>9.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>29.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>39.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>144.50</td>
<td>161.50</td>
<td>1356.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown.

The Statistics including the standard deviation, variance, range, minimum, and maximum measured the amount of variation or spread in the data obtained from the global self esteem questionnaire and the TOEIC test. The low standard deviation for the “self competence” dimension of the global self esteem (SD=.60962) meant that there was much less variation in the participants’ answers of this dimension rather than the “self liking” dimension (SD=.66939), while the high standard deviation for the TOEIC test (SD=2.65445) suggested that there was a lot of variation in the participants’ scores in TOEIC test. The sum or total of the values, across all cases with non missing values was also calculated for the three variables which were reported in Table 5.
Table 5: The Correlations of Global Self-esteem and Speaking Skill

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman's rho</th>
<th>Self competence</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self liking</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spearman's rho</td>
<td></td>
<td>.677**</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Spearman's rho was reported separately for the two dimensions of the global self esteem (self competence and self liking) and the speaking score of the individuals. The association between “self competence” and “speaking score” (rho= .677) as well as the association between “self liking” and “speaking score” (rho= .576) were fairly strong (P<.05). The relationship between self competence and speaking score was stronger. This rejects the first null hypothesis that there is no relationship between global self esteem dimensions (namely “self competence” and “self liking”) and speaking skill of female EFL students.

As it was shown in figure 1 there was a positive relationship between two dimensions of global self esteem (namely “self competence” and “self liking”) and speaking scores of female EFL students.

Considering global self esteem as a dimension of self esteem, some studies also investigated the relationship between self esteem dimensions and other English skills. In this study a significant correlation between global self esteem and speaking skill was found. The findings are in some parts in agreement of and in some parts opposite with Bagheri and Faghieh and Al-hattab studies. In a study by Bagheri and Faghieh (2012), they investigated the relationship between self esteem and reading comprehension on both female and male learners. The result was opposite of the present study. There wasn't a significant relationship between global self-esteem and reading comprehension. The correlation between global self-esteem and TOEFL reading comprehension test was r = .204. This level of Pearson Coefficient of Correlation indicated that there was no relationship between the two variables.
This means that it is not necessary when student's global self-esteem increased, his/her achievement in English reading comprehension test may increase and vice versa because the correlation between the two variables was insignificant. It is also opposite with Al-Hattab study (2006) who investigated the correlation between self-esteem and English writing achievement of EFL third-year secondary students in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah. The result showed there was no significant correlation between global self-esteem and English writing achievement. The finding of global self esteem part of this study is in agreement with Adelaide Heyde study (1979). She found that a high level of self-esteem was associated with SL proficiency (quoted in Littlewood, 1984, p.64). She studied the effects of three levels of self-esteem on the oral production of American college students learning French as a foreign language. In this regard, Brown cites,“ she found all three levels of self-esteem correlated positively with performance on the oral production measure… “(P. 102).

The second null hypothesis formulated in this paper was:

2. There is no relationship between task self-esteem and speaking skill of female EFL students.

Again just like the global self esteem, the Statistics were done for the task self-esteem questionnaire and the TOEIC test.

| Table 6: The Statistics of Task Self-esteem and Speaking Skill |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Speaking score | Task self esteem |
| N | Valid | 40 | 40 |
| Mean | 33.9188 | 3.9588 |
| Median | 33.5000 | 4.0588 |
| Mode | 29.75 | 4.29 |
| Std. Deviation | 2.65445 | .42963 |
| Variance | 7.046 | .185 |
| Range | 9.75 | 1.76 |
| Minimum | 29.75 | 3.00 |
| Maximum | 39.50 | 4.76 |
| Sum | 1356.75 | 158.35 |

There is a lot of variation in the students’ scores on TOEIC test (V= 7.046). In comparison, the value of variance for task self-esteem questionnaire is much lower than the variance value of the speaking test implying that the participants’ answers for the task self esteem questionnaire were more identical to each other than their performance on TOEIC test. The summary illustrates statistically significant relationship between the two pairs implying that
there is a positive and significant relationship between task self-esteem and speaking score. The result was shown in table 6.

**Table 7: The Correlations of Task Self-esteem and Speaking Skill**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman's rho</th>
<th>Task self-esteem</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Spearman's Rank Order correlation was run to determine the relationship between 40 students' tasks self-esteem and the participants’ speaking proficiency. There was a positive correlation between these two variables, which was statistically significant (rho = .379, p < .05). The sign of the Spearman correlation indicated that the direction of association between task self-esteem (the independent variable) and the participants’ speaking proficiency (the dependent variable) was positive. In other words if task-based self esteem tended to increase, the EFL learners’ speaking proficiency would increase, too. The findings reject the second null hypothesis that there is no relationship between task self-esteem and speaking skill of female EFL students suggesting that the relationship between these two variables is significant. The result was reported in table 7.

As it was shown in figure 2 there is a positive and significant relationship between task self-esteem and speaking scores of female EFL students.

This part of the study is in agreement of what Brown and Heyde mentioned. Brown further suggested three levels of self esteem: “general or global self-esteem; situational or specific self-esteem, which is related to certain life situation; and task self-esteem, which relates to particular tasks within specific situations” (p.104). All the three levels of self-esteem were found “to be correlated positively with performance on the oral production measure, with the highest correlation occurring between task self-esteem and performance in oral production” (Heyde, 1979, quoted by Brown, 1980, p.104). It suggests that in the context
of second language acquisition, learners can be expected to perform better in their oral performance by enhancing their self-esteem related to their task. Such enhancement will help them have better conceptions of their abilities in their oral skills.

The third null hypothesis formulated in this paper was:

3. None of the components of speaking skill are related to global self esteem’s dimensions.

While a close examination of the correlation of each global self esteem dimensions with different components of the speaking test showed that there seem to be statistically significant relationship between them, Spearman’s rho results revealed a relatively different values of correlation between some of these components (See Table 8).

In this study, the correlations of speaking components are not measured separately. Rather, the measurements of correlations were based on the “TOEIC Speaking Directions table”. As the result, the statistical analyst divided the speaking components into three categories. The first category consisted of “pronunciation, intonation and stress” which was based on question 1 and 2. The second category consisted of “pronunciation, intonation and stress along with vocabulary, grammar and cohesion” based on question 3. The third and last category comprised all 8 components “pronunciation, intonation and stress, vocabulary, grammar and cohesion, relevance of content and completeness of content” based on question 4 to 11. So, the relationship between self esteem (global and task self esteem) and speaking components were measured and studied based on the 3 speaking component categories.

The highest amount of correlation was reported between the first category of TOEIC components (including pronunciation, intonation and stress) and self competence dimension of the global self esteem (rho= .622, P<.05). On the other hand, the lowest amount of correlation was reported between the third category of the TOEIC components (namely pronunciation, intonation, stress, grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, relevance of content and completeness of content) and the participants’ views of their self liking on global self esteem(rho= .334, P<.05).

Table 8: The Correlations of Global Self-esteem and Speaking Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>First Category</th>
<th></th>
<th>Second category</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coefficient</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.622**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.496**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.014</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8: The Correlations of Global Self-esteem and Speaking Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self competence</th>
<th>Self liking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Category</td>
<td>.622**</td>
<td>.496**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second category</td>
<td>.378</td>
<td>.386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.016</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It should be noted that the speaking questions were designed in a way that when questions proceeded, the questions would become more complicated and the last two questions (questions 10 and 11) contain all components of speaking. By applying the Spearman rank-order correlation test it was found that there was a significant relationship between the two dimensions of the global self esteem and different components of the speaking test (See Table 8). This relationship was relatively stronger for the self competence and speaking components rather than the self liking and the speaking components. Examination of Table 8, the relationship between the two dimensions of the global self esteem (including self competence and self liking) and different components of the speaking test as determined by the Spearman rank-order correlation test, revealed that the participants’ different components of the speaking test significantly correlated with the determined two dimensions of the global self esteem. Thus the answer to the third research question is provided and the third null hypothesis is rejected suggesting that there is statistically a positive and meaningful relationship between the two dimensions of the global self esteem and different components of the speaking test (p≤0.05).

In the present study, there was a positive relationship between speaking components especially pronunciation, intonation & stress and global self-esteem. It is in disagreement with Koosha, Ketabi and Kassaian (2011) and Niki Maleki & Mohammadi (2009) and Kalanzadeh, Mahnegar, Hassannejad, and Bakhtiarvand (2013) studies duo to the speaking scale they used. Koosha, Ketabi and Kassaian (2011) investigated the effects of self-esteem, age and gender on the Speaking Skills of Intermediate University EFL Learners. The result showed that there was a significant relationship between self-esteem and fluency whereas the other components of oral production did not meet the requirements of being statistically significant. It should be noted that in that study the researcher was only interested in oral production not the content of what is produced. Their finding was in part in line with the findings of Niki Maleki & Mohammadi (2009). They found that the more successful learners...
regarding the oral communication had higher self-esteem than the less successful ones in performing oral communication tasks. In Koosha, Ketabi and Kassaian (2011) study, there were no organized and standard set of questions to be asked. Rather, the scores were given solely based on the course of oral short stories at their final exam. Students presented a summary of one or two stories they have read in their books and the scores were given accordingly using Farhady’s scale. That’s why they concluded that there was higher relationship between self esteem and fluency. There was a chance of memorization in that study. But in the present study, the students had to think and use their own speaking skill to answer questions. In Farhady speaking scale as you see, there are 5 components – accent, vocabulary, grammar, fluency, comprehension- and all of them are measured separately but in TOEIC test, the format of questions determine how speaking components should be measured. As questions proceed, more speaking components are involved. In a study by Kalanzadeh, Mahnegar, Hassannejad, and Bakhtiarvand (2013), based on the results obtained from the participants' responses to the self esteem questionnaire and their performance on an standard oral proficiency test, it was concluded that there was a high correlation between the participants self esteem and their oral performance.

The fourth null hypothesis formulated in this paper was:

4. None of the components of oral production are related to task self esteem.

A two-tailed test of significance of the Spearman rank order was run to the results of the task-based self esteem questionnaire and different components of the TOEIC test. The results are presented in Table 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9: The Correlations of Task Self-esteem and Speaking Components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman's rho</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The findings of the Spearman rank-order correlation test for different components of the speaking test and task self esteem questionnaire also implied a significant relationship between them. In other words, the better the participants’ views of their task self esteem, the better their performance on different components of the speaking test. However, this value of the Spearman's rho for the first category of the TOEIC components examined through questions one and two was relatively higher than the two other components suggesting stronger association between pronunciation, intonation and stress and female EFL students’ task self esteem. The results also indicated that when other components including grammar, vocabulary and cohesion are added to the speaking test, this value of association diminishes. And finally, when the speaking test combines other foreign language speaking components together (such as relevance of content and completeness of content), the value of the spearman rank order reaches its lowest amount. This rejects the forth null hypothesis that none of the components of speaking skill are related to task self esteem suggesting that there is a positive relationship between components of TOEIC test especially pronunciation, intonation & stress and task self esteem. The findings are again in disagreement with the studies mentioned earlier including Koosha, Ketabi and Kassaian (2011) and also Niki Maleki & Mohammadi (2009) due to the speaking scale they used. They used farhady scale and were just interested in production skills so they found that there was a significant relationship between self-esteem and fluency whereas the other components of oral production did not meet the requirements of being statistically significant. In a study by Kalanzadeh, Mahnegar, Hassannejad, and Bakhtiarvand (2013) on both female and male learners, based on the results obtained from the participants' responses to the self esteem questionnaire and their performance on a standard oral proficiency test, it was concluded that there was a high correlation between the participants self esteem and their oral performance. The fifth null hypothesis formulated in this paper was:

5. **There is no difference between global self esteem and task self esteem in relation to speaking skill.**

To answer the fifth and last question, the findings of previous questions were compared because the goal was to compare the degree of correlation by referring to correlation coefficient indices of two categories of self esteem. So, the results of the two series of spearman rank order were compared for the two questionnaires (global and task self esteem).
Table 10: the correlation between global and task self esteem and TOEIC scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Global self esteem</th>
<th>Task self esteem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman's rho</td>
<td>.685*</td>
<td>.379*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEIC scores</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the results of the Spearman rank order, the value of correlation between the EFL learners’ speaking proficiency and global self esteem was slightly higher than the amount of correlation between speaking ability and task self esteem resulting that the association between global self esteem and speaking ability is relatively stronger than the association between task self esteem and speaking proficiency but this difference is not significant because both types of self esteem have statistically significant relationship with EFL learners’ oral language proficiency. This answers the fifth research hypothesis that there is no difference between global self esteem and task self esteem in relation to speaking skill. The result is shown in table 10.

Figure 3: the correlation between task self esteem, global self esteem and TOEIC scores

Figure 3 depicted the results of global self esteem and task self esteem in relation to TOEIC scores. No significant difference was observed between global self esteem and task self esteem in relation to speaking skill. Unlike other studies which measured self esteem as a single construct and some other studies which investigated self esteem as a three level construct (Global, task and situational) in relation to English skills, the present study took a little different road and studied self esteem at two dimensions namely global and task self esteem in relation with speaking skill. It is noteworthy that in this study, the global self esteem was considered as two-dimensional. The findings of this part of the study are in disagreement with Bagheri and Faghih and also Al-Hattab studies because global self esteem in their studies had insignificant correlation and task self esteem correlation was significant.
In Bagheri and Faghih study (2012) on both female and male learners, the result showed that there was a positive relationship between overall self-esteem and reading comprehension, and overall self-esteem and personality type, in general. Likewise, positive relationships between situational and task self-esteem with reading comprehension were shown but there wasn't a significant relationship between global self-esteem and reading comprehension. In a study by Al-Hattab (2006) on both female and male learners, Results of the study revealed that there was a positive correlation between self-esteem and English writing achievement, in general. Likewise, positive correlations between situational and task self esteem with English writing achievement were shown but there was a non significant correlation between global self-esteem and English writing achievement.

6. Conclusions and Implications

Several studies have suggested that learning, in general, cannot be achieved without taking into consideration the psychological factors (Carter & Nunan, 2001; Derville, 1966). Most of language learning problems are closely related to psychological factors out of which self-esteem is a main topic that has important effects on language learning. So the importance of self-esteem as a critical factor affecting motivation was emphasized in the present study. It could be stated that no activity will be carried out successfully without self-esteem (Huitt, 2004). Demo and Parker (1987) stated that in real situations both self-esteem and language learning are inter-related factors. Language learning can have impact on the degree of self-esteem and vice versa. As Erikson (1963) maintains we always look for stable identity, covering our knowledge of who we are, what our weaknesses and strengths are, and, in short, how we evaluate ourselves. This evaluation of the self in literature today is referred to as self-esteem. Many studies have been conducted to determine the relationship between how one evaluates himself and his success in academic studies. While some have reported that there is no significant relationship between the two, others have shown that the higher the self esteem, the greater the chances of success in academic achievement. The main concern of this study was to see if such a relationship could be detected among Iranian female EFL student's achievements in oral production, covering the eight components of pronunciation, intonation, stress, grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, relevance of content and completeness of content, on the one hand, and how they evaluate themselves, on the other. In this study a positive and significant relationship was found between global self esteem and speaking skill. It was also found that the low standard deviation for the “self competence” dimension (SD=.60962)
meant much less variation in the participants’ reports of this dimension rather than the “self liking” dimension (SD=.6693). So it may be in part related to what Branden thinks about self esteem. He considered self esteem as two components namely self confidence and self respect, it can be said that the self confidence part is partly related to self competence and self liking is related to self respect. Branden said Self-respect is the sense of worthiness and a person judges himself by some standards. So the higher SD in self liking can be related to the standards each person holds for himself. A person values his action according to the standards he puts. (Branden 2001).

A positive relationship between task self esteem and speaking skill of EFL female learners was also found. The positive relationship between global self esteem dimensions and oral production components (considering stronger relationship between self competence and pronunciation, stress and intonation) on the one hand and task self esteem and oral production components (a stronger relationship between task self esteem and pronunciation, intonation and stress) on the other hand were found. There was also no significant difference among self esteem levels (global and task self esteem) in relation to speaking ability of female EFL learners.

It should be mentioned that in most studies, self esteem has been measured with Rosenberg scale (RSES). But in the present study the SLSC-R scale was used. Examination of the personality correlation-profiles for SL, SC, and the RSES reveal that Rosenberg's (1965) scale appears to split the difference between SL and SC, with some bias toward the former. This corroborates the description achieved by Tafarodi & Swann (1995, 2001) using factor analytic methods. The dominant self-liking component of the RSES was also confirmed in this study by a significantly stronger zero-order correlation between SL and the RSES, compared to that observed between SC and this scale (also corroborated by regression beta-weights). Further evidence of this preferential weighting can be seen in the lack of significant difference in relation to personality between SL and the RSES (although Openness neared significance), compared to the presence of a divergent relationship to Conscientiousness in the case of SC. Regressions replicated these personality associations; Conscientiousness and Openness were predictors of SC, but did not contribute any significant prediction of variance for either SL or the RSES. Emotional Stability was also less of a predictor for SC, relative to the RSES and SL. The results of these analyses provide strong evidence that SL and SC are distinct constructs. Self esteem thus appears to be a two-dimensional construct, and the SLCS-R likely forms a more comprehensive measure of this evaluation than the RSES. Self-liking appears most similar to what many researchers define
as self-esteem—not a general evaluation of the self (as a literal definition might suggest) but an affectively based evaluation of how one “feels” about oneself (Leary, 2004). In contrast, self-competence shares many similarities with self-efficacy beliefs, which are primarily cognitive rather than affective (Bandura, 1997). These two forms of self-evaluation no doubt influence one another (e.g., believing you are competent surely makes you feel good about yourself), but they are nonetheless distinct. Self-competence is associated not only with emotional stability but also with those aspects of personality associated with task focus, responsibility, intelligence, and creativity. The validity of these personality associations is corroborated by the association of Self-Competence with achievement in academia and various creative domains and with higher IQ scores (which index both raw ability [fluid IQ] and learning [crystallized IQ]; Jensen, 1998); nonetheless, future research employing observer ratings of personality in addition to self-reports would provide an opportunity to further test our findings. Measurement of self-competence appears useful for a number of reasons, as this form of self-evaluation appears: (a) less likely to be contaminated by self-deceptive enhancement, (b) associated with more advantageous personality characteristics, and (c) associated with actual ability and achievement in cognitive and creative domains. These two aspects of self evaluation, though strongly related, appear distinct enough to warrant separate examination and measurement. As a whole, therefore, the SLCS-R may be a better choice for assessing self-esteem. To improve self-competence is also likely to raise self-liking, while perhaps avoiding the production of self-regard founded on overconfidence.

The findings of the present study revealed that there was relatively a positive relationship between students’ self esteem and their level of speaking performances. As speaking task got more complicated and more speaking components got involved, the students made more mistakes in their performances even the ones who were good at speaking. So it might be helpful if teachers pay more attention to their students’ self-esteem, especially task self esteem, find their weaknesses and try to enhance it and to provide students with more complicated tasks and help them to improve. Foreign language teachers should consider self esteem as a powerful motivating force that can optimize language learning processes and more importantly consider enhancing student self esteem as one of the primary goals of language education. However, the researcher does not claim the results obtained from the present study are absolutely conclusive. Put it another way, as people come to learn a new language in a foreign context, their self-esteem may influence their performance in general and their spoken performance in particular but also many other factors including their motivation, attitudes towards the language they are going to learn, the
context in which they are going to master the new language are extremely influential in this regard.

References


Iranian EFL Journal


Title
The Acquisition of Optional Infinitives by Persian EFL learners

Authors
Ali Akbar Jabbari (Ph.D)
Yazd University, Yazd, Iran

Hamide Behroueian (Ph.D. Candidate)
Yazd University, Yazd, Iran

Biodata
Ali Akbar Jabbari got his Ph.D in Syntax and phonology form Durham University in Britain. He is affiliated in Language department of Yazd University, Iran. His research interests include applied linguistics, phonology, and syntax.

Hamide Behroueian is a Ph.D Candidate of TEFL at Yazd University, Iran. Her research interest includes applied linguistics. Currently she has been teaching as a University lecturer in Yazd, Iran.

Abstract
Optional Infinitive (OI) stage proposed by Wexler in early 1990s introduced a period in early language acquisition process through which finite and non-finite forms co-occur in similar contexts. Later, properties of OI stage, initially proposed for L1 acquisition, were observed in the products of L2 and cross linguistics data. With this regard, the current book highlights the comprehension and production of Optional Infinitive (OI) stage features including application of infinitive markers, subject-verb agreement, and tense markers by Persian lower and upper intermediate EFL learners. The research was carried out to investigate how different these two proficiency groups pass through this stage. It further aimed at exploring the effect of learners’ L1 on the acquisition of OI features which were mainly neglected by other studies. Moreover, it attempted to apply its results to Truncation and Unique Checking Constraint as two major models proposed to explain OI features through a critical view. Thus, investigating the application of OI features across two proficiency groups can provide second language teachers with pedagogical feedback. Syllabus design can focus on features attributed to OI stage when teachers are aware of the proficiency levels at which OI stage starts and ends. This idea can provide the stakeholders with helpful information about
the characteristics of the learners’ productions and acquisition level at the optional infinitive stage regarding Persian EFL learners.

**Keywords:** English Optional Infinitives, Truncation theory, Unique Checking Constraint hypothesis

1. Introduction

Use of infinitives in L1 acquisition process was first observed by Wexler in the early 1990s, who reported a stage in the L1 learning process within which children use finite and nonfinite forms of verbs interchangeably (Wexler 1990, 1992, and 1993). He also used *Root Infinitive Stage* or *Optional Root Infinitive Stage* equally for OI (Optional Infinitive Stage) to emphasize that children intend to omit the tense markers of verbs in their root clauses. Properties of OI stage are numerated by Wexler (1994) as follow:

1. Root infinitives (non-finite verbs) are possible grammatical sentences for children in this stage
2. These infinitives co-exist with finite forms
3. The children nevertheless know the relevant grammatical Principles and have set the relevant Parameters correctly.

Sorace (2000) defined Syntactic Optionality in non-native grammars as the coexistence of two or more variants of a given construction within an individual grammar which make use of the same lexical resources and express the same meaning. She mentioned three main differences between first and second language optionality. First, L1 can transfer to L2 learning process as an external source of optionality. Second, L1 optionality seems to end sooner than the L2 optionality; advanced learners still show optional productions. Third, L2 optionality is a real optionality which demonstrates use of alternative forms in the same contexts. She proposed Interface Hypothesis (IH) by saying that “those language structures consisting of an interface between syntax and other cognitive domains are less likely to be acquired completely than structures that do not involve this interface.” But it is unclear which cognitive domains are supposed to include other internal aspects of language faculty such as phonology, morphology and semantics. Sorace leant heavily on extra grammatical factors such as contextual discourse and knowledge of functional morphology to explain non target like optionality in the L2 end state. In her account of optionality and instability in bilingual development, she portrayed a swinging state between syntax and pragmatics as the cause.
Wexler (2002) in his upgrading characteristics of the OI stage for English added several other issues:

- Tense morphemes appear only in correct syntactic positions.
- The semantic properties of tense morphemes are used correctly.
- Auxiliaries as tense morphemes are omitted.
- Accusative pronouns are often substituted for nominative pronouns as subjects of root clauses.

Dominguez and Arche (2008) defined L2 optionality as follow: “optionality is usually characterized as phenomenon where more than one form of a particular grammatical structure exists in the inter language of a speaker at any point in the acquisition process.” They studied word order acquisition in Spanish by English learners in a highly ambiguous context, proposing that ambiguity and lack of robustness in input affect grammatical accuracy of all learners, irrespective of proficiency and pragmatic knowledge.

Poeppel and Wexler (1993) as well as Wexler (1994, 1998) observed children’s optional use of root infinitives instead of inflected verbs when they are around two years old to show inaccuracy and deficiency in the acquisition process. They reported that while auxiliaries showed no optionality, root infinitives occurred only with lexical verbs.

According to Radford’s “structure-building” (1996), child’s grammar suffers from some maturational constraints which lead to delayed emergence of functional categories until the third year of life. In its maturational process, child grammar fluctuates between different grammatical forms which help the child to form some categorical knowledge of his language. According to Radford’s Continuity approach these alternative movements end in development. So optional use of (Where did Daddy go?) and (Where Daddy go?) are not only possible but also frequent in child productions. For Radford, the basis of child grammar is the whole phrase structure within which some features may be temporarily underspecified. These underspecified features are what Wexler (1994) called Optionality.

Caprin and Guasti (2009) conducted a cross-sectional study with a group of children as large as 59, aged from 22 to 35 month. They argued a very small rate of OI in Dutch as L1; their findings are comparable to study conducted by Wexler, Schaeffer and Bol (2004).

Eubank’s (1994; 1996) ‘valueless features’ indicates that when an L2 feature is inaccessible permanently or temporarily L1 features are applied without their specified values in L2 and thus are “valueless features” until the learner acquires their real application in target language. Opposing Eubank’s true versus apparent optionality which can be eliminated
by learning, Beck (1998) believed in a permanent deficiency in L2 learners’ grammatical productions, supposing that optionality does not disappear.

Robertson (2000) argued that optionality in L2 development is only apparently deficient. Taking into consideration learners’ internal grammar he studied Chinese learners of English and reported that English articles were used optionally but not randomly, subjects used contextual and lexical recoverability and transfer as cues.

Parody and Tsimpli (2005) compared Greek and Spanish with English to discuss the existence of “True optionality” in L2 developing Grammars. While “Real Optionality” was found among less proficient learners, advanced learners’ optional choices depended highly upon their structure-based properties, proficiency level and morphological richness in L1 and L2. Cross linguistic data on “Clitics” showed more degrees of optionality among English learners of Greek and Spanish since clitic pronouns are absent in their mother language (e.g., English).

Much data was scrutinized by different researchers, but the same conclusion was drawn i.e., in their optional use of finite/non-finite verbs children follow other rules of grammar set by their language since their intricate knowledge already has syntax of adults’. The OI research territory is replete with practical and longitudinal studies in L1 and L2 proposed to tackle OI features by introducing a kind of framework. Among all models introduced since discovery of OI stage, three models survived till today, each with its own merits and demerits.

Rizzi (1993) observed that Optional infinitives occurs mostly in subordinate clauses while finite verbs happen in both main and subordinate contexts, he proposed that subordinate infinitive clauses took their tense interpretation from an Anaphoric Tense identified sentence-internally. He asserts that in the use of infinitives, the root is selected in the VP, saying that all nods above VP e.g., TP or AgrP should be omitted and thus should not be present in the productions of learner. This model which is known as Truncation model can successfully explain misuse of clitics, weak pronouns, and auxiliaries in optional infinitive stage since they occupy a stage higher than the VP which is assumed not to be acquired yet at OI stage. It also can explain nonexistence of OI in pro-drop languages. His model has some demerits in explaining subject presence in negative sentences since in NegP as the root of the clause, the specifier of NegP can be a possible site for subject to raise. On the other hand simultaneous use of nominative and accusative subjects in OI sentences cannot be explained since in OI stage it is supposed that T is not acquired yet but Agr which is higher than T is used successfully. Moreover Wh-structures are not possible according to Truncation model
since in OI stage no CP is available to give site to Wh-to land and thus no possibility for EPP to happen.

Agreement/Tense Omission Model (ATOM) proposed by Schütze and Wexler (1996) and Schütze (2003) based its foundations on optional under specification of either tense or agreement to explain optionality. In this model use of non-Nominative subjects as well as optional infinitives in child English non-finite constructions are explained successfully. When Agr is not met and T is acquired NOM is not assigned and the accusative form is used, when T is not attained while Agr is attributed NOM case is assigned. They could explain the frequent use of accusative cases as the subjects of root verbs at OI stage by proposing that accusatives are the default case form of language in which wherever there is no structural case position the accusative forms are used. But this model cannot explain how, why and where the DP subject moves and from where it receives case, it also has problems explaining the optionality in choosing to omit T or Agr and to explain why some languages don’t have OI stage.

UCC model proposed by Wexler (1998) claims a position for subject initially in the VP which should raise to check finiteness for TP and AgrP which have an uninterpretable D-feature to be checked but this model assumes that the interpretable D-feature of subject can only be checked against one functional category and at least one of these two category should be checked by subject.

In general, these three models, tried to explain properties of the OI stage and investigate how optional infinitives takes place within the syntactic structures of language in early stages of acquisition. Having their own merits and demerits none of which could advocate OI stage features thoroughly. Furthermore, as it is known optional infinitives in any first language acquisition terminate in a full attainment of verbs, tense markers, subject pronouns, and subject-verb agreements, but in L2 it is still a matter of question which needs further investigation.

On one hand, research on OI stage has failed to come up with a well established model capable of explaining all properties of language acquisition process. Various models have been applied as frameworks for conducting studies, but attempts to compare and contrast these models to choose the better one by practical experiments were rare. On the other hand, OI researches in L2 realm, though satisfactory in number, were mostly longitudinal reports of OI stage features. No experiment has explored OI stage properties for Persian children or adult EFL learners. Furthermore, teaching as the prominent feature in second language
learning can be improved by considering possible difficulties in learning any structure before teaching. These are issues that deserve to be investigated.

The present study aims to investigate whether Persian upper and lower intermediate EFL learners show OI features in their productions, thus, the use of infinitive markers, subject pronouns, and tense markers is investigated in the contexts of two verb categories i.e., infinitive-to and bare infinitives. The current research tries to illuminate the role of L1 and proficiency in the acquisition of OI features.

2. Infinitives in English and Persian

2.1 Infinitives in English

Traditionally English infinitive has been described as the basic, dictionary form of a verb when used non-finitely; with (She needs to study hard.) or without (She must study hard.) the particle to. In their book, Wishon and Burks (1980) define infinitive as a verbal, usually made up of a lexico-syntactic infinitive particle to plus the stem of the verb as in to go.

There are three kinds of infinitive in English; the full infinitive or (to-infinitive), the bare infinitive (the stem of verb without to) and the split infinitive (When a single adverb inserts between particle to and verb stem), examples represented in (1) deal with these three kinds of infinitives respectively.

(1) a. John wants to go.
   b. His father lets him go.
   c. We asked him to study more.

As shown through examples in (2) below, infinitives can take subject, object or both of them simultaneously. But cautious attention must be taken into consideration that if the subject of an infinitive is a pronoun, it must be an object pronoun.

(2) a. We asked John to study more. (Subject)
   b. They believed him to be innocent. (both)
   c. John likes to play basketball. (Object)

As Radford (2005) explains complement clauses such as (2b) are exceptional in English because their subjects are assigned accusative case by the transitive verb (believe) immediately preceding them. He added: “the verb is in a different clause from the subject which it assigns accusative case to.” Thus, in a sentence like (2b), the complement clause [him to be innocent] is an infinitival TP which is headed by to, and its subject him is assigned accusative case by the transitive verb believe. These clauses are known as Exceptional Case-
Marking clauses (or ECM). Chomsky (1999) asserted that these defective clauses are not full
CPs and seem to be placed at TPs.

Most recent theories accepted “to+ verb stem” as the default version for infinitives, the
infinitival particle (to) which is separable in “Split Infinitives” can also be omitted in bare
infinitive. English bare infinitives happen in conditions specified below:
a. After prepositions like but, except and besides:
   (3) She does nothing but/except /besides sing all day long.
b. After causing verbs such as let, help, make, see...
   (4) His parents let him use the car.
c. After verbs of sense such as watch, hear, feel...
   (5) I watched him go, then go home.

Though existence or non existence of “to” does not have any effect on the meaning of
the verb, for grammatical reasons they can’t be used interchangeably.

2.2 Infinitives in Persian

Infinitive in Persian is formed by adding -ن (æn) to the basic stem of the verb forcing almost
all Persian infinitives end in -ن (-tan) or -ن (-dan).

(6) Past tense stem + / - æn / → خورد+ن → خوردن (xōrdan) 'to eat.'

Compound verbs which are formed by juxtaposition of light verbs, such as کردن /kærden /
"to do, to make" and nouns, also form infinitives by adding -ن (æn) to their light
verbs.

(7) "conversation" + کردن "to do, to make"/sohbæt kærdæn/ "to speak".

Infinitives are also beneficial in formulating past tense. By omission of -ن / - æn / from
the infinitive, a past stem will be resulted.

(8) خوردن 'to eat.' → omission of -ن / - æn / خورد → خوردن 'ate' (past tense stem)

Persian bare infinitives only occur with future auxiliary verb (خواه) 'will'. For example:

(9) خواهم خرد (xāham xari:d) ‘I will buy.’

Thus, Persian contains all kinds of infinitives except the split ones, since it is impossible
to separate the noun from the light verb.

In the case of application, the Persian infinitive particle is represented through a morpho-
syntactic element (-ت) /be-/ which attaches to the base form of the verb and occupies the final
position of the sentence.

(10) می خواهم (که) پروم. (mi xāham berævæm) ‘I want to go.’
2.3 Contrastive Analysis of Infinitives in English and Persian

In many languages the infinitive is a single word, often with an inflective ending, such as _manger_ (to eat) in French, _portare_ (to carry) in Latin, _lieben_ (to love) in German, etc. On the other hand, some other languages do not have any conjugated forms as infinitives, many Native American Languages as well as some African and Australian languages; they just use finite forms of verbs. Following is

### 2.3.1 Infinitive Particle

Both English and Persian infinitives have inflected forms; while Persian has a morpho-syntactic element (-ـت / -ـت) which occupies the final position of the sentence, English uses a lexi-co-syntactic infinitive particle _to_ that stand after the previous verb.

(11) **English:** I want _to_ go.

**Persian:** می خواهم (که) پروم

### 2.3.2: Full Infinitives

Full infinitives are used in these conditions:

(12) **a.** English: Intransitive verb + to-infinitive “He failed _to jump_ over the fence.”

**Persian:** Intransitive verb + infinitival (ـت / _ـت_) او موفق نشد از روی نردپورد

**b.** English: Transitive verb + object + to-infinitive “I convinced him _to come_ with me.”

**Persian:** Transitive verb + object + infinitival (ـت / _ـت_) او را متقاعد کردم که با من یپايد

### 2.3.3: Bare Infinitives

Bare infinitives or simple verbs are used in the following situations:

**a.** After modal verbs (can, will, should, may…)

**English:** Modal verb + Bare Infinitive

**Persian:** Modal verb (خواستن) [want] (showing future) + Bare Infinitive (No infinitival (ـت / _ـت_))

Other Modal verbs + infinitival (ـت / _ـت_)

(13) "I will/can/etc. _see_ it."

من آن را خواهم دید/ می توانم ببینم

**b.** After some Sensory verbs (see, watch, hear, feel, sense) and other verbs such as (make, bid, let, have…) when they get direct objects.

**English:** Sensory verbs + Bare Infinitive

**Persian:** Sensory verbs + Clause (with “که” [that])

(14) "I saw/watched/heard/etc. _it_ happen."

من دیدم/شنیدم که آن اتفاق افتاد

**c.** After causing verbs (make, bid, let, have…) when they get direct objects

(15) "I made/bade/let/had him _do_ it."

او را مجبور کردم/یه او امر کرد/ به او اجازه دادم "که" آن را انجام دهد.
As Radford (2005) explains, these utterances are Exceptional Case-Marking clauses in English, in which the accusative case plays the role of both subject and object. While English is an exception in this case, Persian has only nominative cases as subject. In example (21) above, *him* is the object of causative verbs and at the same time subject of *do*, while both are represented as (*دِ) [he/she] in Persian.

D. and after Would/Had rather, Would/Had better, Would/Had sooner …

   English: Specific verbs + Bare infinitive
   Persian: Specific verbs + Infinitival (ثُ - ظُ)

(16) "You had better leave now."
were placed at Lower intermediate proficiency level and subjects who scored between 37 up to 47 were placed at upper intermediate level.

3. Tasks

3.3 Translation Task

30 Persian sentences were designed so that an infinitive marker (-ت, ‘to’) attached to their verb stem to highlight the role of Persian infinitive markers in the acquisition of English infinitives. Translation items were used based on the requirement for application of infinitive particle to with infinitive-to and bare infinitives. Since the purpose of the study was not to examine participant’s vocabulary repertoire, subjects were provided with the required English verbs as well as difficult vocabularies to make sure that the structures in question are applied. In Table 2 below distribution of test items are represented. Six distracters were included in the task as fillers.

Table 2: Distribution of Test Items in the Translation Task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Test Item Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infinitive-to</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2, 4, 7, 12, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 24, 27, 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bare infinitive</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 15, 18, 20, 25, 28, 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distracters</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1, 5, 10, 14, 21, 26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One example of Translation Test items for each verb category is mentioned in (2). The whole test is available in Appendix A.

(17) Translation Test examples:

Infinitive-to verb category:

(consult, agree).

Bare infinitive verb-category:

Would rather)

3.3.2 The Grammaticality Judgment Task

To investigate the Persian EFL learners’ knowledge of infinitives and subject pronouns with infinitive-to and bare infinitives, items were designed in three classifications; items with wrong application of infinitive particle to, items consisting of wrong application of subject pronoun, and finally items involving correct sentences. A total number of 60 items for the Grammaticality Judgment Task were designed based on these categories, 12 of which were distracters. Table 2 below shows the distribution of items within GJT. Subjects were required to judge each item as Grammatical, Ungrammatical, and I don’t know.

Table 3: Distribution of Test Items in GJT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Test Item Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infinitive-to</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bare infinitive</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distracters</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three samples of GJT test items for infinitive-to verb category are presented in (3). The rest of items are attached in Appendix B.

(18) GJT examples:

Incorrect application of infinitive particle *to*:

a. Sam may refuse, since he is rather shy, make a speech.

Incorrect application of subject pronoun:

b. John said that him volunteers to supply the drinks for picnic.

Correct Item:

c. Her mother said she deserves to pass the course.

### 3.3.3 Procedures

For the translation task, participants were instructed to apply the provided words within parentheses for each item and not to use other vocabularies. Consisting of 30 items to be translated to English, the test took about 45 to 60 minutes for learners. The Persian sentences were carefully designed so that all of them contained verbs initiated with the infinitive marker (*-ْهَ، ‘to’*). Since Persian is a pro-drop language the subject pronoun was omitted from the begging of the utterances in order to examine the use of subject pronouns by Persian EFL learners.

Following translation test, after a two-week time interval, GJT was administered. In this task participants were instructed to read through sentences and judge them as *grammatical*, *ungrammatical*, and *I don’t know* if they had no idea about the grammaticality of the utterance. Time limitation spotted for these test items were within 60 to 70 minutes.

### 4. Data Analysis and Results

Data analysis in this study is divided into two parts. The first section deals with the results of translation task. Translated items were classified into four categories based on the application of OI features investigated in this study i.e., correct translations, incorrect application of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive-to</th>
<th>Incorrect infini. to</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>2, 6, 9, 23, 25, 40, 44, 50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorrect subj. pro</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10, 12, 16, 22, 26, 30, 52, 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correct items</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7, 15, 24, 31, 37, 47, 55, 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bare infinitive</td>
<td>Incorrect infini. to</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13, 14, 19, 20, 27, 35, 43, 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorrect subj. pro</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8, 18, 28, 29, 33, 36, 54, 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correct items</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3, 4, 17, 38, 45, 48, 51, 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distracters</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1, 5, 11, 21, 32, 34, 39, 42, 46, 49, 53, 57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infinitive-to</th>
<th>Incorrect infini. to</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>2, 6, 9, 23, 25, 40, 44, 50</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorrect subj. pro</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10, 12, 16, 22, 26, 30, 52, 41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correct items</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7, 15, 24, 31, 37, 47, 55, 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bare infinitive</td>
<td>Incorrect infini. to</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13, 14, 19, 20, 27, 35, 43, 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incorrect subj. pro</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8, 18, 28, 29, 33, 36, 54, 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correct items</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3, 4, 17, 38, 45, 48, 51, 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distracters</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1, 5, 11, 21, 32, 34, 39, 42, 46, 49, 53, 57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
infinitives, incorrect application of subject pronouns, and incorrect application of tense markers. It was then possible to calculate the mean score of each subject in application of these features. The results for both infinitive-to and bare infinitives are represented here. The second part aims at representing the results obtained by the GJT to study the comprehension of infinitives and subject pronouns.

4.1 Results of the Translation Test

4.1.1 Results of infinitive-to verb category

The subjects’ performance on translation test where infinitive-to verbs were required are presented here. Total mean scores for correct, incorrect application of infinitive marker, subject pronouns, and tense markers in the translated items were: .7917, .0611, .0972, and .0306, respectively. Later, multivariate tests indicated significant main effect within participants’ translations, Wilks’ Lambda = .093, F (3, 56) = 181.456, p = .000, multivariate eta squared = .907. Also two groups of proficiency performed significantly different in this task, Wilks’ Lambda = .703, F (3, 56) = 7.895, p = .000, multivariate eta squared = .297. Pairwise comparisons indicated that correct translation was significantly different from all incorrect types of translations, p = .000.

4.1.2 Results of bare infinitive verb category

The calculated total mean scores for the application of bare infinitives in the translation task were .6833, .2097, .0458, and .0431 for correct, incorrect infinitive marker, subject pronouns, and tense markers, respectively. As inferred from mean scores, majority of incorrect translations fall within incorrect application of particle to, indicating that application of particle to when bare infinitives were required laid burden on Persian EFL learners. Mean scores of incorrect application of subject pronouns and tense markers show that subject pronouns and tense markers are processed similarly. Results of one-way repeated measures ANOVA indicated that correct translations as well as incorrect application of infinitival to were significantly different from all incorrect translations, p = .000, but incorrect translations caused by incorrect application of subject pronouns were not significantly different from incorrect application of tense marker, p = 1.000. Additionally, multivariate tests reported a significant effect for the application of bare infinitives in the translation test, Wilks’ Lambda = .066, F (3, 56) = 262.563, p = .000, multivariate eta squared = .934. Proficiency also made significant differences, Wilks’ Lambda = .605, F (3, 56) = 12.191, p = .000, multivariate eta squared = .395.

4.2 Results of the GJT; infinitive-to verb category

4.2.1 Correct items
Descriptive statistics indicated that correct items were judged successfully, .8208 of learners chose grammatical option, .1667 ungrammatical, and .0125 said I don’t know. Upper intermediate group ticked grammatical option more frequently (Mean = .8417) than the lower intermediate group (Mean = .8000) and there was a significant main effect between three choices in answering correct items with infinitive-to verb category, Wilks’ Lambda = .026, F (2, 57) = 1054.804, p = .000, multivariate eta squared = .974 which indicates a very large effect size. Later, pairwise comparisons between three options indicated that all options were ticked significantly different from each other, p = .000. No significant effect for proficiency in judging the correct sentences was reported, Wilks’ Lambda = .978, F (2, 57) = .640, p = .531, multivariate eta squared = .022 which indicates a small effect size. Since the differences observed between the proficiency groups’ means for three options in the GJ Test are not statistically significant, it is concluded that lower and upper intermediate Persian EFL learners process items with correct application of infinitive marker to in the same manner.

4.2.2 Items with Incorrect Application of infinitival to
The total mean scores for items with incorrect application of infinitive to, for the grammatical, ungrammatical, and I don’t know options were .2667, .6833, and .0500, respectively. Between groups comparisons of lower and upper intermediate groups’ mean scores for ungrammatical option were respectively .8250 and .5417 showing better performance by upper intermediate group. As represented by Multivariate Tests, participants’ judgments of items with incorrect application of infinitive to were significant, Wilks’ Lambda = .133, F (2, 57) = 185.965, p = .000, multivariate eta squared = .867 which indicates a very large effect size. Furthermore, pairwise comparisons indicated that all options were selected significantly different from each other, p = .000. Additionally, the results reported a significant main effect for proficiency in judging items with incorrect application of infinitive to, Wilks’ Lambda = .735, F (2, 57) = 10.256, p = .000, multivariate eta squared =.265 which indicates a large effect size.

4.2.3 Items with Incorrect Application of Subject pronouns
Items with incorrect subject pronouns seemed easy to judge for participants, since .9000 of total answers were ungrammatical and only .0750 grammatical. Upper intermediate subjects had better performance in choosing the correct answer (Mean = .9750) than lower intermediate learners (Mean = .8250). Furthermore, the multivariate tests revealed significant effects within items with incorrect application of subject pronouns, Wilks’ Lambda = .052, F (2, 57) = 522.277, p = .000, multivariate eta squared = .948. Also, pairwise comparisons reported that only grammatical and ungrammatical options were selected significantly
different, \( p = .000 \). moreover, a significant effect for proficiency was reported, Wilks’ Lambda = .806, \( F (2, 57) = 6.881, p = .000 \), multivariate eta squared = .194 which indicates a very large effect size.

4.3 Results of the GJT; Bare infinitive verb category

In this section the bare infinitives are investigated. As mentioned before, all GJT items were of three types i.e., the correct items, the incorrect items with inappropriate application of infinitive marker to, and incorrect application of subject pronouns, which are discussed in the following part.

4.3.1 Correct items

For correct items grammatical, ungrammatical, and I don’t know options were selected with total mean scores equal to .7208, .2396, and .0396, respectively. Lower and upper intermediate groups chose the grammatical option with mean scores equal to .6833 and .7583, respectively. Furthermore, ungrammatical option was selected more frequently by lower intermediate (mean = .2625) than upper intermediate group (mean = .2167). Multivariate tests conducted, indicated that there is significant main effect within correct items. Wilks’ Lambda = .055, \( F (2, 57) = 489.777, p = .000 \), multivariate eta squared = .945. Also the pairwise comparisons indicated a significant main effect among all three options, \( P = .000 \). Furthermore, no significant main effect was reported for proficiency, Wilks’ Lambda = .937, \( F (2, 57) = 1.908, p = .158 \), multivariate eta squared = .063 which indicates a moderate effect size.

4.3.2 Items with Incorrect Application of infinitive marker to

The total mean scores for incorrect application of infinitive marker to when bare infinitives were required, for grammatical, ungrammatical, and I don’t know options were .4646, .4917, and .0438, respectively. Though the rate of choosing ungrammatical option is higher than grammatical one, the difference does not seem salient. Comparing proficiency groups shows better mean score for upper intermediate group. Multivariate tests resulted from the one-way repeated measures ANOVA indicated significant difference within items selected by participants, Wilks’ Lambda = .075, \( F (2, 57) = 352.313, p = .000 \), multivariate eta squared = .925 which indicates a very large effect size. Furthermore, pairwise comparisons showed no statistically significant difference in selecting grammatical and ungrammatical options, \( p = 1.000 \), mean difference = .027 and thus the significant effect size was attributed to I don’t know option. But proficiency was reported to have a significant effect for this category, Wilks’ Lambda = .585, \( F (2, 57) = 20.197, p = .000 \), multivariate eta squared = .415. The partial eta squared value (.415) indicates a very large effect size.
4.3.3 Items with Incorrect Application of Subject pronouns

As reported in descriptive statistics, total mean scores for incorrect application of subject pronouns indicated that .8958 of participants’ answers were correct i.e., ungrammatical, while the total mean score for grammatical and I don’t know options were .0750 and .0250, respectively. Multivariate tests among options for items with incorrect application of subject pronouns reported a significant effect among them, Wilks’ Lambda = .034, F (2, 57) = 820.928, p = .000, multivariate eta squared = .966 which indicates a very large effect size. Pairwise comparisons indicated that there exist significant effects among all three options. Furthermore, no significant role for proficiency was reported, Wilks’ Lambda = .907, F (2, 57) = 2.910, p = .063, multivariate eta squared = .093 which indicates a moderate effect size.

5. Discussion

The main feature of OI stage refers to an optional application of infinitive marker to in similar contexts by learners in early acquisition process, this stage for children as proposed by Wexler and agreed by other researchers begins around age three, but this time for second language learners should be investigated within the proficiency levels. Thus, infinitive verbs (infinitive-to and bare infinitives) were investigated in translation test and GJT.

5.1 Processing Infinitive marker to by Persian EFL learners

Application of infinitive marker to in translation task studied for two verb categories, indicated that total mean score of correct translations with infinitive-to verbs (.7917) was higher than bare infinitives (.6833) which confirms a salient role of L1 transfer. Most of the time, Persian verbs when applied within the sentences, take an infinitive marker (ِ) which is attached to the stem, the same procedure happens with English infinitive-to verbs; that is it is placed before verb stem (to go). Considering the infinitive-to verbs, though L1 transferred positively and the learners applied infinitive marker (to) in their translations to a high degree, but between groups’ comparisons showed that the correct translations’ mean scores of upper intermediate group (.9167) was highly better than that of lower intermediates (.6667). This concludes that upper intermediate learners applied the target forms more, indicating their acquisition of infinitive-to verbs. On the other hand, bare infinitives in comparison to infinitive-to verbs had lower mean scores for their correct translations, showing L1 negative transfer, since in Persian only in future tense the bare stem of the verb is used:

(19) Persian : خواهم خرید /Xahamxarid/
      English: I will buy.
Additionally, mean scores of correct translations with bare infinitives is significantly higher for upper (.8222) than the lower intermediate (.5444) groups; this concludes that at least lower intermediate learners have not acquired the bare infinitives yet, and their significant mean score for correct use of bare infinitives was due to the times they applied the other optional form in their language system.

In the GJT, the same results were obtained; correct items with infinitive-to verbs (.8208) were marked as grammatical more frequently than those of bare infinitives (.7208). Though upper intermediate subjects’ mean scores were higher than lower intermediate group, the proficiency was not significant in GJT. While incorrect application of infinitive marker to with bare infinitives in translation test had the highest mean score among other incorrect features and was significantly different from them, for infinitive-to verbs the more frequent incorrect translations were made by incorrect application of subject pronouns which were not significantly different from incorrect applications of tense markers or infinitival to.

In GJT, when infinitive marker (to) was not applied with infinitive-to verbs (.6833) ungrammatical option was ticked much more than when it was applied with bare infinitives (.4917) which again supports the L1 negative transfer for bare infinitives. Between groups comparisons showed better performance of upper intermediate learners in detecting the ungrammaticality of infinitival marker applied with bare infinitives but as the mean scores indicate this rate is not so high to claim that bare infinitives are acquired (mean scores of upper and lower intermediates = .6708 and .3125, respectively).

These data reported by translation and judgment tests with incorrect application of infinitive marker to indicated that learners made more errors in application and judgment of bare infinitives, which highlights the necessity of more instruction with bare infinitives in both proficiency groups. The significant role assigned to proficiency in detecting incorrect items of GJT or applying less incorrect features in their translations supports the progressive view on language acquisition for L2 learners, the fact that upper intermediate learners performed better while both groups showed optional use of infinitives in their products suggest that they are toward the end of OI stage or at least are at higher levels of acquisitions.

Thus, the first research question is answered in this way: lower intermediate Persian EFL learners have not yet acquired infinitives, neither infinitive-to verbs nor bare infinitives, but upper intermediates seem to be at a good stage in application of infinitive-to verbs while they still seem to have difficulty in bare infinitives. Considering the role of L1, to answer the fourth research question, as it was aforementioned it is positively transferred in the acquisition of infinitive-to verbs and negatively in bare infinitives. The proficiency’s
significant effect in bare infinitives, where L1 was not supportive, suggested that their OI stage features are more target-like, illuminating the role of education and exposure in the progressive acquisition as it was asked in the sixth question.

5.2 Processing Subject Pronouns by Persian EFL learners

Defective and optional application Subject pronouns were reported as a feature of OI stage in which accusative cases were the dominant forms of subject application by children at OI stage. In order to compare upper and lower intermediate learners of English subject pronouns were studied across two verb-categories.

Means scores of participants in translating items with incorrect application of subject pronouns when used by infinitive-to verb category had higher rate (.0972) than those with bare infinitives (mean score = .0458), suggesting that when learners applied infinitive particle (to) they tend to use incorrect subject pronouns more; this idea supports the UCC model, saying that either tense or agreement are checked by the finite D-Feature. Furthermore, incorrect application of subject pronouns and tense markers in translation task were not significantly different from each other, concluding that these two features are developing simultaneously and that’s why optionality happens.

In GJT, learners judged incorrect subject pronouns rather easily in both verb categories; total mean score for ungrammatical option in infinitive-to verb category and bare infinitives were .9000 and .8958. Proficiency had significant role in judging incorrect subject pronouns applied with infinitive-to verbs while it lacked for bare infinitives, indicating that when infinitive particle (to) was applied before the verb stem upper intermediate learners judge incorrect subjects better than where these incorrect subjects were applied with bare infinitives. This can be explained by saying that upper intermediate learners are more developed at their OI stage, since subject pronouns are placed at a higher level in the tree diagram than tense or infinitives and are said to be acquired later. As resulted from the above results, upper intermediate learners seem to have acquired infinitive-to verbs, thus, when the verb matched their expectation they had better focus on other parts of the sentence and could detect the incorrect subject pronoun better.

In studies of translation items, it was observed that many participants used accusative cases instead of nominatives though this matched the findings of L1 acquisition in the OI stage reported in the literature, but for Persian learners this behavior needs further discussion. On one hand, accusative cases are lacked in Persian and thus subject pronoun (ش) [he/she] is used for both nominative and accusative cases, consequently, L1 is transferred positively in the successful application and judgments of subject pronouns in translation and GJT. On the
other hand, as it was mentioned in chapter two, accusative forms in English sentences such as *They believe him to be innocent* are Exceptional case-marking clauses in which the accusative form *him* plays the role of subject and object at the same time within the TP clause (Radford, 2005), in this regard Persian applies subject pronoun (*آ* [he/she]) for both subject and object pronouns. Thus, application of accusative forms was an indicator of target-form production by Persian learners.

Moreover, Persian as a pro-drop language permeates omitting subject pronoun at the beginning of the sentence, thus to study the role of L1 in application of subject pronouns, items in the translation task were designed so that they had no overt subject pronouns at the initial part of the sentences and only way to detect subject of utterance was attending to the particle attached to the right part of verb stem. Leading to negative L1 transfer, many learners omit subject from their translations. Shortly, both groups seem to have acquired subject pronouns as a consequence of L1 positive transfer. Traces of accusative cases in the translation data indicate that the subjects has recently started acquisition of accusatives.

### 5.3 Processing Tense markers by Persian EFL learners

Tense markers as another feature of OI stage have been considered by many researchers, English past and present tense markers are applied optionally in the early acquisition process as first or second language. According to mean scores obtained from the data and pairwise comparisons, tense markers though not significant are more easily used by Persian learners of English than subject pronouns or infinitives which results from L1 background. Both Persian and English use particles attached to the verb stems to show tense, but this seems less complicated for English tense markers; in English present tense is only marked for third person singular, (ed) added to verb stems for past tense.

Mean scores for incorrect application of tense markers in translation test indicated almost similar rates within verb categories, mean score for infinitive-to and bare infinitive verbs are .0306 and .0431, respectively. While comparing these data between groups, a significant difference is reported for proficiency. Almost all incorrect tense markers were used by lower intermediate learners; mean scores for infinitive-to and bare infinitives were .0556 and .0667, respectively, while this rate for upper intermediate group was .0056 and .0196. Incorrect tense application observed in translation items were mostly caused by incorrect subject-verb agreement in third person singular, which is due to absence of this feature in learners’ L1.

### 5.4 Critical view on OI models
Truncation model proposed by Rizzi (1993) introduced a sequential axiom on Clausal representation in which CP is the base of all finite as well as nonfinite utterances, but in OI stage CP and stages below CP such as AgrP, TP or VP can be the root of a clause, that is when a nod is selected as the root, the upper nods are omitted. In OI stage application of infinitive verbs (V) dominated by VP is optional, concluding that all stages dominating VP are deleted. Findings of the current study indicated that though lower and upper intermediate learners seem not to have acquired infinitives completely, but they used subject pronouns and tense markers with better mean scores which were also significantly different from application of infinitives. By taking the very low mean scores in incorrect applications of tense markers and subject pronouns into account, it seems that truncation model is too extremist to explain the results achieved in this study. Also, Rizzi’s model is unable to count for existence of both nominative and accusative subjects in English sentences observed within this study.

Unique Checking Constraint (UCC) as Wexler (1998) explains claims that subject is generated basically in VP and when it is forced by a checking constraint, it raises to Spec-TP and then to Spec-AgrP. Subject DP having the interpretable D-feature must raise to check uninterpretable D-features on Agr and T, but this D-feature of DP can only check against one functional category. On the account of this constraint it is impossible to have a derivation with uninterpretable features on both Agr and T. On one hand, the interpretations of obtained results from this study indicated that tense and subject pronouns are developing simultaneously and are at the same level of difficulty for lower and upper intermediate learners because they had almost similar mean scores and were not significantly different from each other. On the other hand, the application of subjects was affected by the use of verb-category i.e., when infinitive-to verbs were applied successfully, learners used more incorrect subjects than bare infinitives which supports the UCC model, saying that only Agr or T are checked. Thus, as UCC model explains there is a limitation on computational ability of learners at OI stage which is removed through UG-based maturation.

Though UCC model served better than the truncation model, but the variety found in the production and comprehension of OI features in this study indicates that language acquisition is empirical and developmental as Wexler (2003) suggests maturation is not all or none, but rather it is a matter of variation in development which is biological to all human beings.
6. Concluding Remarks

Persian lower and upper intermediate EFL learners show Optional Infinitive features in their productions, concluding that OI stage for Persian EFL learners continues till the upper intermediate level and thus requires considerations even at advanced level. Though, infinitive-to verb category seems not problematic regarding the application of infinitive marker (to) before verb stem at upper intermediate levels, but lower intermediate group’s low mean score indicates that this feature is not yet acquired for them.

Furthermore, bare infinitives seem not to be acquired by neither of groups, this can be due to L1’s limited support in application of bare infinitives. Additionally, in application of subject pronouns one part of learners’ problems goes back to their L1 since Persian is a pro-drop language, it lets omission of subject pronouns, but this feature being absent in L2 made some translations without subjects. The other part, lays in the learners’ still developing IL process since Persian lacks accusative cases when subjects apply accusatives instead of nominatives they are trying the target-form which Shows developmental acquisition. Finally, the developmental process and significant difference between two proficiency groups show that Persian learners can pass through the OI stage successfully but not as fast as L1 learners; upper intermediate learners had better mean scores and less incorrect features and were significantly different from lower intermediate subjects most of the time.

Appendix A

Production test e.g., Translation Test (N = 30). Subjects were required to translate sentences by making use of verbs and vocabularies provided in parenthesis ( note that six distracters were designed as fillers).

1. دیذى فحٌَ تقادف اّ سا ؽْکَ کشد (accident, shock)
2. بعد از مشاوره با خانواده مواقف کرد که برود. (consult, agree)
3. کاش پدرش اجازه دهد که بیاید. (wish, let)
4. پسرش را نصیحت کرد تا درس بخواند. (advise, study)
5. معلم دانش آموختن را سخت تنیه کرد. (punish, badly)
6. ترجیح می دهم ساکت بمانم. (would better, silent)
7. گفت که بی موقع بیاید. (tell, on time)
8. ممکن است یک لیوان آب بهدید. (could)
9. ممکن است انتخاب کند که بماند. (may, refuse)
10. سخنان او مراعاج کرد. (surprise)
11. دوست دارد کارگردان را ببیند. (see, work)
12. از او خواستند که بخواند. (ask, sing)
Appendix B

Comprehension test e.g., Grammaticality Judgment Test. Subjects were required to read the sentences very carefully and tick them as: grammatical, ungrammatical or I don’t know (N = 60) (Note that 12 items were designed as distracters).

1. Nothing would have grown, if the area hadn’t been irrigated.
2. Mrs. Yokoto has advised Elsie review the material.
3. She feels the wind blow on her face.
4. Would you please, if you have tim(e), come to my office today.
5. My hometown is twice as populated as it used to be.
6. He reminds her bring the book.
7. After consulting with her advisor, she agrees to take the lesson.
8. When my friend comes to my office, me feel her anger increases every day.
9. The company expects complete the work within a week.
10. It was obvious that them persuade the actress to use another interpretation.
11. Keeping clean is surely one of the most important rule of good hygiene.
12. I want he to go.
13. He makes two men to fight.
14. She notices to lock the door.
15. He invites me to visit her family.
16. It seems that her hesitates to call me.
17. The queen made us enter.
18. It is interesting when its watches the bird makes its nest.
19. Time is up, we must to go.
20. The police chief had two of his men to investigate the complaint.
21. We hoped if Sue could return soon.
22. They think that them arrange to meet once a week.
23. He was forbidden leave the house as a punishment.
24. He asked him to study more.
25. She told him listen carefully.
26. John said that him volunteers to supply the drinks for picnic.
27. She had rather to drink coffee.
28. She says she wants to pass, then her has to try harder.
29. Please him let him study more.
30. I saw that her begs him to stay.
31. Her mother said she deserves to pass the course.
32. Do you remember who was Henry the VII’s sixth wife?
33. Them would rather the companies send a letter.
34. We can begin when he brings the report that she has prepared last week.
35. She spends hours observing children to play.
36. Word by word, him makes him answer the letter.
37. His secretary was instructed to cancel all his engagements.
38. He cannot hurt you.
39. He is the one whom, I believe, is interested in entomology.
40. He threatened take them to court.
41. She meant to invite she to the party, but she forgot.
42. One can always depend on their being helpful.
43. He would better to cook than to go out.
44. The research institute can’t afford, at this time, hire additional staff members.
45. We’d better ask one of the students what the assignment is.
46. Yesterday a reporter announced that several homes had been destroyed.
47. Sam may refuse, since he is rather shy, make a speech.
48. He hears the audience whisper.
49. Although the road was narrow, but the cars could pass each other.
50. She said that she cares watch the match.
51. I wish she lets her dog enter.
52. The audience shouted that us prefers you to sing.
53. Keeping clean is surely one of the most important rule of good hygiene.
54. If her wills, she will act in the play.
55. Motorists are being warned to avoid the center of London this week.
56. I assume that he shall to bother.
57. She is one of the women, who I believe is running for office in this district.
58. It’s late, me would sooner leave.
59. I have been trying to convince Jean to come with me.
60. He had sooner visit a doctor.

References


Title

Mobile Learning: Using Cellphones and Its Effects on Listening Skill in Iranian EFL Intermediate Learners and on Their Motivation

Authors

Soraya Entezari (M.A)
Kermanshah Islamic Azad University

Habib Soleimani (Ph.D)
University of Kurdistan, Sanandaj

Kamran Janfeshan (Ph.D)
English Language Department, Kermanshah Islamic Azad University

Biodata

Soraya Entezari M.A in TEFL and is currently a teacher at Parsian Iranian Institute, Tehran, Iran. Her research areas include mobile learning, the effect of using mobile phones and motivation.

Habib Soleimani Ph.D in TEFL and is currently the assistant professor in university of Kurdistan, Sanandaj, Iran.

Kamran Janfeshan Ph.D in TEFL and is currently the full time member of English language department in Kermanshah Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah, Iran.

Abstract

The present study was an attempt to investigate the effect of mobile learning and mobile phones on Iranian EFL learners’ listening fluency and their motivation level. To fulfill the objectives of the study, sixty female intermediate-level students studying English at an institute in Tehran were chosen. After being assured of their homogeneity, the learners were divided into two groups randomly. Thirty learners were assigned to a control group and thirty to an experimental group. Learners in the control group had to do all the listening skills during the semester and in the posttests were tested via the traditional way of instruction and its accompanying tool, i.e. tape recorders. Learners in the experimental group got instruction treatment and had to do listening skills via mobile phones. Each of the groups got the instructional courses during three semesters and at the time of getting the posttests they came to the classes at 7:00 am. The texts were recorded
on the experimental group students’ mobile phones and they were supposed to go
to their homes and listen to them, but the students in control group remained in the
class to listen to the texts via tape recorders and they had time to use the texts for
about two hours, and the quarantine for about one hour. The test was held at 11:00
am. Two posttests were done in this study to check the effect of the treatment on
the participants. The data were analyzed through t-test and ANCOVA and the
results were revealed that the learners in the experimental group got higher scores
in their listening. The results confirmed the improving effect of mobile learning
especially mobile phones on listening skill, and a questionnaire proved its effect
on the level of motivation.

Keywords: Mobile Learning (M-learning), Cellular Phone, Listening skill, EFL
Learner, Intermediate, Motivation

1. Introduction

Since Renaissance the application of technology became more and more important in Europe.
Although this movement did not ignore the previous works in this field, the speed of
creativity and innovation was so much fast in that era that was unbelievable for many people.
Cavus and Ibrahim (2009) asserted that “there is an increased use of wireless devices in
foreign language classrooms” (p. 78). They believe that wireless devices such as laptop
computers, palmtop computers, and mobile phones are revolutionizing education. They stated
that all of the students were very positive and satisfied with mobile learning and expressed
their enjoyment of learning out of the classroom settings.

In another study, Cunningham (1998, as cited in Liu, Moore, Graham & Lee, n.d.)
stated that in the 1980s the application of technology in language learning in classrooms
included the use of film, radio, television, language labs with audio/video tapes, computers,
and interactive video.

Now that some points about technology itself were mentioned, it is the time to check
its application in language learning. Because technology comes very deep into the lives of
people, educational system can use it in language learning. According to Salaberry (2001, as
cited in Zhao, 2003), there is a long history of using technology to increase the level of
language learning.

According to Zhao (2003), the distribution of articles showed the below results.
Language education: 18%
Educational technology: 14%
Language technology: 68%

There has been vast worldwide growth in using computer-based methods for learning different language skills and components. It can be noted that one of the main goals of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) is to provide learners with a good environment that facilitates acquiring communicative competence in the L2. Liu et al. (n.d), mentioned that research from 1990-2000 had showed some evidence on the effectiveness of computer technology in second language learning.

According to Sharples (2000, as cited in Chen, Hsieh & Kinshuk, 2008), mobile learning (m-learning) has emerged as the next generation of e-learning. Quinn (2000, as cited in Cavus & Ibrahim, 2009) defined m-learning as a learning that takes place with the help of portable electronic tools.

There are many definitions of mobile devices but one of the most useful definitions is proposed by Trifanova, Knapp, Ronchetti, and Gamper (2004) who define mobile devices as “…any device that is small, autonomous and unobtrusive enough to accompany us in every moment” (p. 273).

According to Prensky (2005, as cited in Lu, 2008), indeed, mobile phones are particularly useful computers that are as small as fit in [a student’s] pocket, and are as portable as are always with [students], and are nearly always on. According to Pęcherzewska and Knot (2007, as cited in Kukulska-Hulme & Sheild, 2008), the majority of MALL activities appear to make use of mobile phones. Among mobile computing devices, most of the people use cell phones as the wide spread devices and they are available for almost every university student. Other than being portable phones, cell phones are equipped with functionalities including internet access, mp3/mp4 players, digital cameras, video recorders and many of them are flash-enabled and/or Java-enabled and can run multimedia contents including audio and video (Salameh, 2011).

Ordinal Logistic Regression to Design an Efficient Mobile Training System from Iranian Experts’ Point of View is one of the Iranian studies that was conducted by Najafabadi, Mirdamadi, and Najafabadi (2011). In their idea, because of the portability of mobile phones and their low cost, these tools can be used for basic education in rural and remote areas; they can expand educational opportunities and contribute to reduction of digital gap in developing countries. They came to this conclusion that mobile learning helps to reduce the traditional training infrastructure, facilitates the learning process of employees and improves their productivity and effectiveness whilst on the move. It also adds a new
dimension for student-instructor interaction and a positive attitude among the students towards the instructor and learning.

Another Iranian study was conducted by Ahangari and Nobar (2012) titled *The Impact of Computer Assisted Language Learning on Iranian EFL Learners’ Task-Based Listening Skill and Motivation*. Through the analysis of the post-test listening comprehension scores, they came to the conclusion that there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups’ performance. The experimental group outperformed the control group and obtained a higher average. The motivation of the participants in the experimental group was also higher than the participants in the control group.

Jalilifar, Khazaie, and Shooshtari (2013) conducted another study to examine the impact of the application of mobile devices on teaching English vocabulary items to 123 Iranian semi-illiterates and the results showed that the succinct nature of today’s short message service (SMS) texts allows for a more successful application of the informal style of language in the realm of teaching English to semi-illiterate citizens. It was also found that annotated materials led into the outperformance of the semi-illiterates.

Hashemi, Rezaierad, and Ghanbarpoor (2013) conducted another study about the application of mobile learning in Iran. Their study showed that because of educational support and pervasive access to learning resources mobile learning can make learning possible in everywhere and every time and because of strong media communication and interaction between members of learning groups, this kind of learning quickly showed itself in structuralism framework of learning model in new learning communities.

According to Stockwell (2007), the usage of the mobile platform is very rare in comparison to that of the computer. In his idea, there are many obstacles to the use of the mobile phone which may be categorized as technological (i.e. students’ concerns about the small screen size and the costs), psychological (i.e. the failure of the majority of the students to attempt to do any of the mobile activities at all), or perhaps a combination of both of them, where learners may have held preconceived ideas about the inconvenience of the mobile interface or its potential costs. Technological advances usually decrease the cost of mobile phone-based Internet access and it may make mobile technologies more interesting to learners. Moreover, as the concept of learning via mobile devices becomes more widespread, it is likely to be an increased acceptance of using these tools for learning purposes that have typically been associated with more personal usage (Stockwell, 2007).

To conclude, learning to speak and listen is the most fundamental issue in a foreign language. Moreover, teaching listening to zero beginners or learners at the initial levels of
literacy is more important than the other issues. It can be assumed that successful beginners will be fluent listeners. If learners make reasonable progress in this level they will be successful in school career and if they do not make the expected progress they will experience disappointment in school and they might neither like nor want to listen. Therefore, this skill should be paid more attention these days.

In the process of learning a foreign language, motivation has an extensive role. “Motivation has been widely accepted by both teachers and researchers as one of the main factors that affect the rate and success of second/foreign language learning. Motivation provides the primary impetus to initiate learning L2 and later drives force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process, indeed, all the other factors involved in L2 acquisition presuppose motivation to some extent” (Dornyei, 2012, p.117).

3. Method
3.1. Research Questions and Hypothesis
This study was conducted to find answers for the following two questions:

- Does mobile learning have any effect on improving listening skill of Iranian Intermediate EFL learners?
- Can mobile learning make Iranian Intermediate EFL learners more motivated to apply mobile phones as a facilitative device rather than a debilitative one?

Based on the above research questions, the following hypotheses were put forward:

- Mobile learning does not have any effect on improving listening skill of Iranian Intermediate EFL learners.
- Mobile learning cannot make Iranian Intermediate EFL learners more motivated to apply mobile phones as a facilitative device rather than a debilitative one.

3.2. Participants
The sample of the present study was drawn from among 76 intermediate level female students of an English language institute in Tehran where the learners were taught the New Interchange book with audio-lingual method. So, the sampling design of the study was convenience non-probability design. For the purpose of homogeneity, prior to research a TOEFL general English test, as a proficiency test, was given to the initial 60 students whose scores were between one standard deviation minus and plus the mean took part in the study. Then, thirty of them were assigned randomly to the control group and thirty to the experimental one. All participants were in the age range of 18 to 20.
The learners in control group were taught with the traditional ways of instruction and their accompanying tools like tape recorders, but in the experimental group the learners were taught via the new way of instruction and its accompanying tools like mobile phones.

3.3. Instruments
Mobile phone was the most important physical instrument in this study. Two different versions of TOEFL general English test were also used to measure the students’ language abilities. The first one was used as both proficiency test and listening pre-test. But, the second one was used just as listening post test (See Appendices A & B). This test included different parts; writing, listening, multiple choice questions, etc. Each student had an answer sheet, and the researcher corrected the sheets by using the objective way of scoring in this phase. An Alpha Cronbach was checked for the reliability of this test and it was 0.80.

Listening part of each test contained five questions, and each of the participants’ received an answer sheet. Therefore, an objective way of scoring was used here too. An alpha Cronbach was calculated for the reliability of the listening sections of the tests which was found 0.72, 0.68 for the pre-test and post-test, respectively. Listening to the TOEFL tests, during all the sessions for the control group was via tape recorders and for the experimental group was via mobile phones.

In the end, the researcher used Academic Motivation Scale (AMS-C 28) College (CEGEP) Version made by Vallerand, Blais, Brière, and Pelletier (1989, 1992,1993), to measure the motivation of the students (see Appendix C).

The scale included 28 questions and participants were supposed to select a number from 1 to 7, where:
1 represented “does not correspond at all”;
2-3 represented “corresponds a little”;
4 represented “corresponds moderately”;  
5-6 represented “corresponds a lot”;  
6-7 represented “corresponds exactly”.

This scale assessed seven constructs as the Motivation scale toward College (CEGEP) studies on a 7-point scale. Every construct (i.e., Intrinsic motivation - to know, Intrinsic motivation - toward accomplishment, Intrinsic motivation - to experience stimulation, Extrinsic motivation – identified, Extrinsic motivation – introjected, Extrinsic motivation - external regulation, Amotivation) was assessed through four statements.
3.4. Procedure
At the first stage, TOEFL general English Test as a proficiency test was administered to the students and based on the results of this test those students whose scores were between one standard deviation minus and plus the mean were selected to participate in the study. The subjects were then randomly divided into two groups; one as experimental and the other as control. The students’ scores in the listening part of the TOEFL general English test were taken as their pre-test scores.

Then, the control group listened to the texts via a tape recorder and the experimental group listened to the texts via their mobile phones. After the end of the treatment period, listening part of another version of TOEFL general English was given to them as the post-test. At the end of the study, a questionnaire was administered to the participants to investigate their level of motivation.

3.5. Scoring
In order to analyze the proficiency test an objective way of scoring was utilized. The total score of this exam was 80. The researcher checked the answer sheets, step by step, and then calculated each participant’s score. The researcher calculated each students score in listening part of the TOEFL general English test out of 20 and took them as pre-test score of listening. The post-test answer sheets were scored similar to the pre-test. An objective way of scoring was used to calculate the questionnaires’ scores. The total score of this questionnaire was 196.

The researcher got help from another rater to check all of the scores in all the phases. This rater did not interfere in the phases of the study, but she checked all of the answers again and confirmed that the researcher’s scores for all of the phases of the study were correct.

3.6. Design of the Study
The present study included pre-test – post-test – control group design. However, as the participants have not been randomly selected, the study is regarded as a quasi-experimental research. It should be mentioned that students were assigned to control and experimental groups randomly.

4. Results and Discussion
4.1 Results of the Proficiency Test
The proficiency test of the research addressed the following question:
Is there any evidence to verify the existence of homogeneity in the 60 present Iranian EFL learners who were selected for taking part in this research?

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the proficiency test. The minimum score of the pretest was 45 out of 80. The maximum score was 60 out of 80. The mean of the scores was 53.58 with the standard deviation of 4.806.

| Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of the Participants’ Scores in the Proficiency Test |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|                                | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean    | Std. Deviation |
| Proficiency Test               | 76 |   44    |    63   | 53.58   | 4.806          |

Those students whose scores in were between one standard deviation minus and plus the mean were selected as the participants of the main study and others were excluded. It means that 60 students whose scores were between 49 and 58 were selected. Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of proficiency test scores in control and experimental groups, separately.

| Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Participants’ Scores in the Pre-Test in Two Groups |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|
|                                | N  | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
| TOEFL Control                  | 30 | 53.30   | 5.120          |
| TOEFL Experimental             | 30 | 53.87   | 4.539          |

As Table 2 indicates the mean of students’ proficiency test in the control group was 53.30 and in the experimental group was 53.87. This difference was not meaningful based on the results taken from the independent sample t-test (see Table 3) with the P-value of 0.6, in other words the participants in both control and experimental groups were homogeneous.

| Table 3. Independent Samples T-Test for Proficiency Test |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances                  | t-test for Equality of Means |
|                                                        | F      | Sig.  | t      | df  | Sig. (2-tailed) |
| TOEFL                                                   |        |       |       |     |                 |
| Equal variances assumed                                 | 1.060  | .307  | -.454 | 58  | .652            |
| Equal variances not assumed                             |        |       | -.454 | 57.178 | .652 |

This can also be seen in Figure 1.
Figure 1. Homogeneity of Participants in Control & Experimental groups in the Proficiency Test

Table 6 referred to the proficiency test whose total score was 80. The Levene’s Test for Equal variances yields a p-value of .307. This means that the difference between the variances is statistically insignificant and the statistics in the first row should be used. The p-value is equal to .652 which is higher than 0.05 and indicates that there is not a significant difference between the proficiency level of two groups.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics for Control Group

Table 4 reflects the descriptive statistics for the participants in the control group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test in Control Group</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.20</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test in Control Group</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16.03</td>
<td>1.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table it can be clearly seen that participants’ pre-test mean score in control group was 15.20 with the standard deviation of 1.47. Concerning the post-test, participants’ mean score was 16.03 with the standard deviation of 1.30. Figure 2 shows the students’ pre-test scores in control group:

Figure 2. Students’ Pre-Test Scores in Control Group

Figure 3 presents the students’ post-test scores in control group:
4.3 Descriptive Statistics for Experimental Group

Table 5 reflects the descriptive statistics for the participants in the experimental group.

Table 5.
The Results of the Participants’ Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores in Experimental Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test in Experimental Group</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.73</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test in Experimental Group</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.67</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the table illustrates, it has been found that students’ mean score in pre-test was 15.73 with the standard deviation of 1.39; whereas in the post-test, experimental group revealed a mean score of 18.67 with the standard deviation of 0.88. Figure 4 shows the students’ pre-test scores in experimental group:

Figure 4. Students’ Pre-Test Scores in Experimental Group

Figure 5 indicates the students’ pre-test scores in experimental group:
4.4 The Results Regarding the First Research Hypothesis

In order to make sure about the normal distribution of the scores in both control and experimental groups, One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was run on four sets of scores. Table 6 presents the results of this test:

Table 6. 
One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test for Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores in Control and Experimental Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Test of Control Group</th>
<th>Post-Test of Control Group</th>
<th>Pre-Test of Experimental Group</th>
<th>Post-Test of Experimental Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal Parametersa,b</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>15.20</td>
<td>16.03</td>
<td>15.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>1.472</td>
<td>1.299</td>
<td>1.388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Extreme Differences</td>
<td>Absolute</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>.190</td>
<td>.176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>.162</td>
<td>.124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>-.140</td>
<td>-.190</td>
<td>-.176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z</td>
<td>.872</td>
<td>1.039</td>
<td>.965</td>
<td>1.352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.432</td>
<td>.230</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td>.052</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Test distribution is Normal.

As it is indicated in Table 6, P-value for each set of scores is higher than 0.05, therefore all sets of scores have normal distributions and the parametric test of ANCOVA can be used.

In order to investigate the research hypothesis and for the purpose of eliminating the effect of pre-test on students’ performance in the post-test, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was run with the SPSS software version 17. Table 7 shows the results of Levene's test of equality of error variances.
Table 7. Levene’s Test of Equality of Error Variances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>df1</th>
<th>df2</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.243</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.624</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tests the null hypothesis that the error variance of the dependent variable is equal across groups.

a. Design: Intercept + Pre-Test + Groups

From the above table it is clear that the underlying assumption of homogeneity of variance for the one-way ANCOVA has been met – as evidenced by F(1, 58) = 0.243, p = 0.624. That is, p (0.624) > .05.

As the relationship between the dependent variable – post-test – and the covariate – pre-test – should be similar for two groups, the homogeneity of regression lines was checked at the first stage the results of which are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Homogeneity of Regression

<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>144.819a</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48.273</td>
<td>87.681</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>39.135</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>39.135</td>
<td>71.084</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>7.812</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.812</td>
<td>14.190</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>35.337</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35.337</td>
<td>64.185</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups * Pre-Test</td>
<td>3.946</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.946</td>
<td>7.168</td>
<td>.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>30.831</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.551</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18237.000</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Corrected Total 175.650 59

a. R Squared = .824 (Adjusted R Squared = .815)

As it is shown in Table 8, the P-value is equal to 0.100 which is higher than 0.05, so interaction between the independent variable – teaching with two levels of mobile-based and traditional – and covariate is not significant and the assumption of the homogeneity of regression is accepted. Therefore, the ANCOVA can be performed.

With regard to the first null hypothesis of the study, that is, mobile learning does not have any effect on improving listening skill of Iranian Intermediate EFL learners, an ANCOVA was conducted. According to Dornyei (2007), in quasi-experimental studies, the use of ANCOVA contributes to the reduction of the initial group differences. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 9.
Table 9. Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA)

<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>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>140.873a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>70.436</td>
<td>115.446</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.802</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>37.499</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37.499</td>
<td>61.462</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>36.856</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36.856</td>
<td>60.408</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>79.020</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>79.020</td>
<td>129.514</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>34.777</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>.610</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18237.000</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>175.650</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. R Squared = .802 (Adjusted R Squared = .795)

As it is shown in Table 9, the first line highlighted shows that the pre-test is significantly related to the post-test (P< 0.05) with the magnitude of 0.515. The next line is the indicator of the main effect of the using mobile phones on the dependent variable – listening post-test. After adjusting for pretest scores, there was a significant effect of the group, F(1,57)=129.514, p < 0.05, partial η² = 0.694. As P-value is less than 0.05, the difference between two groups is significant and the effect of using mobile phones on L2 listening skill is clear. Therefore, the research null hypothesis is rejected and the answer for the research question will be ‘YES’. That is, mobile learning has a significant effect on improving listening skill of Iranian Intermediate EFL learners.

4.5 The Results Regarding the Second Research Hypothesis

The final phase of the study (motivation questionnaire) addressed the following question:

Is there any evidence to verify more motivation of using mobile phones as a learning tool in listening skill?

The mean of the control group in the questionnaire part was 141.77 and the mean of the experimental group in this part is 159.83. This indicates that participants in the experimental group had higher motivation in comparison to the students in control group. Table 10 presents the descriptive statistics of the motivation questionnaire in two groups.

Table 10. Descriptive Statistics of the Participants’ Scores in the Academic Motivation Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation Control</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>141.77</td>
<td>2.417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation Experimental</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>159.83</td>
<td>5.292</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This difference was not meaningful based on the results taken from an independent sample t-test (See Table 11) with the P-Value of 0.0001. In other words the results of the
final phase of the study (See Figure 6) showed more motivation in the experimental group in comparison with the control group, because of using the mobile phones in their learning.

![Figure 6. Motivation Because of Using a New Tool of Learning (Phase of Questionnaire)](image)

As it is clear from Table 13, the Levene’s Test for Equal variances yields a p-value of .008. This means that the difference between the variances is statistically significant and the statistics in the second row should be used. The p-value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05 and indicates that there is a significant difference between the motivation of two groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL</td>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>7.541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>40.591</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**5. Discussion**

During the present study the researcher used a pretest, a posttest, and a questionnaire, to understand the effect of mobile learning especially mobile phones on listening skill of EFL learners. The present study resulted in some findings. First of all, the literature review revealed the significance of listening. It was known that some scholars (e.g., Ally, 2009;
Attewell, 2005; Bailey & Pownell, 2001; Houser & Thornton, 2005) had engaged in investigating the theme. The majority of the studies which were conducted had confirmed the effect of mobile learning on EFL learners.

It was revealed in this study that mobile learning could help learners to learn the listening texts better than to have more accurate answer sheets in this skill. This new way of instruction helped the learners to make faster progress than the traditional ways.

It was found that mobile learning in listening skill could benefit students. This was explained in some ways. First, mobile learning could help learners to practice the text as much as they want, because mobile learning causes availability. Second, it could help the learners to use new technological tool in English classes and to become more motivated to use it. Finally, it could help disabled learners to improve their ability of listening because of using this new way of instruction and its accompanying tool at their homes.

The analysis of the collected data indicated a positive answer to the major question of the study. It was found that mobile learning especially mobile phones had a positive effect on the students’ listening skill. This was proved through the higher mean scores that the experimental group obtained during the study. Specifically, the experimental group’s performance was more differentiated than that of the control group in the study. Furthermore, the pre-test results for both groups did not reveal any statistically significant difference between the two groups. This means that before the application of the experiment they both had nearly the same general English levels i.e. they had the same language background.

The major difference between the experimental group and the control group could be attributed to many reasons. Firstly, during the experiment the experimental group had the opportunity to listen many times to the listening texts. On the other hand, the control group did not have that opportunity. Such listening materials can be said to have enhanced the experimental groups’ listening ability in an effective way. Secondly, the mobile phones used for the experimental group made the students more motivated to listen to texts. Fortunately, the experimental group students, as it was shown through a questionnaire regarding studying via mobile phones, had preference for using mobile phones, this also agreed with the findings of some recent studies about this branch of research. According to Mehta (2012),

**Advantages are**

- Personalizing learners’ environment.
- Providing learning experience outside the classroom.
- Making learning process of learning enjoyable by recording, organizing over time
- Minting benefits of an informal learning.
Helping in boosting the morale of the learners.
No more forced to use PC as the only object to have access to materials, knowledge.

Limitations are
- Small screen size
- Limited memory size
- Small keyboards
- Limited battery life
- High costs
- Possibility for mobile devices to be misplaced or stolen or corrupted
- Difficulty to use mobile devices in noisy environments
- Communication failure due to poor network connectivity. (pp.88-89)

This study aimed to achieve two main objectives. The first was to check whether mobile learning especially using mobile phones had any positive effect on the improvement of listening skill in Iranian intermediate EFL learners or not. The second one was to check whether it was possible to make the students motivated to listening skill via using this new way of instruction and its accompanying tool i.e. mobile phone and change it from a detrimental device to a facilitative one or not.

According to the statistical analysis the mean score of the experimental group increased from pre-test to the post-test the control group’s mean score was same in these two tests. This showed that using this new way of instruction and its accompanying tool had a positive effect on the population. The second objective of the study; motivation, was paid attention through a questionnaire. The questionnaire was ACADEMIC MOTIVATION SCALE (AMS-C 28) COLLEGE (CEGEP) VERSION. The results of this questionnaire showed that the students became motivated by using the new way of instruction.

The results of this article may provide sufficient reason to motivate different schools or language institutes to re-think about their ways of instruction especially in listening skill.

References


Kukulska-Hulme, A., & Shield, L. (2008). An overview of mobile assisted language learning: From content delivery to supported collaboration and interaction. ReCALL, 20(3), 271-289.


Title

The Effect of Three Test Methods on Reading Comprehension of Iranian EFL learners: Focusing on Multiple Intelligences Approach

Authors

Mahin Gholami (M.A)
Islamic Azad University, Najafabad Branch, Iran

Azizollah Dabaghi (Ph.D)
Dept. of English Language, Isfahan University

Biodata

Mahin Gholami, M.A. Candidate of TEFL at Islamic Azad University of Najafabad Branch, Iran. Her research interests include testing and IELTS studies.

Azizollah Dabaghi is a second language expert and a Persian-English translator working and teaching at the University of Isfahan, Iran. His research interests include second language acquisition, teaching English in EFL, ESL contexts and translation.

Abstract

The major aim of this study was to examine the effect of three test methods, multiple-choice questions, true-false and short answer questions on reading comprehension of the Iranian EFL learners. The population from which this study aimed to draw its sample consisted of intermediate students studying at different junior high schools in Mobarakeh, Iran. To sample the subjects of this study, the one version of Solution Placement Test was administered to 180 students in 6 different high schools. Based on the results of the Solution Placement Test and for the sake of homogeneity 90 students were considered as the target participants of the study. Out of these participants, these different groups were formed based on different test items administered to them after reading the same comprehension passages. Group one answered multiple choice questions, group two true-false and group three short answer questions. The results of ANOVA indicated that the three test methods have a significant effect on reading comprehension and true-false is most effective. It is also found that, there is a relationship between these tests scores and their multiple intelligence of Iranian EFL learners.

Key words: Reading comprehension, test method, multiple intelligence theory
1. Introduction

Reading is a multi-component ability which calls for a variety of response formats (test methods) to measure this multivariate skill properly (Akhondi, 2011). As Alderson (2000) claims, the choice of text and test methods are very important in testing reading comprehension. According to Alderson (2000), the main variables in reading assessment are related to reader, text and task. For instance, he sees background and general knowledge, motivation and language proficiency as variables related directly to the reader; genre and text-type, lexical density and topic variables as those associated with texts; and the language and types of questions as variables related to the task. Two important factors that affect the process of reading and consequently the process of comprehension are the task variable and the reader variable (Alderson, 2000).

Considering the task variable, different studies have been conducted to investigate the effect of test methods on test performance. Among the many important variables that are affecting language test performance, a central issue is the effect of test methods on test performance (Alderson, 2000; Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Brantmeier, 2006; Buck, 2001). Test method is defined as: “the way in which the response is produced, for instance selected, limited production, and extended production (short answer, summary writing, multiple choice, etc.)” (Bachman & Palmer, 1996). These different test methods have all been used in measuring reading comprehension as a major module of language ability, such as multiple choice, open-ended questions, cloze tests, written recall, true/false, fill in the blanks, sentence completion and checklist tests (Farhady, 1987). The present research attempts to discuss a number of three testing methods on reading comprehension. These methods include multiple-choice, true-false and short answer questions.

Multiple-choice questions are common devices for testing students’ reading comprehension. The candidate provides evidence for his/her successful reading by choosing one out of a number of alternatives. Alderson (2000) writes that the popularity of multiple-choice method is at the expense of validity and “it would be naïve to assume that because a method is widely used it is therefore ‘valid’” (p. 204).

The other test type of the reading comprehension was true-false questions. It is a test item which consists of statement that require test taker to listen to or read and mark "true" or "false" (Alderson, 1988).

Another test type of the reading comprehension was short-answer question. Short-answer tests are very useful for testing reading comprehension Weir (1993). According to
Alderson (2000, p. 227), short-answer tests are seen as “a semi-objective alternative to multiple choice.”

The term ‘intelligence’ is defined as intelligence quotient (IQ) which designates the ratio between mental age and chronological age. However, according to Gardner (1983), each individual has a multitude of intelligences that are quite independent of each other. In this regard, he defined intelligence as “the ability to solve problems or to fashion products that are valued in one or more cultural settings” (Howard Gardner, 1993, p. 15, 2006a, p. 48).

As Bachman (1990) claims, styles, personality types and cognitive factors affect learning and performance on certain test formats. Also, scholars have paid attention to the need for examination of the effect of individual characteristics on test taking process as individual characteristics might have an effect on test performance. Also, considering testing points of view, these differences might be a threat to the validity of the test (Bachman, 2000). Since multiple intelligences is considered personal characteristics of learners, it seems that the relationship between IQ as an important aspect of cognition, and test format has not been examined to date; therefore, this study was set out to investigate the relationship between dominant multiple intelligence and different test formats.

2. Review of literature

Since reading plays a crucial role in language learning, a great deal of investigations has been provided as a guidance to train and facilitate reading comprehension effectively. Therefore, assessing the achievement of reading in learning as a reference to improve teaching and developing effective listening tests have become important issues. When constructing reading comprehension tests, test developer have to understand and be aware of the factors that affect reading performance. Researchers who have looked at the effects of item format in reading tests include Samson (1983) used multiple-choice questions, open-ended questions, and summary tests in a reading comprehension test. The results showed there was no significant difference among the three test methods, so she concluded that the three test methods all tested the same ability or trait of the subjects. But she did find that multiple-choice questions were the easiest and summary test the most difficult.

Shohamy (1984) found that test methods influenced how readers performed on a test of reading comprehension, and that multiple-choice questions were easier than open questions, and the effect was stronger on low-proficient readers.
Wolf (1993) carried out a similar experiment; he also concluded that multiple-choice questions were easier than open-ended questions.

Wolf (1993) also found significant differences in score between equivalent question–answer items in multiple-choice and constructed-response items and also items rephrased in rational cloze format. She suggested that the multiple-choice and constructed-response formats might be measuring different abilities and recommended studying differences in difficulty by directly comparing the participant’s responses. However, Wolf’s study did not confirm Shohamy’s findings of differences due to proficiency level. The study described in the present paper, as well as directly comparing responses between stem equivalent items, analyzes the effect of the participants’ proficiency on their responses to the multiple-choice tests.

According to Lin and Wu (2003), no research has been conducted exclusively in an ESL / EFL testing related to gender. In an L2 reading context, test constructors must keep in mind the gender differences while designing reading comprehension tests so that one gender will not be biased over another (Alderson, 2000).

According to Brantmeier (2004), gender needs to be considered as an essential element both in the process of L2 reading test design and in the analysis of its results. However, very little investigation has been conducted in this area. It should also be mentioned that the majority of Assessing the Performance of Male and Female Students in Reading Tests 27 researches on gender performance in reading comprehension have been carried out in low-stakes contexts. Testing conditions can extensively influence the performance of learners.

According to Gardner (1993), intelligences can be improved, modified, trained and even changed. In fact, human ability and intelligences are flexible and can be guided. The Multiple Intelligences Theory and its applications to the educational settings are growing so rapidly. Gardner (1993) demonstrates that schools can try to prepare the situation in a way that students can discover their intelligence spectra and use their maximum potential to make a brilliant future. Many teachers and educational curriculum designers have used Gardner’s theory in the teaching learning processes and used its benefits. For example, McClaskey(1995) continued to use Howard Gardner’s ideas on multiple intelligences as models for developing lessons. So, he concludes that it is not enough that teachers learn to recognize the types of intelligences in their students; rather, we must find ways to share that knowledge with the students themselves so that they would be able to use their skills in situations outside our classroom.
Many educators such as Armstrong (2002) began to use MI-Based Instructions as ways to overcome the difficulties which they encounter with their students as a result of their individual differences and their learning styles.

Armstrong (2002, 2003) explains the application of MI to the classroom. He accepts the mentioned theory as the theory of education and learning trend that can support curriculum designers and educators with opportunity to apply it to educational settings. He also states that the theory can help both learners and teachers.

Based on Armstrong (2002), it is better to create an enjoyable classroom atmosphere in which students like what they learn and enjoy it. Using the MI Theory in the classroom can thus help teachers create such an encouraging atmosphere as well. The MI Theory is greatly required so as to deal with different students who have different minds. It will involve all the students with their different personalities to have more chance for learning and achieving success in spite of these differences that cannot be considered.

In another study by Rosenthal (1998, cited in Christine, 2003), the MI theory was concluded to be one successful instruction strategy for teachers who struggle to enhance student's self-esteem. Dobbs (2002), in his study of the relationship between multiple intelligence-based learning environment and academic achievements, found positive relationship between MI and students' performance level in subjects such as reading, writing, and mathematics.

To investigate the effects of Gardner's theory on writing, Fahim and Nejad Ansari (2006) investigated whether the type of feedback that EFL learners receive during the process of writing can have any significant effect on their short and/or long term writing achievement. The results proved the existence of the effect.

Marefat (2007) tried to see whether there is any relationship between students’ MI Profile and their writing product. The instrument she used was McKenzi (1999)’s MI Inventory (p.154). The results turned out that kinesthetic, existential, and interpersonal intelligences are making the greatest contribution toward predicting writing scores.

As Swarlis (2008) reports, some researchers have found a statistically significant relationship between spatial intelligence and academic success in science and mathematics. Akbari and Hosseini (2008) investigated the possible relationship between learners’ MI scores and language learning strategies. The result of the study showed that there is a relatively weak but statistically significant relationship between learners’ MI and language learning strategies. According to their findings, there is a significantly positive correlation between MI and language proficiency as well.
Jalilian (2009), pointed to the role of spatial ability in learners’ performance in cloze tests. He concluded that a relationship exists between spatial ability and the scores obtained from the administration of two forms of close tests. Another research project conducted by Hashemi (2009) aimed to see if there is any relationship between Emotional Intelligence and writing performance at different proficiency levels. He reported that there is a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and writing performance at different levels of proficiency. He claims that “those participants whose emotional intelligence scores are higher, perform better in writing” (p. 84).

In spite of the growing number of studies investigating the relationship between MI and aspects of language learning, particularly learning language skills, a few studies have been conducted to investigate the correlation between MI and English reading scores. However, as a matter of fact, the MI plays important parts in processing reading activities in the brain (Armstrong, 2003). McMahon, et al. (2004) explored the effect of MI on reading achievement of 288 fourth grade students. The multiple intelligences scale they used was Teele Inventory of Multiple intelligences. This scale consisted of a number of subscales including linguistic, logical-mathematical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, musical, spatial, and bodily-kinesthestic intelligences. The results showed that only mathematical intelligences significantly and strongly affected reading performance of the participants; the other domains of intelligence, nonetheless, did not turn out to influence the students’ reading comprehension.

Having reviewed the relevant research projects and mentioned their results and findings now we turn to the present study its purpose and research questions.

In this study, the aim was to focus on test formats used more often in different tests (short answer, true-false, and multiple-choice) Therefore, this study was set out to answer the following three questions:

Q1: Are there any significant differences among the reading comprehension scores measured through the three test methods (i.e., multiple-choice questions, true-false and short answer questions)?

Q2: Is there any significant differences between EFL males and females in reading comprehension scores measured by the three test methods?

Q3: Is there any correlation between students overall multiple intelligence profiles and reading scores?

3. Methods
3.1. Participants

Ninety (45 females and 45 males) EFL students studying at two high schools in Mobarakeh, Iran participated in this study. The participants were at the intermediate level based on the placement test taken from the Solutions placement test. They were assigned randomly to three test groups, test group one those whose scores were measured through the multiple-choice questions, test group two whose scores were measured via the true-false questions and test group three whose scores were measured through the short answer questions. Each group consisted of 30 students.

3.2 Instrumentation

This study had 3 main instruments. They include Solution Placement Test, Multiple Intelligence Questionnaire, and reading comprehension texts.

3.4.1. Solution placement test

The Solutions placement test contains fifty multiple choice questions which assess students’ knowledge of grammar and vocabulary from elementary to intermediate levels. It also includes a reading comprehension text with 10 graded comprehension questions. Students whose score was up to 7 were selected as the intermediate students and were chosen as the target sample. (See Appendix A)

3.4.2. Multiple Intelligence Questionnaires

The Multiple intelligence questionnaire used to elicit information for this study was McKenzie’s (1999) MI inventory Questionnaire. The MI inventory consists of 90 Likert-type statements which are related to the nine intelligences set forth by Gardner (1999a, 1999b) with an overall internal consistency of 0.85 to 0.90 (see e.g. Al-Balhan, 2006; Hajhashemi& Wong, 2010; Razmjoo, 2008; Razmjoo, et al., 2009). (see Appendix B)

In order to avoid any difficulty related to the students’ foreign language proficiency and to ensure that they can easily follow its items, the researcher utilized the translated version of the MI Inventory.

3.4.3. Reading comprehension texts:

Four English reading passages, of appropriate length were chosen from select reading for intermediate level by Linda Lee and Erik Gundersen. No changes or modifications were made to the texts. For estimating the difficulty level of four Reading comprehension texts Flesch readability formula, adopted from the internet, was used. This indicated that all four texts were of the same level of difficulty.

3.4.4. Reading comprehension tests
After the four texts had been selected from *select reading* for intermediate level by Linda Lee and Erick Gunderson book, test items were developed for each text in three formats: multiple choice, true-false and open-ended questions the number of items for each test was: 20 for multiple choice, 20 for true-false and 20 for the short answer question format. The reliability and validity of the tests were calculated and the content validity of them was confirmed by 2 English Ph.D.

### 3.5. Procedure

To carry out this study, the procedures used were as follows. First of all, Solutions placement test was run in order to homogenize the participants. Then the participants were assigned randomly to either of the three groups, that is, 30 participants were assigned to the group one, who receiving the multiple-choice questions, 30 participants were assigned to the group two, who receiving the true-false questions and the other 30 participants were assigned to the group three, who receiving the short answer questions. The ninety students were assigned randomly to three test groups and all the three test groups take the test at the same time. The three types of papers contain the same four reading passages and the participants were fully informed of the importance of their contributions to the results of the study and were asked to pay due attention and discretion and patience while taking the tests.

Then McKenzie’s (2006) questionnaire was used to identify students’ intelligence profiles. The collected data were entered into and processed with SPSS 19.

### 3.6. Data Analysis

Firstly, the content validity as well as the reliability estimates of the four texts was examined. The reliability and validity of the tests were calculated and the content validity of them was confirmed by 2 English Ph.D. graduates. The first research question was dealt with using a one-way ANOVA to find the differences in the performances of the students in the three test groups in order to accept or reject the formulated hypotheses.

To explore the second research question and to see the effect of test scores on either gender, a series of independent samples t-tests were conducted. To approach the third research question, the collected questionnaires were analyzed to assess the correlation between students overall multiple intelligence profiles and their scores.

### 4. Results and Discussion

#### 4.2. Descriptive Statistics
Following the administration of the reading comprehension test which consisted of four English reading passages with twenty multiple choice items, twenty true-false items and twenty short answer items the ANOVA test was employed to determine whether there was any significant difference between the mean scores of the three groups. Then multiple comparisons have been done to determine which group had the best result. Table 1 displays the descriptive analysis of the test results:

**Table 1** Descriptive Statistics of the test results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>scores</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.05</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T/F</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16.80</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.40</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means and standard deviations for the variables are shown in Table 1. The mean of test scores for multiple-choice, true-false and short answer questions are 13.05, 16.80, and 13.40, with standard deviations of 1.90, 2.50 and 2.06 respectively. This results show that, the mean scores of true-false scores are higher than MC and SA scores. Since a more quantitative superiority of T/F scores over the other test mean score could not be a conclusive proof of its superiority, the ANOVA test was used to compare the three test scores. To find out whether the mean scores of the participants on the multiple-choice, true-false and short answer were distributed normally, a One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was calculated. Furthermore, to find out whether the variances are normal, the normality test was used. Table 2 shows the results.

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The variance</th>
<th>Group1 multiple choice</th>
<th>Group2 True-false</th>
<th>Group3 Short answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistics</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>0.718</td>
<td>0.764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>0.851</td>
<td>0.682</td>
<td>0.604</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As table 2 shows, the calculated value of sig. is more than .05, therefore it is concluded that the variance is normal. The following section discusses the results for each research question.

4.3. Research questions

In the following section, the researcher will discuss the way each research question of the present investigation was addressed and what results were obtained.

4.3.1. Research question one

The first question asks whether there is any significant difference between the three test methods. In order to answer the question, the ANOVA test was used. Table 3 displays the result.

Table 3 Analysis of Variance on the Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scores</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>171.633</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>85.817</td>
<td>18.188</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>268.950</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4.718</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>440.583</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As table 3 indicates, the calculated value of Sig for the performance of the three test scores is .000 which is less than .05; therefore it is concluded that there is significant difference between the three test methods. In other words, the first null hypothesis which indicates that "there are no significant differences among the reading comprehension scores measured by the three test methods (i.e. multiple-choice questions, true false and short answer questions." is rejected. Table 4 presents the results.

Table 4 Multiple Comparisons of the Three Question Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) question type</th>
<th>(J)question type</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I- J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MC (group one)</td>
<td>T/F</td>
<td>-3.750</td>
<td>72359</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>T/F</td>
<td>- .350</td>
<td>72359</td>
<td>.867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T/F (group two)</td>
<td>MC</td>
<td>3.750</td>
<td>72359</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>MC</td>
<td>3.400</td>
<td>72359</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA (group three)</td>
<td>T/F</td>
<td>.350</td>
<td>72359</td>
<td>.867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T/F</td>
<td>.350</td>
<td>72359</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

As indicated in Table 4, the test takers’ performance of three test methods were compared two by two by the use of mean differences. The mean differences of MC and T/F is -3.750 which indicates that the test takers’ performance of T/F method is better than the test takers’ performance of MC method. Furthermore, the calculated value of Sig is .000. Since it is less
than .05, it can be concluded that there is significant differences between the reading comprehension scores measured through the MC and T/F methods. The comparison of T/F and SA indicates that there is significant difference between true-false and short answer with the sig of .000 which is less than .05. The mean difference of two groups which is 3.400 shows that group two performed better. On the contrary, the comparison of group one and three shows that the calculated value of Sig is .867 and more than .05; therefore it is concluded that there is no significant difference between multiple-choice and short answer although the mean difference of -350 shows that group three performed better. The effect of test methods can be more easily shown in Table 5.

**Table 5** Homogeneous Subsets of question type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>question types</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Subset for alpha = 0.05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>13.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T/F</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td></td>
<td>.867</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the subset columns, the factor levels that do not have significantly different effects are displayed in the same column. In this case, the first columns contain multiple-choice and short answer questions, and the second column contains true-false questions. Figure 1 shows the mean scores of students' performance on the three test types.

**Figure 1** The Mean Scores of students' performance on the three test questions

As illustrated in Figure 1, test takers’ performance on true-false question was significantly better than that of multiple-choice and short answer questions.

**4.3.2. Research questions two**

In order to answer the second research question, which indicates that whether there is any significant differences between EFL males and females in reading comprehension scores
measured by the three test methods or not, SPSS software was used to analyze any significant differences between EFL males and females in reading comprehension scores measured by the three test methods. Therefore, first, descriptive statistics which includes mean and standard deviation were used. The results are shown in Table 6.

**Table 6** Descriptive statistics of males and females’ scores on multiple choice, true-false and short answer questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>question type</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>MC</td>
<td>8.8917</td>
<td>2.78286</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T/F</td>
<td>13.0417</td>
<td>4.10744</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>11.1917</td>
<td>3.52680</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.0417</td>
<td>3.33625</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>MC</td>
<td>10.3456</td>
<td>2.90768</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>T/F</td>
<td>11.4632</td>
<td>4.07883</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>9.6397</td>
<td>2.90845</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.4828</td>
<td>2.90668</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means and standard deviations for males and females’ scores on multiple choice, true-false and short answer questions are shown in Table 6 the total mean test scores for females performance on multiple-choice, true-false and short answer questions is 11.0417, with standard deviation of 3.33625 respectively. Also, this total mean test scores for males performance on multiple-choice, true-false and short answer questions is 10.4828, with standard deviations of 2.90668 respectively. These results show that the total mean test scores for female performance on three test methods, is higher than total mean test scores for male performance and based on the mean differences females’ performance was better than that of males. To find the difference between males and females in reading comprehension scores, a series of independent samples t-test were conducted. Table 7 indicated the degree of difference.

**Table 7** Independent samples t-test between males and females’ scores on reading comprehension scores
As can be seen in Table 7, there is a significant differences between EFL males and females in reading comprehension scores measured by the three test methods.

By employing a paired-samples t-test, it was shown that the amount of t-observed (t-observed = -5.657) is significant at the probability level of p=.000 which is statistically significant amount. Therefore, the second null hypothesis of the research in hand was rejected and it can be claimed that gender has positive effects on test method.

4.3.3. Research questions three

The third question addressed in this study was: Is there any correlation between students overall multiple intelligence profiles and their scores?

Table 8 summarizes descriptive statistics of the overall MI of participants and their scores in the reading comprehension tests.

**Table 8** Descriptive statistics of the overall MI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MI scores</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>94.00</td>
<td>70.4000</td>
<td>13.21541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>15.7111</td>
<td>2.90387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>94.00</td>
<td>70.4000</td>
<td>13.21541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>15.7111</td>
<td>2.90387</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means and standard deviations of participant’s scores on reading comprehension questions and their MI are shown in Table 8. The mean scores for the participants on reading comprehension questions and their MI are 15.7111 and 70.4000 with standard deviations of 2.90387 and 13.21541 respectively.

To investigate the relationship between the overall MI and test scores of Iranian EFL learners, a Pearson product-moment correlation was run. The results are shown in Table 9.

**Table 9** Correlation Between MI and Reading Scores
By employing Pearson's product correlation, it was shown that the amount of Pearson's product correlation are respectively ($r=0.182$) is significant at the probability level of $p=0.000$ which is a statistically significant amount. Based on the findings in Table 10, it was revealed that the correlation between the MI and test scores is $r = 0.815$, $n=90$, $p<0.01$. The correlation coefficient shows a significant relationship between the MI and test scores. In the light of this finding, the null hypothesis is rejected. Figure 2 shows the mean scores of students' performance on MI test.

**Figure 2** The mean scores of students' performance on MI test:

![Histogram](image)

Figure 2 shows the mean scores of students' performance on MI questionnaire. In a nutshell, based on all the facts and information expressed above, all three null hypotheses were rejected.

5. Discussions

Reading researchers have argued that different test formats seem to measure different aspects of language ability (Graesser, Hoffman, and Clark, 1980; Kintsch and Yarbrough, 1982; Lewkowicz, 1983; Reder and Anderson, 1980; Shohamy, 1984; Shohamy and Inbar, 1991; Kobayashi, 1995, 2002; Cutting and Scarborough, 2006; Francis et al., 2006). This study
suggests, similar to the Anderson et al. (1991) study, that the test items in a reading comprehension do affect the test takers’ performance.

Responding to the first research question, the three test groups were compared. In order to find out whether this difference is statistically significant or not, one-way ANOVA was employed. The results reveal that the significant differences were found within the students' performance in different test items.

But just as Alderson (2000) notes, it is inadequate to measure the understanding of text by only one method, and that objective methods can be supplemented by more subjective evaluation techniques. Good reading tests are likely to employ a number of different methods. Besides, statistical results indicates that a particular test format appear to be easier than others in this case true-false. This ease may be the result of more frequent exposure of test takers to true-false format in Iranian context. Therefore, the first null hypotheses stating that," There are no significant differences among the reading comprehension scores measured by the three test methods (i.e. multiple-choice questions, true false, and short answer questions)" can safely be rejected, and it can claimed that the three test method have significant effects on students reading comprehension.

1. As the result obtained in response to the first question show the three test method have significant effects on students reading comprehension, which is in line with the result obtained by Liu (1998), he used multiple-choice questions, true or false questions and short answer questions in his reading comprehension test. The results showed that test methods affected the subjects’ performance on reading comprehension tests, there were significant differences among the scores elicited by the three different test methods, short answer questions were the most difficult.

2. The results obtained through the analyses of the second hypothesis formulated in the present study are in line with the result obtained by Maccoby and Jacklin’s(1974) they believe that females are outstandingly superior in reading skills, and it is known that remedial reading classes contain significantly higher proportions of males. This finding is also in line with Bratmeier’s (2002, 2004b, 2007) studies in which females outperformed males in their comprehension of given passages in a written recall task.

According to the third question put forward on this study. The findings indicate that such a relationship does exist, and MI and reading comprehension test scores are related. Based on the findings in Table 4.6, it was revealed that the correlation between the MI and test scores is $r = .815$, $n=90$, $p<0.01$. The correlation coefficient shows a significant relationship between the MI and test scores. As mentioned in chapter two, a few studies have
been conducted to investigate the correlation between MI and English reading scores. However, as a matter of fact, the MI plays important parts in processing reading activities in the brain (Armstrong, 2003). McMahon, et al. (2004) explored the effect of MI on reading achievement of 288 fourth grade students.

6. Conclusion

In investigating the relative effects of different test methods on the reading comprehension performance of Iranian EFL learners at junior high school level, the results showed that true-false question had the greatest positive effect on the reading comprehension performance of the study sample. This study also found the significant differences between EFL males and females in reading comprehension scores measured by the three test methods. Other finding of this study shows appositive correlation between test scores and student's overall MI.

References


InformationFor/Staff/TeachingandLearningUnit/


Sun, Xiaoying. (2001). Do the Different Test Methods Have an Effect on the Reading Comprehension Scores?


Title

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Press News on Syrian Unrest

Author

Javad Hayatdavoudi (M.A)
Shiraz University Language Center, Shiraz, Iran

Biodata

Javad Hayatdavoudi is a language instructor and researcher. His research interests include psycholinguistics, CDA and language assessment.

Abstract

The present study aims at investigating the ideo-political underpinnings of the news stories in three select press coverage systems of Syrian conflicts. In this regard, Washington Post, AFP and Kayhan International were selected as the representatives of three ideo-political voices. From within the voluminous news stories released in these media, a sample of six news items was selected. Hodge-Kress model of CDA was drawn upon to account for the micro and macro structure of the select news stories. The data was analyzed within an essentially linguistically-oriented framework of CDA. Accordingly, four influential discursive structures, i.e., naming, nominalization, causality and agency were analyzed in the light of Hodge and Kress Model. The reliability of the analysis was ascertained using inter-rater reliability method. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The results of Chi-Square test showed that there were significant differences in the type and tenor of ideological representations among the select news stories. Accordingly, there were significant differences among the selected media in using two discursive structures of nominalization and agency while the difference was not significant in naming and causality. The results also revealed that the press representation of Syrian conflicts were ideo-politically biased, which may account for the multi-directional power relations in media discourse.

Keywords: CDA, Discursive structures, Hodge and Kress Model
1. Introduction

The structure of the news tends to follow a specific framework that has attracted the interests of critical media analysts who seek to discover the latent discourse-bound ideologies. The news discourse can be analyzed at different levels such as thematic, schematic, and structural as well as macro and micro levels of structure. It is also possible for media analysts to analyze media discourse in terms of graphical organization such as layout and non-verbal properties of the news such as photographs.

Most of the previous studies in this area focus on the 'context' and 'content' of the news discourse such as ideological, socio-cultural or practical aspects. However, little attention has been paid to the structure and details of the news text themselves such as local syntax and the style of news language.

The present study would restrict its focus to news structures within the sentence level and seek to discover the discursive use of linguistic structures such as syntactic, semantic, stylistic or rhetorical features of sentences. It is common to most critical studies to investigate the social function of language in a specific discourse in order to reveal the discursive sources of power, inequality and bias. In this regard, the present study puts the structures of three selected media under critical lenses in order to evaluate the representation of Syrian unrest in media using Hodge and Kress model (1996).

In this model, language is considered as an entity containing certain categories and processes. This model constitutes certain categories that are used to manifest the relationship between texts and events. According to this model, a text is critically analyzed with respect to three aspects: grammar, vocabulary, and modality.

With respect to grammar, a text can be analyzed in terms of two properties: syntagmatic models and transformations. In syntagmatic models, categories and processes that describe the interrelation of objects and events are of two kinds: actional and relational. The former describes the occasions when one or two objects are related to verbal processes. The latter refers to a simple relation not showing any processes or actions.

With respect to vocabulary, by scrutinizing the words a writer chooses, it may be possible to reveal the underlying ideologies. In this model, texts are also to be analyzed in terms of modality, adverbs and time.

Media are often subject to the considerations of power and ideological biases of their stakeholders. Thus, the representation of events in the world of media entails ideological tendencies and systematic choices of language to serve their benefits.
1.1 Media coverage of the Arab Spring

Arab Spring is an outstanding uprising cause which has seriously affected the Middle East in general and Arab countries in particular, which may open up a new window to the future of many nations in the Middle East. Media across the world have extensively been covering the latest events since the uprisings began. However, for sure, reactions have been different on the part of third party countries. Commonly, the uprising is favored by countries once it could be thought of as a devastating cause to eradicate enemy powers but lamented upon once it could force an ally out of rule. One may reasonably think that these reactions are most vividly represented in the media sponsored by these powers. Therefore, it may not be surprising to find the same event represented differently in different media.

As part of the Arab Spring, the Syria uprising was an internal conflict started in Syria on January 26, 2011. The Syrian protesters wanted President Bashar al-Assad to step down. The protesters’ demands included participation of other political parties in ruling Arab Socialist Ba’ath Party, equal rights for Kurdish people and broad political freedoms such as freedom of press, speech and assembly. Later on, the protests led to a full-fledged civil war between the Syrian government and armed terrorists.

As expected, the events in Syria had different reflections in the Media throughout the world and many politicians and journalists described it as unprecedented. This study is not intended to blame the selected media for any kind of conspiracy to deceive the public. Rather, the purpose is to show how different ideologies of the news practitioners affect their linguistic choices to describe and report on the same event.

2. Review of the literature

In the late 1970s, drawing upon Halliday's systemic functional linguistics, a group of linguists and literary theorists developed the notion of 'Critical Linguistics' (CL) at the University of East Anglia in order to 'isolate ideology in discourse' (Fowler et al., 1979; Kress & Hodge, 1979). Nowadays, CL, recently referred to as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), is a fashionable term, which has been further developed and broadened.

CDA has been defined by many scholars and theorists in different disciplinary contexts. None of the definitions provide a simple and clear meaning of the term, though, mostly due to the fluidity of its meaning which cannot be pinned down to just one area so that it is currently used within a wide range of disciplines. However, in many cases, the discourse implies the idea that language is structured according to different patterns that people’s
utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life, familiar examples being medical discourse and political discourse. Discourse analysis is the analysis of these patterns (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002).

Among the theorists who have paid considerable attention to discourse and defined it in many ways are linguists. For many theorists within linguistics, the discourse goes far beyond the level of sentences. Accordingly, they consider the language as a system that must be concerned in use (Brown & Yule, 1983). Some other linguists also consider the length of the text or the utterance. Thus, to them, discourse is an extended piece of text (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Carter & Simpson, 1989).

Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 271-80) summarize the main tenets of CDA as follows:
1. CDA addresses social problems.
2. Power relations are discursive.
3. Discourse constitutes society and culture.
4. Discourse does ideological work.
5. Discourse is historical.
6. The link between text and society is mediated.
7. Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory.
8. Discourse is a form of social action.

The struggle over representation of ambiguous events, issues, people and objects are characteristic of all political discourses that are called ‘politics of representation’ (Holquist, 1983; Mehan & Willis, 1988; Shapiro, 1988). Fowler (1991) contends that ‘news is not just a value-free reflection of facts. Anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position’ (p. 101). In this regard, the study of the news from a critical point of view has been favored by many CDA practitioners who have developed different analytical frameworks for news analysis. Van Dijk (1988) was one of the pioneers that applied his theories of discourse to the analysis of the news in the press.

Van Dijk (1988) introduces a socio-cognitive framework that involves a thorough analysis of news in terms of both microstructure and macrostructure. Microstructure analysis includes the semantic relations between elements such as syntactic, lexical and propositional as well as quotations and direct or indirect reporting, that gives factuality to the news reports and creates coherence in the text.

On the other hand, many CDA experts are convinced that a context-free approach to and pure structural analysis of language, is at best one-sided and cannot suffice empirically. Rather, it should be related to cognitive and socio-cultural context of news production and
reception. In order to satisfy this criterion, Van Dijk (1988) believes that news analysis should also occur at macro structure level that involves the analysis of schematic structure of the news stories and their overall schemata. Why do news items bear the kind of thematic or schematic structures we want to study? Why do news stories have headlines and why would these be big, bold, and on top of the news article? These are the questions that news analysts have to pay attention to in order to account for socio-cognitive and contextual factors.

Discourse sociolinguistics is another framework proposed by Wodak (1995). According to Wodak: Discourse Sociolinguistics…is a sociolinguistics which not only is explicitly dedicated to the study of the text in context, but also accords both factors equal importance. It is an approach capable of identifying and describing the underlying mechanisms that contribute to those disorders in discourse which are embedded in a particular context—whether they be in the structure and function of the media, or in institutions such as a hospital or a school—and inevitably affect communication (p. 204-210).

Wodak (1995) contends that context of the discourse has an important effect on the function, structure, and context of the texts. She introduced the concept of discourse historical method through which an attempt is made ‘to the interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text’ (p.209). In this method, language is believed to manifest social processes and interactions and also shape these processes in turn (Wodak & Ludwig, 1999, p. 12). The most important feature of Wodak's approach is interpretation. That is, the readers and listeners' background knowledge and information or their position shapes their interpretation of communicative events so that they may have different interpretations of the same event. Therefore, she does not believe in the existence of the ‘The Right’ interpretation and emphasizes the necessity of a hermeneutic approach.

One of the most comprehensive approaches to CDA is that of Fairclough, that has been the dominant approach for the several past years. Fairclough (1989) believes that the main objective of critical discourse analysis should be ‘a contribution to the general raising of consciousness of exploitative social relations, through focusing upon language’.

Trying to provide a framework for media analysis, Fairclough (1995) introduces some considerations. He states that ‘an account of communication in the mass media must consider the economics and politics of the mass media: the nature of the market within which the mass media are operating and their relationship to the state and so forth’.

He believes that there may be many individuals and groups in the society that do not have equal access to the media. This may be because of the fact that ‘media output is very much
under professional and institutional control, and in general it is those who already have other forms of economic, political or cultural power that have the best access to the media’ (p.40).

The other important factor is the economics of the media. Fairclough argues that the commercial pressures are an influential factor in determining the selection of news and their publication.

*Politics of the media* is another consideration that is of upmost importance in analyzing media texts. This factor denotes the fact that, basically, the media are ideologically oriented and work for the benefits of the more powerful social groups (Chomsky, 1989; Fairclough, 1995b; Fishman, 1980; Fowler, 1991; van Dijk, 1991, 1993).

Drawing upon the proposed models of CDA, many critical studies have been done recently within the suggested frameworks, that have addressed the representation of political issues in journals and newspapers. Among them is the work of Adam Hodges (2008) who conducted a critical study of the discursive competition over claims of Iranian interference in Iraq. His study focused on the recontextualization of General Peter Pace by White House officials on Iranian involvement in Iraq. He argues that ‘the effective study of political discourse, especially as it relates to larger forms of socio-cultural knowledge, requires an analytic emphasis on intertextuality.’ From the study of politics of recontextualization, he concludes that since meaning making is an ongoing process that occurs across multiple contexts, the study of political discourse requires an analytic emphasis on intertextuality. In a study conducted by Yaghoobi (2009), representation of Hezbollah-Israel war in Iranian and American printed media went under critical study. The results of the study suggested that the linguistic choices such as passivization and nominalization by the writers enabled them to present the same issue in a way that would influence variable reader's view of the same event.

In the present study, the use of four discursive features is investigated in the news stories in three selected media, Washington Post, Agence France Presse (AFP) and Kayhan International, over Syrian unrest. The reason for the selection of these media was that they represent different ideological tendencies in the contemporary world. Accordingly, Washington Post favors the conservative ruling party in the U.S and Kayhan International is the voice of the conservative party in Iran. In between comes AFP which is the oldest news agency in the world and which may represent the continental ideological tendencies though they claim to be independent. Indeed, despite claims of independency, considerations of power and ideology are common to the media in the contemporary world. However, the present study is not to presuppose and attribute any conspiracy to any of these media, rather it will delve into the select sample of news stories in order to discover how considerations of
power and ideology might have affected linguistic choices in these media. Embedded in the Iranian context and favored by the current administration, Kayhan International is necessarily pro-Islamic while Washington Post, on the opposite side of the world, may not support Islamic movements.

The four discursive structures used to analyze the texts in this study include naming, nominalization, causality and agency. These structures are systematically related and serve to either mystify or demystify a specific event (e.g. Yarmohammadi, 2006). Assigning names to objects, events and people may reflect a certain tendency in referring to the world, hence the discursive importance of naming that can be either direct or indirect. Nominalization is the process whereby the emphasis is shifted from the actor to the action itself or the recipient of the action, hence the mystification of the doer and time of the deed. Causality plays a crucial role in the perception and identification of events, which may be realized with actional sentences. Broadly speaking, the sentences may be divided into actional and relational. Actionals clearly demonstrate the agent of an action whereas relationals tend to relate an already-established state to an individual or event. Thus, these two modes of representation may be systematically used to either mystify or demystify an event. Similarly, the demonstration of agency can be realized by actional and active sentences. Agency and causality are closely related, though not identical.

3. Methodology
3.1 Data collection
Conflicts in Syria began on January 26, 2011 and have since been the topic of continuous analyses and reports in international media including the three selected media in this study. In order to select the news texts, a two-month time interval from September 1, 2011 to October 1, 2011 was considered. Subsequently, a corpus of all news stories on Syrian conflicts appearing on the official websites of these news corporations was collected during this period. From among the news stories in the corpus, a sample of 6 texts (2 texts from each newspaper), which reported similar events and bore identical themes, was randomly chosen. All the texts were posted online by the respective media on the spot of the reported events. Some of the stories entailed graphical representations such as photographs, which were deliberately overlooked as the present study limits the analysis to the linguistic aspects of the texts. The sample news stories in the selected media are as follows:
1. Kayhan International
   – People's Vigilance Foils West's Plot in Syria (September 3, 2011)
2. AFP
   - Dissidents in Syria reject foreign intervention: Kilo (September 29, 2011)
   - Syria hails 'historic' Russia, China vetoes (October 5, 2011)
3. Washington Post
   - Syria troops fire on protesters, killing 8 (October 8, 2011)
   - Unrest in Syria has an upside next door (October 10, 2011)

3.2 Data analysis and discussion

Not all sentences of a news story are discursive; thus, in analyzing the texts, discursive structures were identified first. Then they underwent close scrutiny for the respective discursive features to be identified. Since two news stories were selected from each newspaper culminating in a sample of six texts to be analyzed, the mention of all discursive relations may be bulky. Therefore, samples of each feature in the texts were chosen to be elaborated on in this section. Besides, organization of news stories takes the form of a so-called invented pyramid so that key points come first in the headline and at the beginning of news. Therefore, the discussion shall be restricted to the major themes and processes occurring early in the text. For every newspaper, the two chosen stories will be discussed in terms of the type and frequency of the respective discursive structures. For convenience, news stories and their associated paragraphs are numbered in every newspaper.

3.3 Kayhan International
   1. People's Vigilance Foils West's Plot in Syria (September 3, 2011)
   2. Iran Blasts U.S. Plots against Syria (September 13, 2011)

Naming

Naming is a process whereby names are assigned to actions, people, objects and events, which represent one's ideology to encapsulate a certain fact into a term. The headlines of both the story 1 and story 2 involve examples of naming. The so-called ‘people's vigilance’ and ‘west's plots’ in the story 1 and ‘U.S plots’ in the storey 2 are instances of naming. Accordingly, people's backing of current political system in Syria is referred to as ‘people's vigilance’ and the interception of western countries in Syrian conflicts is considered as ‘west's plots’. These two are examples of indirect naming. However, in the headline of the story 2, the writer most markedly charges the U.S with the plots, hence an instance of direct naming. The most noticeable is a scene of conflict between Iran and U.S, and it is Iran that is represented as taking the upper hand in foiling these plots.
Excerpt 1.1 A senior Iranian foreign ministry official lauded Syrian people's resistance against plots hatched by the West to sow discord among Shiite and Sunni Muslims in Syria. Vigilance observed by the Syrian people had foiled the Western ploy to split Shiites and Sunnis, Director-General of the Iranian Foreign Ministry’s Persian Gulf and Middle-East Department Hossein Amir Abdollahian said on Thursday.

The first paragraph of the story 1 contains instances of both direct and indirect naming. Accordingly, ‘Syrian people's resistance’ and ‘western poly’ are examples of indirect naming but ‘Shiites and Sunnis’ is an instance of direct naming of two Islamic sects. The charges have been put to the West as weaving plots to cause enmity between the two cults irrespective of the ingrained religious differences among them. Besides, the first sentence begins with ‘A senior Iranian foreign ministry official’ as an official affiliation, which is an example of indirect naming and may be used to apply authoritative rigor to the asserted claim. Still, the paragraph ends with reference to the same authority through direct naming ‘Director-General of the Iranian Foreign Ministry’s Persian Gulf and Middle-East Department Hossein Amir Abdollahian,’ which makes the official rigor of the statement even stronger.

Excerpt 2.1 Iran has lashed out at the United States for hatching plots to ignite insecurity in Syria, saying U.S. pressure on Damascus aims to save the occupying regime of Israel.

Instances of both direct naming in the first paragraph of the story 2 include the direct mention of major actors in the scene of Syrian conflicts including Iran, U.S and Israel. Here Syrian conflict is represented as a stage where the old enemies come to the fore. The scene is illustrated so that Iran is taking the upper hand in identifying the U.S and Israeli plots and helping the Syrian people in exercising the type of vigilance required to foil the American mischief.

Nominalization

Nominalization is a process whereby sentence patterns are reduced to noun phrases in which the time and doer of the action can be removed and the emphasis be put on the action itself.

Excerpt 1.5 He highlighted the lifting of the emergency law in Syria, the introduction of changes in the country's electoral process, and media laws, as well as other instances of political reformation as examples of 'true reforms' implemented by the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Press TV reported.
‘The lifting of the emergency law’, ‘the introduction of changes’ and ‘political reformation’ in the above paragraph are obvious examples of nominalization which emphasize the significance of the actions done followed by the direct naming of the actor who has initiated the actions.

*Excerpt 2.3* Following the collapse of dictatorial regimes in Egypt and Tunisia, the U.S and its allies were concerned that the popular uprisings would threaten their interests, Mehr news agency quoted the Iranian official as saying.

‘The collapse of the dictatorial regimes’ is an instance of nominalization, which makes no reference to those who might have initiated the action. Therefore, the time of the action and the agents are mystified.

**Causality**

*Excerpt 1.4* He also downplayed the Western efforts to push Syria out of the forefront of the ‘axis of resistance’ against Israel, and stated, "The US and Israel want to...detach Syria from the axis of resistance; if not they want to change the regime in Damascus."

The above paragraph contains examples of actional sentences, which are used to address causality in the texts. Accordingly, ‘Western efforts to push Syria out of the forefront…’, ‘The US and Israel want to…detach Syria…’ and ‘they want to change the regime’ are instances of the actionals where the actors are outspokenly identified and held responsible for the actions. In this regard, moves, forces, and intention of the U.S and Israel to actively interfere in Syrian affairs are highlighted.

*Excerpt 2.4* The Iranian spokesperson noted that the U.S. and its allies decided to cause instability in certain important regional countries which had set up an Islamic resistance front to fight against the occupying regime of Israel.

The above excerpt also highlights ‘the U.S and its allies’ as the agents of mischief and ‘instability in certain important regional countries’ to foil the ‘Islamic resistance…against the occupying regime of Israel’. The ideological war is being manifested markedly in the sentences that are clearly devised to represent the good versus evil.

**Agency**

Agency is a process closely associated with causality. In this study, the agency of processes was divided into two general themes: the agency of western powers in Syrian conflicts and the agency of Syrian government in dealing with the conflicts.

*Excerpt 1.10* The European Union was to formally adopt an embargo on Syrian oil, but the sanctions would not take effect until November 15 for existing contracts after Italy insisted on a delay, according to diplomats in Brussels.
Excerpt 1.13 In Paris, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the world community should escalate pressure on by targeting Syria's oil and gas exports to force him from office.

Excerpt 2.5 He stated that the U.S. and Western powers sought to pretend that instability in regional countries is the outcome of the Islamic awakening, stressing they are still making utmost efforts to cause instability in Syria.

In the above paragraphs, the agency of western powers in ‘escalating pressure’ on Syria through oil and gas export sanctions are highlighted so as to emphasize a call by western powers for global hegemony against the Syrian regime.

Excerpt 1.6 Syria has been experiencing unrest since mid-March with organized attacks by well-armed gangs against Syrian police forces and border guards being reported across the country.

Excerpt 1.8 The government blames outlaws, saboteurs, and armed terrorist groups for the deaths, stressing that the unrest is being orchestrated from abroad.

The above paragraphs put Syrian government and its forces into a defensive position as experiencing assaults by ‘well-armed gangs’, ‘outlaws, saboteurs, and armed terrorist groups’. Thus, emphasis has been put to highlight the role of the victim (Syrian forces) and victimizers (outlaws).

3.4 Agence France Press (AFP)

1. Dissidents in Syria reject foreign intervention: Kilo (September 29, 2011)

2. Syria hails 'historic' Russia, China vetoes (October 5, 2011)

Naming

The headline of the story 1 contains two instances of indirect naming so that the people protesting against the current Syrian government are referred to as ‘dissidents’ and efforts by the third party countries to make a potential military intervention in Syria are referred to as ‘foreign intervention’.

Excerpt 1.1 Anti-regime activists inside Syria oppose the Syrian National Council, an opposition body formed in Turkey last month, because it favors foreign intervention, prominent activist Michel Kilo said on Thursday.

Instances of indirect naming include ‘anti-regime activists’, ‘opposition body’ and ‘foreign intervention’, which are chosen to refer to people, groups and actions with no direct appeal to a proper name. However, ‘prominent activist Michel Kilo’ is an instance of direct naming whereby the name of a certain individual along with his affiliation is addressed. The noun phrase ‘prominent activist’ is to emphasize the political orientation of the speaker.
Excerpt 2.1 - A senior aide to Syria's embattled President Bashar al-Assad on Wednesday hailed as "historic" Russian and Chinese vetoes of a UN resolution against his regime's deadly crackdown on protests.

‘A senior Aide’, ‘Syria's embattled president’, ‘UN resolution’ and ‘regime's deadly crackdown’ are instances of indirect naming of the people, processes and events involved in this socio-political situation. However, direct reference to ‘Bashar al-Assad’ as the ‘embattled president’ is an example of direct naming which emphasizes the unfortunate situation the Syrian president is experiencing.

Nominalization

Excerpt 1.11 Paris and Washington have welcomed the formation of the SNC, which is backed by the Local Coordination Committees, an anti-regime network inside Syria.

Excerpt 1.12 The group is to meet this weekend in Istanbul in a bid to unify the fragmented opposition movement, a spokeswoman said on Tuesday.

‘The formation of SNC’ and ‘fragmented opposition movement’ signify processes which could have been represented via sentence patterns with thematic relations including agent, patient and source. However, they are reduced to noun phrases so that those who have formed the Syrian national council (SNC) and those who have initiated the opposition movement and causes that has led to the fragmentation of the movement remain unknown.

Excerpt 2.1 But Syria's newly united opposition said that by voting against the European-proposed resolution at the UN Security Council, Russia and China risked provoking opponents of Assad's regime to resort to violence.

Excerpt 2.6 “I think that all the Syrians are happy that now there are other powers in the world to stand against hegemony, against military interference in the affairs of countries and people.”

Again, ‘Syria's newly united opposition’ is represented as an animate being which expresses its opinions on the current events with no reference to the actual people who have initiated and currently leading the movement. ‘Military interference’ can also be considered as a sentence with thematic roles reduced to a simple noun phrase to mystify those who may initiate the interference. Thus, the speaker takes quite a cautious stance in expressing his opinions. Besides, the china-Russia veto of military action resolution is appreciated indirectly.

Causality

Excerpt 1.8 ... opposition figures in Turkey have not consulted the NCDC and offered it only three representatives among the 71 of its members coming from inside the country.
Excerpt 1.13 "All our efforts now are not to appear as a movement that wants to eliminate others, we're trying to offer a national framework," Bassma Kodmani said.

The sentences in the above paragraphs are actionals, which attribute an active role to the opposition that takes charge of current opposition movement. The emphasis is put on the ‘opposition figures’ who are shaping a national framework and developing an organized movement. The speaker tries to give the impression that the opposition movement is so strong and organized that it can initiate a nationwide cause.

Excerpt 2.12 "To avoid the slide towards violence, the international community needs to act differently and realize what are the risks and the dangers of this moment in history," said Ghalioun.

Excerpt 2.13 "I think the international community has not yet lived up to its responsibilities," the Paris-based academic said.

The actional sentences in the above paragraphs emphasize the role of so-called ‘international community’ to take effective measures to stop the violence in Syria. The speaker calls on the international community to assume its true responsibility and do something about the Syrian regime. This comes as an objection to the Russia-China veto of a UN resolution on the violence against protesters.

Agency

Excerpt 1.11 Paris and Washington have welcomed the formation of the SNC, which is backed by the Local Coordination Committees, an anti-regime network inside Syria.

Excerpt 2.3 The double veto was both condemned and lamented in Western capitals, with the United States saying it was "outraged" and France bemoaning it as a "sad day" for Syria's people and the Security Council.

The above excerpts emphasize the agency of western powers including Paris and Washington in exercising their power in Syria through supporting the opposition council as well as the attempts to enforce a resolution against Syria. However, they allegedly do so in favor of ‘Syria's people’ so that the double veto by china and Russia would be a ‘sad day’ for Syrians rather than for these powers.

Excerpt 2.12 "Supporting Bashar al-Assad in his militarist and fascist project will not encourage the Syrian people to stick to a peaceful revolution," SNC president Burhan Ghalioun told AFP.

The speaker condemns Bashar al-Assad most poignantly as conducting a fascist project in Syria and thus provokes the images and horror of fascism though nowhere in the text he
refers to the project. Therefore, it seems that the reference to a so-called ‘fascist project’ is just an appeal to the reader to show sympathy with the oppressed people.

3.5 Washington Post

1. Syria troops fire on protesters, killing 8 (October 8, 2011)
2. Unrest in Syria has an upside next door (October 10, 2011)

Naming

Excerpt 1.7 Assad granted citizenship in April to stateless Kurds in eastern Syria in an attempt to address some of the protesters’ grievances.

The two instances of indirect naming including ‘stateless Kurds’ and ‘protesters’ grievances’ are discursive whereby the writer deliberately implies that Kurds do not favor Assad's regime since they are referred to as protesters. Besides, the adjective ‘stateless’ indicates one of the most important ‘grievances’ of Kurds who wish to establish an independent state of their own. Thus, the writer implicitly sympathizes with the Kurds who aspire to exercise separatism.

Excerpt 2.5 One of the significant upsides already from the growing chaos in Syria has been a disruption of the flow of foreign fighters into Iraq to join al-Qaeda’s affiliate there, according to a senior U.S. intelligence official.

‘Foreign fighters’ and ‘al-Qaeda’s affiliate’ are examples of indirect naming. The writer implies that Syria has long been the source of fighter supply to al-Qaeda in Iraq but since the beginning of conflicts in Syria, the flow of fighters has stopped. Considering the earlier reference to Damascus as an indirect naming of the Syrian regime in the first and second paragraphs of the same text, the blame for the flow of fighters is directly put to the government in Syria. The appeal to the indirect naming of ‘a senior U.S. intelligence official’ is an attempt to give authority to the claim.

Nominalization

Excerpt 1.3 The slaying of Mashaal Tammo, a 53-year-old former political prisoner and a spokesman for the Kurdish Future Party, was the latest in a string of targeted killings in Syria seven months into the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad.

‘The slaying of Mashaal Tammo’ and ‘targeted killings’ are instances of cunning nominalization in the above paragraph. Though the shift from a sentence structure to nominalization has helped mystify the doer and time of the action, further references are made in the following phrases to have the reader make inferences as to the identification of the agent of slaying. Accordingly, the references to Tammo as a ‘political prisoner’, ‘spokesman’ and ‘Kurdish Future Party’ and the final slide into ‘targeted killings’ are
directive towards the agent of slaying, ‘President Bashar al-Assad’. The word ‘slaying’ also provokes connotations of brutality and atrocity on the part of the doer of the action.

Excerpt 2.10 It’s difficult to know exactly what Assad’s fall would mean for the flow of foreign fighters across the border. But the official said, in the view of U.S. intelligence, there’s little question that Assad will, indeed, fall.

‘The flow of foreign fighters’ from Syria into Iraq to join al-Qaida is associated with Syrian regime and most markedly with Assad himself, which is why the U.S intelligence official craves so much for Assad’s fall. The reduction of what could be quite a few paragraphs into the noun phrase ‘the flow of foreign fighters’ has made the true agents, time, processes, organization, volume, affiliates and accomplices of the action obscure while it gives a vague impression of what is claimed to have been happening in the past.

Causality

Excerpt 1.1 Syrian security forces opened fire on protesters in several parts of the country Friday, killing at least eight people and wounding scores, and masked gunmen burst into an apartment in the predominantly Kurdish northeast and shot dead one of Syria’s most prominent opposition figures.

The first actional sentence clearly highlights the agents of killings while the second coordinated sentence introduces ‘masked gunmen’ as the agents of the second action. However, through associations and references made in the paragraph, the reader is to identify the masked gunmen as the Syrian security forces who kill the protesters indiscriminately and who may readily do so discriminately.

Excerpt 2.6 “The unrest in Syria has hurt AQI,” the official said, referring to al-Qaeda in Iraq. Syria has been “their conduit, their historical fighter flow. The unrest has gotten in the way of that.”

The first actional sentence puts the patient, ‘al-Qaeda’, in a passive position and implicitly lauds the unrest that has damaged a terrorist group. The following sentences put the blame to Syria and implicitly Syrian regime for providing a safe ‘conduit’ for al-Qaeda fighters into Iraq.

Agency

Excerpt 1. Headline: Syria troops fire on protesters, killing 8

Excerpt 1.6 The killing could spark violent protests in the Kurdish region at a time when Syria’s security forces have their hands full trying to stamp out dissent elsewhere. Kurds make up less than 10 percent of the country’s 23 million people and have long complained of neglect and discrimination.
The agency of ‘Syrian troops’ and ‘security forces’ in killing protesters and Kurds are highlighted. Besides, a prediction has been made by the writer that ‘violent protests’ will be ‘sparked’ because of killings. The impression is given that earlier protests, in which civilians were killed, were not violent on the part of the protesters, but the killing could spark violent protests in future, and thus offering a justification for violent protests in future.

Excerpt 2.8 But the official said Syria under Assad had “enabled” that flow of fighters into Iraq, allowing his border to serve as a major crossroad as part of a deliberate effort to destabilize Iraq and undermine U.S. efforts there.

The agency of ‘Syria under Assad’ in fighter supply to al-Qaida is outspokenly highlighted. Syrian regime is depicted as conducting mischievous activities to ‘destabilize Iraq’ and thus wage an indirect war with the U.S.

4. Results

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Following the identification of discursive features, descriptive statistics was first used to describe the measures of frequency and percentage. The reliability of the analysis was calculated to be 0.82 using inter-rater reliability method. Table 1 illustrates the results of descriptive statistics of the use of discursive features in each newspaper.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of discursive features analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discursive features</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kayhan</td>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Washington Post</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19.73</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>24.83</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>80.26</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>75.17</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nominalization</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Causality</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actional</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>67.21</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>73.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32.78</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency of western powers</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>84.61</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency of Syrian regime</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>85.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table, all newspapers have used more indirect than direct naming. As well, all newspapers have used more actional than relational sentences. With regard to nominalization, the percentages do not vary markedly among the newspapers. However, they differ in their reference to the agency of western powers and the agency of Syrian regime. Chi square test was run to examine the research hypotheses and the significance of the differences among the newspapers in their use of discursive features. SPSS 18 was used to do
the statistical analysis. Table 2 illustrates the results of Chi square test of the use of naming in the newspapers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>1.379a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.502</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>1.365</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>0.993</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>395</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the two-sided sig. equals 0.502 which is bigger than 0.05, there is no significant difference in the use of naming among different newspapers. Besides, there is no significant difference between the subsets of naming, both direct and indirect, in each newspaper. Table 3 illustrates the results of Chi square test of the use of nominalization in the newspapers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>8.708a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>8.943</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>5.418</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>128</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering the value of two-sided sig (0.013) which is smaller than 0.05, there is 95% certainty that there is a significant difference among newspapers in the use of nominalization. Table 4 illustrates the results of Chi square test of causality in the newspapers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>1.087a</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>1.072</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>0.566</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>197</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table, the two-sided sig (0.581) is bigger than 0.05, which indicates that there is no significant difference in the representation of causality among different newspapers. Besides, there was no significant difference between the two subsets of
causality, actionals and relationals, in each newspaper. Table 5 illustrates the results of Chi square test of agency in the newspapers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. Chi square test of agency in the three newspapers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Value</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Valid Cases</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering the value of two-sided sig (0.000) which is smaller than 0.05, there is 95% certainty that there is a significant difference in the representation of the agency of processes in different newspapers. Besides, there is a significant difference in the representation of the two subsets of agency, agency of western powers and agency of Syrian regime, in each newspaper. Overall, the results showed no significant difference in the use of the two discursive features of naming and causality and their subsets in and among the newspapers. However, there was a significant difference in the use of nominalization and agency among the newspapers. In this regard, post hoc Tukey's test was run to determine between which newspapers the difference is significant. The results of Tukey's test of nominalization showed that there is a significant difference between Kayhan International and AFP in the use of nominalization. The results of the post hoc test of agency revealed a significant difference between Kayhan International and Washington Post as well as between Washington Post and AFP.

5. Conclusion and implication

The present study was conducted to investigate the ideo-political processes of the representation of Syrian conflicts in the selected media in different ideo-political contexts. In this regard, Kayhan International, AFP and Washington Post were selected as the media that belonged to not only different geographical areas but also to different ideological domains. Four discursive features, which systematically work to either mystify or demystify processes and events, were selected to examine how differences in ideology and power relations may lead to different representations of similar events in different ideo-political domains.

Fairclough (1993) contends that ‘ideology and ideological processes are manifested as systems of linguistic characteristics and processes.’ In fact, there is common belief among
analysts that discourse analysis is ideology analysis. According to Thompson (1990), ideology is a type of social process that establishes and regulates symbolic forms in the society. Language is a means of ideological representation so that texts are designed in ways that help establish and institutionalize a dominant ideology in a certain social context. Weiss and Wodak (2003) assert that ‘one of the aims of CDA is to demystify discourses by deciphering ideologies.’ (p. 27).

The selected media in the present study were thought to belong to different ideological worlds. Accordingly, supported by the current conservative administration and located in the socio-cultural context of Iran, Kayhan International is evidently pro-Islamic while Washington Post may support the politics of current conservative administration in the U.S in dealing with Middle East conflicts. Still, AFP may show no apparent tendency toward either of these ideological possessions and follow a different line of politics. The ideological conflict between these domains was clearly voiced by Kayhan International that calls Syria the ‘forefront of the ‘axis of resistance’ against Israel’ (1.4) so that U.S and Israel are deemed to push Syria out of the forefront of Islamic resistance against the West. Quoting one of the top officials of Iran's foreign ministry, Kayhan reports that in case the west cannot ‘detach Syria from the axis of resistance, they want to change the regime in Damascus.’ On the other hand, Washington Post reports that Syria has long been the route for the flow of Al-Qaeda fighters into Iraq so that ‘U.S. officials can thank the pro-democracy protesters rising up against President Bashar al-Assad,’ which has helped block the flow of Al-Qaeda fighters into Iraq (2.4). This is considered to be ‘one positive development lately in Iraq’ providing justification for possible prolongation of U.S troops mission in Iraq until the everlasting blockage of Al-Qaeda fighters flow route is warranted. This also provides justification for the U.S attempt to remove the Syrian regime.

The results showed no significant difference in using naming and causality among the selected media. However, a significant difference was noticed in using nominalization and agency among the newspapers. The results of statistical analysis showed a significant difference between Kayhan International and AFP in using nominalization. That is, the use of nominalization in selected news stories significantly differs between these two newspapers. In other words, Kayhan International has used significantly more instances of nominalization as a process to shift the emphasis to the events and mystify the agency and time of the deeds.

Overall, the results showed a significant difference in the use of the two discursive features of nominalization and agency and their subsets in and among the newspapers. In this regard, post hoc Tukey's test was run to determine between which newspapers the difference was
significant. The results of Tukey's test of nominalization showed that there was a significant difference between Kayhan International and AFP in the use of nominalization. The results of the post hoc test of agency revealed a significant difference between Kayhan International and Washington Post as well as between Washington Post and AFP. A thematic analysis of the texts showed the highlighted agency of two main actors in the texts, i.e., western powers and Syrian regime. While Kayhan International emphasized the role of western powers in putting pressure on Syrian regime to drive it out of rule, Washington Post highlighted the role of Syrian regime in suppressing the pro-democracy protests. However, AFP took a more moderate stance and directly quoted the western officials and Syrian activists. Overall, the selected media were found to draw upon variable linguistic choices to impart their ideological tendencies to the reader.

In the current world, media have come to be the main source of information and circulation of knowledge. This study could be considered as an attempt in raising the readers' consciousness toward the underlying ideological and political considerations prevalent in the media so that the readers may be able to take a more critical stance toward the flow of news stories flooding the world every day. In this regard, it may foster the critical thinking in the reader. It may also prove useful to the students of language and linguistics who need to pay greater heed to the powerful social functions of language in shaping the social world.

References


Title

Enhancing Promotion through Generic Features: The Case of Blurbs in Hard versus Soft Science Textbooks

Authors

Davud Kuhi (Ph.D)
Department of English Language Teaching, Maragheh Branch, Islamic Azad University, Maragheh, Iran

Zeinab Iraji (M.A)
Department of English Language Teaching, Maragheh Branch, Islamic Azad University, Maragheh, Iran

Biodata

Davud Kuhi, assistant professor at the department of English language teaching, University of Maragheh, Iran. His research interests are applied linguistics, ESP, discourse analysis and genre analysis.

Zeinab Iraji M.A in TEFL from Islamic Azad University of Maragheh. Her research interests include discourse analysis, genre analysis and ESP.

Abstract

This study is an attempt to scrutinize the move structure of 100 academic book blurbs in 10 disciplinary areas from hard science (biology, chemistry, civil engineering, mechanical engineering and physics) and soft science (applied linguistics, business management, philosophy, psychology and sociology) published academic books. To this end, 50 book blurbs in each area were analyzed in terms of their move structure and the ways in which these moves were realized linguistically. What the analysis revealed was the existence of a four-move structure in the data. As far as the move structure was considered, there was no outstanding difference between the areas.

Keywords: Academic discourse, Book blurb, Genre, Hard science, Move, Soft science

1. Introduction

Among different non-literary genres, much attention has been paid to the organizational patterns of genres producing knowledge, such as research articles, and genres distributing
knowledge have escaped the attention of researchers. One of these genres is the academic book blurb. People who somehow deal with books (e.g. buying books, reading books and writing books) have been highly involved in this genre. The availability of limited research implies that blurbs appeared ‘with the advent of the mass-produced paperback’ (Davis, 1994, p. 245). According to Gea Valor (2005), blurbs are brief texts traditionally displayed on book covers which provide information about a book to potential readers. They are named blurbs, book blurbs, publisher’s blurbs, and back-cover blurbs. A blurb may be written by the author and/or publisher of the book and even by well-known experts of the field.

Book blurbs are examples of promotional genres. Some other examples of promotional genres may include advertisements, promotional letters (Bhatia, 2004). When the purpose of persuasion is to give a positive image of the product with commercial interests in mind, it is common to talk about a promotional language. As Featherstone (1991) points out today we are living in a “consumer culture,” where many of our discursive activities, whether in business or in the academia, or even in personal contexts, have to some extent been influenced by promotional concerns. The inevitable result of this development is that many of the institutionalized genres, whether they are social, professional, or academic, are seen as incorporating elements of promotion.

The schematic structure of book blurbs has been studied by some scholars. Gea Valor (2005), for example, focused on four of the most widely-known publishing and bookselling companies in the English-speaking world: Penguin, Ballantine, Routledge, and Barnes and Noble. The findings of this research revealed that the rhetorical structure of blurbs consisted of three main moves, each one performing a specific function: 1.Description, 2.Evaluation and 3.About the Author. The study demonstrated that blurbs do share the same communicative purpose to persuade the potential customer with the advertising discourse and they also present many linguistic features typical of such discourse. Cacchainni (2007) performed a comparison of the generic structure of book reviews and book blurbs of fiction and suggested four moves: 1.Identification, 2.Establishing credentials (author’s track record), 3.Highlighting parts of the book and 4.Appraising the book and concluded that positive evaluation was a defining property of book blurbs and a function of their promotional purposes.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the differences and/or similarities that exist in move structures of academic book blurbs of hard and soft sciences. The study seeks answers to the following questions:
1. What types of move structures are employed in the academic book blurbs of hard and soft sciences?
2. What are the possible similarities and/or differences between the move structures of the academic book blurbs of hard and soft sciences?

Being aware of the similarities and differences in the academic book blurbs of hard and soft sciences would help both native and particularly non-native English students and teachers of EAP/ESP to deal with them more consciously and maybe write academic book blurbs more effectively.

2. Move and Move Analysis
Since the aim of this research is to identify moves, some definitions of move are presented here. Holmes (1997) defines move as “a segment of text that is shaped and constrained by a specific communicative function” (p. 325). Swales (2004) defines a move in genre analysis as “a discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse” (p. 228). And finally, Bhatia (as cited in Hewings, 2006) considers moves as “rhetorical instruments that realize a subset of specific communicative purposes…” (p. 48). All the above-mentioned definitions have stressed the communicative purpose of the moves. For the present study, we define a move as a segment of a text which recycles and occurs in different sizes and is constrained by communicative purpose, following the general purpose of the genre. Moves may contain multiple elements that together, or in some combination, realize the move. These elements are referred to as ‘steps’ by Swales (1990) or ‘strategies’ by Bhatia (1993a).

Although move has sometimes been aligned with a grammatical unit such as a sentence, utterance, or paragraph (e.g. Crookes, 1986), it is better seen as flexible in terms of its linguistic realization. According to Swales (2004), at one extreme, it can be realized by a clause; at the other by several sentences. Both moves and steps may or may not regularly appear, and they can be used in different sequential orders. Some move types and steps occur more frequently than others in a genre and can be described as obligatory, whereas other moves occurring not as frequently can be described as discretionary (Connor and Mauranen, 1999).

Ding (2007) claims that “move analysis is a helpful tool in genre studies since moves are semantic and functional units of texts, which can be identified because of their communicative purposes and linguistic boundaries” (p. 370). Move analysis owes much of its
reputation to Swales’ (1981) effort to offer a model to account for the rhetorical movement in research article introductions: 1. Establishing field, 2. Summarizing previous research, 3. Preparing for present research, and 4. Introducing present research. Having revised this model, Swales (1990) finally proposed a refined model of Create a Research Space (CARS) model: 1. Establishing a territory, 2. Establishing a niche and 3. Occupying the niche. What is new in the CARS model is the recognition by Swales of the variation that exists in terms of the amount of rhetorical work to execute discourse tasks.

3. Method
3.1. Corpus
A corpus of 100 academic book blurbs in 10 disciplinary areas from hard sciences (biology, chemistry, civil engineering, mechanical engineering and physics) and soft sciences (applied linguistics, business management, philosophy, psychology and sociology), whose authors were native speakers of English, was assembled from published editions between 2000 and 2013. In this study, in order to make sure that the texts were actually written by native English authors the researcher relied on the authors’ names, affiliations and occasionally biographical notes attached. The analyzed academic book blurbs which included textbooks (introductory and advanced) and handbooks were chosen beyond the constraints of their companies of publications. The data included 68 academic book blurbs by male authors and 32 academic book blurbs by female authors. Equal male and female authors were collected from both hard and soft science areas.

3.2. Procedure of Analysis
The identification of moves is considered as a crucial step in rhetorical studies and in the present study considering Gea Valor’s (2005) model as an analytical framework and following the genre-based theories (Swales, 1990; Bhatia 1993) academic book blurbs were analyzed for their move structure. A functional, rather than formal, criterion was adopted for the identification of the moves. The present study extended the unit of move analysis to smaller segments than sentences by involving some clauses and a few phrases, considering this fact that book blurbs are very condensed texts; however, in most cases the unit of analysis was the sentence. Having identified the moves, the typical linguistic features in each move were investigated separately.

4. Results and Discussion
4.1. Move Structure
The analysis of the academic book blurbs of hard and soft sciences reveals a four move structure, outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Type and Frequency of the Moves in the ABBsHScs and the ABBsSScs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moves</th>
<th>HScs (N = 50)</th>
<th>SScs (N = 50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Evaluating Book</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Describing Book’s Contents</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Identifying Audience</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Offering Information about Author</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, 156 moves were found in the academic book blurbs of soft sciences, and 139 moves were found in the academic book blurbs of hard sciences. The most frequent moves were moves 2 and 3 in the HScs and moves 2 and 1 in the SSs. There are significant differences between the frequencies of the occurrence of these moves with other moves in both areas. Move 4 is the least frequent move in both areas. All moves had been found in the related previous works with the exception of Move 3, which was found for the academic book blurbs of this study.

After identification of each move in the texts, they were categorized in tables by plus, signaling the existence of a move, and minus, representing the lack of a move. Tables 2 and 3 represent the distribution of the moves in the HScs and the SSs:

Table 2. Distribution of the Moves in the ABBsHScs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BBs</th>
<th>Move 1</th>
<th>Move 2</th>
<th>Move 3</th>
<th>Move 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three-move texts were the most frequent and one-move texts were the least frequent move structure both in hard and soft science areas. When the texts included three moves, moves 1, 2, and 3 were the most frequent in their assigned order in both areas.

The choice of the move order was determined on the basis of the frequency of the moves in each position. For instance, *Offering Information about Author* was coded as Move 4 because it was the most frequent move in the fourth position of the book blurbs. Move orders in the hard and soft science areas are shown in Table 4 and Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BBs</th>
<th>Move 1</th>
<th>Move 2</th>
<th>Move 3</th>
<th>Move 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BBs</th>
<th>Move 1</th>
<th>Move 2</th>
<th>Move 3</th>
<th>Move 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Distribution of the Moves in the ABBsSScs
According to the above tables, the general sequence of the moves in the academic book blurbs could be recognized as *Evaluating Book, Describing Book’s Contents, Identifying Audience* and *Offering Information about Author*. This is the same order in the hard science area; however, Move 2 is the most frequent move in the first position in the soft science area.

In the following the communicative purposes of the moves are discussed.

### 4.1.1. Evaluating Book Move

This move appeared either in quotations by other authors (specialist in that work) or by the authors/publishers of the books themselves. It provides evaluation of the qualities of both the
book and the author. It occurred in 72% (36 out of 50) of the academic book blurbs of the hard sciences and was the discretionary move and 80% (40 out of 50) of the academic book of the soft sciences as the obligatory move.

Example 1 (ABBHScs # 21)

“Pat Galloway is very knowledgeable, thoughtful, and experienced both in commercial practice and leadership in the profession...Her book contains many sound observations and offers some suggestions worthy of serious consideration and discussion.”

Stephen D. Bechtel, Jr., Chairman Retired, Member Board of Directors, Bechtel Group, Inc.

Example 2 (ABBSScs # 4)

“This is a most welcome book in every respect…”

Brian Morgan, York University

Examples 1 and 2 represent that this move attempts to persuade the reader to trust the book and the author of the book and as a result decide to buy and read it.

Taking all this into consideration, the Evaluating Book Move is really important to the academic book blurbs, in general, and the academic book blurbs of hard and soft sciences, in particular. These are conceived by its high frequency of occurrence, positioning as the first move and communicative purpose.

4.1.2. Describing Book’s Contents Move

This move in most of the texts, first of all, provided a brief introduction about the contents of the book or previous works on the topic of the book and then an outline of the topics of the chapters. The frequency of the occurrence of this move implies that it is the essential and significant move in both hard and soft science academic book blurbs since it occurs in 96% (48 out of 50) of the hard and 98% (49 out of 50) of the soft science academic book blurbs and was the obligatory move in both areas.

Example 3 (ABBHScs # 15)

Each of 15 study units offers clear instruction and examples to help you brush up on the chemistry you studied in school but have since forgotten. Topics covered include the building blocks of chemistry (atoms, elements, components, and molecules), chemical nomenclature, balancing equations…

Example 4 (ABBSScs # 12)

Academic libraries underwent tremendous change during the last two decades of the 20th century as they sought redefinition as learning organizations. This book provides a
comprehensive look at issues that shape the nature of human resources in academic libraries…

Although some evaluation is also done in this move, the main aim is being informative to the audience as the above examples imply.

4.1.3. Identifying Audience Move

This move determines who will benefit the book and for whom the book has been written. It occurred either in quotations or by the author(s) of the book. It occurred in 86% (43 out of 50) of the academic book blurbs of hard sciences that was considered to be the obligatory move and 74% (37 out of 50) of the academic book blurbs of soft sciences that was considered to be the discretionary move.

Example 5 (ABBHScs # 28)

The publication will be valuable to water and environmental engineers involved in hydrology, especially the analysis of rainwater runoff problems.

Example 6 (ABBSScs # 50)

The new edition of this highly successful textbook will prove invaluable to anyone taking an introductory sociology course, especially at GCSE and related levels.

It seems that this move has an informative function, too. However, a great deal of evaluation is also carried out in this move.

4.1.4. Offering Information about Author Move

This move provides the readers with information about the author(s) of the book. It offers the author’s educational background, past and current occupational background and other related works. This move was the least frequent move in both which occurred in 36% (18 out of 50) of the academic book blurbs of hard sciences and 60% (30 out of 50) of the academic book blurbs of soft sciences and was considered to be the discretionary move in both.

Example 7 (ABBHScs # 19)

James A. Kent has extensive experiences as a chemical engineer and engineering educator. He most recently served as Chrysler Professor and Dean of Engineering and Science at the University of Detroit…

Example 8 (ABBSScs # 44)

CHARLES LEMERT is Andrus Professor of Sociology at Wesleyan University, and author of many books read the world over. His most recent works include…
It could be regarded as the most informative move in the academic book blurbs since nearly no evaluation is done in this move; that is to say, this is the least affected move by the evaluation.

4.2. Move Cycles and Move Embedding

A considerable number of move cycles were found in both hard and soft science areas and they were frequent in the Evaluating Book Move, Describing Book’s Contents Move and Identifying Audience Move. In other words, linear fashion occurred just in 30% (15 out of 50) in both. Move cycles were not considered in calculating the frequencies of the moves. The following are two examples of move cycling:

Example 9 (ABBHScs # 49)

Identifying Audience More than a mere reference, this book is a great refresher course in undergraduate physics… Evaluating Book Here is one of the most useful books of its type, an essential aid in all physics research as well as problem-solving. Identifying Audience A must for every physicist and astrophysicist.

Example 10 (ABBSScs # 23)

Evaluating Book A really excellent text, Describing Book’s Contents Richards uses the controversy over sociobiology as a way to discuss a whole series of traditional philosophical problems. Evaluating Book This book provides a valuable introduction to philosophical methods of thinking … always clear, well-informed and challenging. Describing Book’s Contents Janet Radcliffe Richards reveals the real ‘implications’ of Darwinism for our view of ourselves. If you knew that the anti-Darwinians must be wrong but you lacked ammunition – here it is. Evaluating Book what evolutionary psychology needs most is clear thinking. Richards provides it … This book has long been needed, and will be much appreciated. Describing Book’s Contents Human Nature after Darwin: A Philosophical Introduction is an original investigation of the implications of Darwinism for our understanding of ourselves and our situation…

The extent of embedding was nearly the same in both hard and soft science areas. In both areas, moves 1, 2 and 3 were embedded within each other. However, in all texts Move 4 was applied by itself. Move 1 was embedded within all moves, particularly in the form of adjectives and adverbs.

Example 11 (ABBHScs # 11)

“Evaluating Book Written in a clear and comprehensible, Identifying Audience Writing Reaching Mechanisms in Organic Chemistry will serve as an invaluable supplement to both
under graduate and graduate chemistry students alike; the thorough index renders it useful for professionals as well.” Choice

Example 12 (ABBSScs # 23)

‘Evaluating Book A really excellent text, Describing Book’s Contents Richards uses the controversy over sociobiology as a way to discuss a whole series of traditional philosophical problems.’

Professor David Hull, Northwestern University

4.3. Linguistic Features

Positive evaluative adjectives, superlative, intensifying adverbs and auxiliary modals for possibility (positive evaluative adjectives were the mostly applied linguistic features) were investigated and found in the academic book blurbs which were distributed through the moves in different frequencies. The following are two examples for each linguistic feature:

Example 13 (ABBsHScs # 17)

Valuable contributions from internationally renowned authors once again help distinguish Uhligh’s corrosion Handbook as a leading resource in the field …

Example 14 (ABBsSScs # 41)

‘Engaging and intelligent … I look forward to future developments of Cormack’s distinctive voice’

Colm J. Kelly, American Journal of Sociology

Example 15 (ABBsHScs # 2)

The book presents the most noteworthy discoveries in biology, including those that affect our daily lives…

Example 16 (ABBsSScs # 4)

McKay emphasizes throughout that what a teacher chooses to examine will dictate which method is most effective.

Example 17 (ABBsHScs # 46)

“This is absolutely delightful book. It is charmingly written, bright, cheerful, funny, irrelevant, and full of amusing stories. It also tells more about how the very strange world of quantum behavior blends into the very familiar world of everyday experience than any book I know…Laughlin really does know what he is talking about.”

GEORGE WHITESIDES, professor of chemistry, Harvard University

Example 18 (ABBsSScs # 50)
Thoroughly revised and fully updated, this fourth edition of An Introduction to sociology provides an accessible and engaging introduction to sociology, without oversimplifying or passing over the important and exciting insights sociology has to offer.

Example 19 (ABBsHScs # 47)
…More modestly, it may lead to a technological revolution that will transform the world.
Michael Freedman
Fields Medalist

Example 20 (ABBsSScs # 15)
“Jim Burtles is one of the few practitioners who have both the depth of knowledge and length of experience to write what might arguably be the most comprehensive review of the subject ever produced…”
Lyndon Bird, Technical Services Director, The Business Continuity Institute

Positive evaluative adjectives were most significant in moves 1 and 2, respectively. Superlatives were most frequent in moves 2 and 1, respectively. Auxiliary modals for possibility were found to be most frequent in the Move 2 in the SScs and did not exist in Move 4 whether in hard or soft sciences and Move 1 in the hard sciences.

4.4. Quotations
Quotations, which were from authoritative journals, authors, and magazines, were abundant in book blurbs and they were more distributed within the SScs than the HScs significantly. It could mean that book blurbs want to disguise their role in the evaluation. Also, it can be interpreted that they represent the positive characteristics of the book and the author(s) by authoritative people or journals that are known to the audience. In the subsequent sections, the reasons for the results of the present study are interpreted.

4.5. Advertising Discourse in the Academic Book Blurbs
It must be remembered that a book is chosen to be read or borrowed mostly on the basis of the information provided by its blurb; that is to say, it is the most vital part of the book that can silently do its job, which is selling the product. This means that the book blurb cannot simply have a descriptive value for the author of the book. Therefore, the brief text should be extremely attractive and as a result the most influencing points should be placed in it in order to catch the audience’s eye.

As pointed out in Bhatia (1993), the most popular promotional strategy in advertising has been to describe and evaluate a product or service in a positive manner and in the case of academic book blurbs both requirements are accomplished. Moreover, it is known that one of the most essential and a typical strategy that advertisers use is the positive description of the
product. The most useful linguistic feature for that purpose is the adjective. According to Kathpalia (1992), it might have the same communicative purpose of marketing: that of selling for profit. This could be considered as the rationale behind the generic structure of academic book blurbs. Therefore, the main communicative purpose of the blurbs is to position the academic books favorably in the academic community through a series of identifiable rhetorical moves peppered with positive lexis. It is implied by the extreme distribution of positive linguistic features in all four moves. Finally, it could be concluded that market society even affects academic spheres.

4.6. Evaluation in the Academic Book Blurbs
Because of the presence of positive evaluation in every part of the academic book blurbs by different strategies (moves, linguistic features, move embedding and move cycle) it can be said that evaluation is dispersed in the book blurbs. This seems rational since the potential readers take a quick look when they want to buy a book and they may choose to read just one part of the book blurbs. These imply the existence of a lot of move cycles and also embedding of Evaluating Book Move in the book blurbs.

4.7. The Priority of Evaluative Features in the SSs
Soft sciences typically favor a broader range of strategies and attempt to engage readers by rhetorical means (Haggan, 2004). It seems that soft sciences do not let the audience think and choose but by using abundant evaluative discourse attempt to convince him/her. The high frequency of the moves in the SScs may represent this and show the wordiness of the SScs. The frequent inclusion of moves in quotations by other authors in the SScs by comparison with the HScs could mean that SScs want to disguise their role in the evaluation and also represent the positive characteristics of the book and the author(s) by authoritative people or journals that are known to the audience. The high number of auxiliary modals for possibility in the SScs, especially in the Describing Book’s Contents Move, can be attributed to more diversity of research outcomes and the fewer clear bases for accepting claims in the SScs than in the HScs (Hyland, 2009). Thus, it means that arguments have to be expressed more cautiously. Also, modal verbs can downplay the person making the evaluation. As Hyland (2001) has noted, the use of impersonality has been proposed by most manuals and textbooks as a means of demonstrating a grasp of scholarly persuasion and allowing the research to speak directly to the reader in an unmediated way. These are consistent with Hyland’s opinion (2005) that soft sciences are more interpretative than the hard sciences.

4.8. The Priority of Informative Features in the HSs
The audience of HSs is limited and certain. In other words, HSs are not used by everyone. Therefore, they do not need as much evaluation as the SSs need. To Hyland (2005), hard fields see themselves as more removed from exerting an influence on the findings of the study. This can be implied by the objective nature of the hard sciences (Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Hewings, Lillis and Swan, 2003; Chang et al., 2012).

5. Conclusion
The results of this work could be of invaluable importance to EAP teachers in the sense that, on the one hand, they may be potential authors of the academic books, i.e. be a member of the discourse community of the genre, and as a result need to produce book blurbs for their academic books. Therefore, they will need to acquire the generic conventions of the academic discourse. In other words, they will need to know the move structure of the academic book blurbs. On the other hand, since they constantly deal with the academic books (considering buying, reading and introducing to their students) particularly written by native English speakers, they need to read the blurbs of the unfamiliar academic books before they decide to buy them. Therefore, they need to know the rationale behind the rhetorical structure of the academic book blurbs and consciously choose to buy the books.

The findings could be relevant to ESP teachers of both hard and soft sciences since they need to be aware of the move structure and linguistic strategies of the genres related to the students of both hard and soft disciplines and then they can let their students know them.

Familiarity of students of both hard and soft science disciplines with this genre and its move structure, communicative purpose and linguistic strategies could be useful to them in two ways: First, it may clarify misconceptions, if any, about this genre’s communicative purposes and as a result they could be able to borrow, buy and read their academic books on the basis of their blurbs consciously. Second, in the future they may enter the discourse community of this academic genre and need to produce it. Therefore, in order to be creative writers they should master the rules. Thus, the findings can be imagined to be really important to them.

Acknowledgements
I have had the pleasure of being a student of Dr. Davud Kuhi, my learned supervisor. I appreciate his invaluable attention, support, and advice. Special thanks to him.
References


**Appendix**

Texts used in the analysis:

**Hard Science Books**


Soft Science Books


Title

The Effect of Foreign Language Anxiety on Listening Comprehension of Iranian EFL Learners

Authors

Fatemeh Mahmoudi Zarandi (M.A)
Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran

Hamid Mohaghegh (M.A)
Sama Technical and Vocational Training College, Islamic Azad University, Kerman Branch, Kerman, Iran

Biodata

Fatemeh Mahmoudi Zarandi, B.A in English Translation and M.A in English Teaching from Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran. She is a lecturer at Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran. She has published an article as a co-author. Her main research interests include second language acquisition, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics.

Hamid Mohaghegh, B.A in English Literature and M.A in English Teaching from Islamic Azad University, Bandar Abbas Branch, Iran. He is a member of the faculty of Sama Technical and Vocational Training College, Islamic Azad University, Kerman Branch, Kerman, Iran. He has published an article and his main research interests include second language acquisition, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics.

Abstract

This study investigated the effect of foreign language anxiety on listening comprehension of Iranian EFL learners. The quantitative component of the study first examined the learners' level of FL listening anxiety as well as their performance on the listening comprehension test, and then compared the performance of high-anxious and low-anxious females and males on the listening comprehension test. The quantitative component of the study further looked at the females' and males' performance on the listening comprehension test regardless of their level of FL listening anxiety, and also the females' and males' differences in terms of their level of FL listening anxiety were examined. This study suggested that foreign language learners do indeed experience anxiety in response to listening comprehension, and the results of the t-tests analyses revealed the possibility that FL listening anxiety actually does not interfere with foreign language listening comprehension skill. This study also
suggested that FL listening anxiety attributable to gender does not interfere with the listening comprehension skill and there is no significant difference between females and males in the listening comprehension skill as well as in their level of FL listening anxiety.

**Keywords:** EFL, ESL, FL, SL, Foreign language anxiety, Listening anxiety

1. Introduction

Research on listening comprehension to date has neglected an important dimension of the listening process – the listener's own viewpoint (Lynch, 1998). Brown (1995) also pointed out that listeners in real life conversation do not simply respond neutrally as recipients of message, and that the listener should be examined in more naturalistic contexts. It was also mentioned that without understanding of the listener's individual personality and point of view, it is difficult to explain logically how speakers and hearers interact with each other in real situations. Therefore, sociocultural and affective factors influencing listening should be carefully explored in order to get a more comprehensive view of listeners and their task.

Based on this consideration, Kim (2000) mentioned that a series of studies (Call, 1985; Dunkel, Mishra, & Berliner, 1989; Faerch & Kasper, 1986; Long, 1989) have suggested that success in L2 comprehension depends on internal variables as well as external variables. Therefore, they have proposed that foreign language teachers should not blame students for their low aptitude in listening comprehension and lack of effort, but should be sensitive to affective aspects, such as attitude, motivation, confidence, and anxiety.

2. Review of the Related Literature

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) found strong anxiety in listening as well as speaking and testing situations. The results revealed that highly anxious learners apprehend that they may not understand all of the input in listening activities. They felt that it was not easy both to distinguish the sounds and structures of a listening message, and to comprehend the content of the extended utterances in L2.

An ESL researcher, Aneiro (1989), presented the possibility that listening anxiety may hamper comprehension of the second language input when ESL students participate in communication activities. A Receiver Apprehension Test revised for second language learners was used in the study. The results revealed that there was significantly negative correlation among receiver apprehension, listening ability, and general language proficiency.
in L2. Receiver apprehension was also significantly and negatively correlated with exposure to English. More specifically, receiver apprehension was most influenced by listening proficiency, followed by the degree of exposure to a second language, and then language proficiency. The ESL listeners experienced the highest level of listening anxiety in dyadic communication situations. Aneiro also examined the difference between male and female students on receiver apprehension, but found no significant relationship. Interestingly, no significant difference was found between the levels of receiver apprehension in students' native language and their second language.

MacIntyre and Gardner (1991, 1994) developed scales to measure anxiety. They (1991) found significant negative correlations between French language anxiety and performance on the French versions of the tasks at the input stages, indicating that anxiety influences the initial encoding of second language information. Since anxiety limits the use of both short-term and long-term memory, apprehensive students must have difficulty in listening comprehension. Their subsequent study (1994) also proved that foreign language anxiety significantly affects all three stages of learning, not only the output stage. It should be noted that anxiety impaired performance on listening and comprehension tasks as well as repetition or reading tasks.

MacIntyre (1995) indicated that foreign language students are likely to worry about misunderstanding linguistic structures or inferring meaning from situational context because they may make embarrassing mistakes in listening activities. Considering that the expectation of foreign language use in receiving information can produce anxiety, he acknowledged a potential role for listening anxiety in comprehension processes. Recently, MacIntyre, Noels, and Clement (1997) measured correlations among L2 language anxiety, perceived L2 competence, and actual L2 competence. One of the results showed that listening comprehension was negatively correlated with language anxiety ($r = -.55$).

Vogely (1998) carried out a descriptive study involving Anglophone University of students of Spanish, centering exclusively on what she called "listening comprehension anxiety" (p. 27). She aimed to report classroom practices that aroused foreign language listening comprehension anxiety in students, and to offer solution that might alleviate listening anxiety as proposed by students. On a questionnaire, students wrote whether or not they experienced anxiety when listening in language class, what made them feel anxious during listening exercises, and what they thought helped reduce listening anxiety.

Kim (2000) also conducted an investigation on foreign language anxiety in 238 Korean university students of English, and in this study, she designed an instrument for
measuring foreign language listening anxiety, the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS), consisting of 33 items, each with five Likert-type responses (from 1 "strongly disagree" to 5 "strongly agree"). This study suggested that foreign language learners do indeed experience anxiety in response to listening comprehension. A majority of the participants acknowledged having experienced listening anxiety in foreign language classrooms and real-life communication situations.

The next work also examined listening anxiety from a quantitative viewpoint, using two scales, and also taking into account some student variables, such as gender. Elkhafaifi (2005), in an investigation about listening anxiety involving 233 North American university learners of Arabic, used a 20-item listening anxiety scale, which was different from Kim's (2000), but also called the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS), and which was based on Saito, Horwitz and Garza's Foreign Language Reading Anxiety Scale (1999, p. 211). The results indicated that FL learning anxiety and listening anxiety are separate but related phenomena that both correlate negatively with achievement. The study also revealed significant negative correlations among FL learning anxiety, listening anxiety, and selected demographic variables. These results suggest that reducing student anxiety and providing a less stressful classroom environment might enable teachers and Arabic programs to help students improve both their listening comprehension proficiency as well as their overall course performance.

In'namia (2006) did a research involving 79 Japanese first-year university students (50 males and 29 females) enrolling in three general English classes with special focus on listening. Results of this study showed that among the three components of test anxiety (i.e., general test worry, test-irrelevant thinking, and emotion), none affects listening test performance. The non-relationship between test anxiety and listening test performance may be due to (a) test-takers' personal characteristics (especially, test-takers' English proficiency levels, experience of successful test performance in the past, and self-esteem), (b) strategic competence that controls anxiety, and (c) the low stakes nature of test results.

Through a qualitative analysis of questionnaire data obtained from 21 advanced students of Spanish, Ewald (2007) found that many of these students did report experiencing anxiety in upper-level courses, perhaps an unanticipated setting given students' relatively higher levels of proficiency. Students highlighted many issues related to their anxiety and confirmed findings of previous investigations; specifically, they pointed to the key role of the teacher in producing and relieving anxiety. In addition to considering anxiety in an
unexplored context, this study serves as a model for involving students in research related to language learning.

3. Objectives of the Study

In the literature on foreign language anxiety, a few studies have been conducted to examine the effects and sources of listening anxiety. So, the major purpose of the present study is to investigate the effect of FL anxiety on listening comprehension. The main research questions addressed by this study are listed below.

1. Are there any significant differences between the intermediate students who have high level of foreign language listening anxiety and those who have low level based on their performance on the listening comprehension test?
2. Are there any significant differences between male and female students based on their level of foreign language listening anxiety on the listening comprehension test?
3. Are there any significant differences between the performance of females and males on the listening comprehension test?
4. Are there any significant differences between females and males in terms of their level of foreign language listening anxiety?

4. Method

4.1. Subjects

This study was initially conducted with 180 intermediate EFL learners studying at Parsian and Noavaran Language Institutes located in Rafsanjan and Simin Language Institute in Kerman, Iran. Out of 180 selected learners, 80 studied at Simin Institute, 52 studied at Parsian Institute, and 48 studied at Noavaran Institute. The sample subjects were selected randomly through the following procedures.

The intermediate Nelson Test 200 (A) was given to the selected population as a placement test to control the proficiency factor. In other words, the results of the test were used to make sure that all the participants are homogeneous in terms of their proficiency level although they were placed at intermediate level based on their performance on the tests administered by the institutes. On the basis of the learners' scores obtained from the intermediate Nelson Test, 80 of them didn't get the pass mark and so they were discarded. Therefore, the sample subjects who participated in this study were 100 intermediate EFL learners and out of 100 sample subjects 42 were male and 58 were female.
4.2. Materials and Instruments

To meet the goals of the study, two tests and a questionnaire were used. One of the tests that should be noted in this study was the intermediate Nelson Test 200 (A). This test, adopted from "Nelson English Language Tests" (Fowler & Coe, 1976), has been developed to test the intermediate level of proficiency in English. It contains 50 items, and in every case the students have to choose the correct answer from four alternatives. In relation to the scoring system of the test, it should be noted that one score is allocated to each item. Therefore, the total score of the test is 50 (the required pass mark is 30). Nelson Test 200 (A) was used in the present study to confirm the homogeneity of the participants.

Another test used in this study was a listening comprehension test which was adopted from "Developing Tactics for Listening Test Booklet" (Richards & Aldcorn, 2004). This test consists of four parts; each part consists of ten items which were of three types (Multiple-Choice, True-False, and Matching items). This test booklet consists of 24 unites, out of which four units (14, 15, 16, 17) were selected. These units were combined as a unified test consisted of 40 items. The total score of the test was 40, that is, one score was allocated to each item. It is worth noting that the reliability of this test was computed 0.82 which shows that the instrument can elicit reliable responses.

The last instrument used in the present study was a Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) which is designed by Kim (2000) to measure listening anxiety of foreign language learners. It consists of 33 items scored on a five-point Likert scale. In this study, a higher score indicated a higher degree of listening anxiety. The response continuum is: 1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree. The analyses of internal consistency (r = 0.90) and test-retest reliability (r = 0.85) in the study reveals that the FLLAS is a reliable measure by nature and across time. In the validation study, evidence of construct validity is found in the correlations seen between the FLLAS scores and other variables related to comprehension and general anxiety.

4.3. Procedures

After administering the Nelson Test 200 (A) for 45 minutes, those learners who were homogeneous regarding their level of proficiency were selected. After that, 100 EFL learners out of 180 took the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) for 30 minutes. A week later, the same participants took the listening comprehension test which took them 15 minutes to answer all the items. It should be mentioned that the participants listened to the tape just one time and answered all the items simultaneously based on the instructions of the
test booklet. Another important point that was taken into account was the interval between administering the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS) and the listening comprehension test. This was done to dissuggest the probable test anxiety that might be caused by administering the FLLAS.

5. Results

According to the first research question of the present study, the effect of FL listening anxiety was examined on the listening comprehension skill among Iranian EFL learners. To measure the learners' level of FL listening anxiety a five-point Likert scale was used. The answer indicating the highest degree of anxiety received five points, whereas the answer indicating the least anxiety received one point. For each participant, an anxiety score was the sum of his or her ratings for the 33 items. Higher scores indicate higher anxiety whereas lower scores indicate lower anxiety. As table 5.1 shows, the maximum range for the FLLAS is 33 to 165 while the total scores in this study ranged from 70 to 145 with a mean of 105.63 and a SD of 13.85.

**Table 5.1  The Frequency and Descriptive Statistics of Learners' FL Listening Anxiety**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreign Language Listening Anxiety</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The lowest</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>99.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The highest</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>105.6300</td>
<td>13.85178</td>
<td>-.369</td>
<td>.166</td>
<td>33-165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As table and graph 5.1 show, out of 100 participants involved in this study, 10 students obtained the lowest score, 57 achieved the mid score, 32 obtained the high score, and 1 achieved the highest score. It should be noted that no one obtained the low score.

**Graph 5.1  The Percent of Frequency of Learners' FL Listening Anxiety**
As graph 5.2 shows the skewness of the scores indicates that the learners' level of FL listening anxiety is decreasing.

**Graph 5.2 Descriptive Statistics of Learners' FL Listening Anxiety**

Table 5.2 illustrates the descriptive statistics of listening comprehension test which was given to the participants to examine the effect of learners' FL listening anxiety on the learners' listening comprehension skill.

**Table 5.2 Descriptive Statistics of Learners' Listening Comprehension Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Comprehension Test</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>27.52</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>5.806</td>
<td>-.724</td>
<td>.379</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>0-40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As table 5.2 shows the total scores of the listening comprehension test range from 0 to 40 while the total scores in this study range from 10 to 40 with a mean of 27.52 and a SD of 5.80.

Table 5.3 illustrates the results of the t-test which was applied to get the answer of the first research question of the present study.

**Table 5.3 The Results of the T-test Compared the Means of High-anxious and Low-anxious Learners' Listening Comprehension Scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Comprehension Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Language Listening Anxiety</td>
<td>Low anxious</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27.9655</td>
<td>5.01058</td>
<td>0.489</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High anxious</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>27.3380</td>
<td>6.12476</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As it was mentioned earlier, the participants involved in this study were divided into two groups based on their scores of the FLLAS (high-anxious and low-anxious groups). Out of 100 participants, 29 were assigned to the low-anxious group and 71 were assigned to the high-anxious group.

The means of these two groups obtained from their scores of the listening comprehension test were compared through a t-test. The results showed that there is a relative difference between the two involved groups' performance on the listening comprehension test, but it is not statistically significant. As table 5.3 shows the p-value (the significance value) is 0.626 which is higher than the probability level of 0.05. This implies that the difference between the means of the two involved groups is not statistically significant, although the high-anxious learners' scores of the listening comprehension test were somehow lower than those with low anxiety. Therefore, based on the results, it can be concluded that FL listening anxiety has no statistically significant effect on the intermediate EFL learners' listening comprehension skill. Graph 5.3 confirms the same results.

**Graph 5.3 The Distribution of High-anxious and Low-anxious Learners' Scores of the Listening Comprehension Test**

Another variable which was involved in this study was gender. The number of females involved in the current study exceeded the number of males. In fact, out of 100 participants, 42 were males and 58 were females. Table 5.4 and graph 5.4 illustrate this fact.

**Table 5.4**

*The Frequency of the Participants' Gender*
As mentioned earlier, to find out whether there were any significant differences between the performance of females and males based on their level of FL listening anxiety on the listening comprehension test, two independent t-tests were applied. The results are shown in the following tables and graphs.

**Table 5.5 The Results of the T-test Compared the Means of Low-anxious Females' and Males' Scores of the Listening Comprehension Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Comprehension Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.82</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>-0.122</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0.904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>5.59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graph 5.4** The Percent of the Frequency of the Participants' Gender

**Graph 5.5**
The Comparison of the Means of Low-anxious Females' and Males' Scores of the Listening Comprehension Test
According to the table and graph 5.5 the p-value is 0.904 which is higher than the probability level of 0.05. This fact shows that the difference between the performance of the involved low-anxious females and males on the listening comprehension test is not statistically significant.

**Table 5.6 The Results of the T-test Compared the Means of High-anxious Females' and Males' Scores of the Listening Comprehension Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Comprehension Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27.9355</td>
<td>6.12609</td>
<td>0.721</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>0.473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>26.8750</td>
<td>6.16103</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graph 5.6 The Comparison of the Means of High-anxious Females' and Males' Scores of the Listening Comprehension Test**

Table and graph 5.6 illustrate that the p-value obtained by comparing the means of females' and males' scores of the listening comprehension test is 0.473 that is higher than the probability level of 0.05. These results show that the difference between the performance of
the involved high-anxious females and males on the listening comprehension test is not statistically significant.

According to what mentioned above it can be concluded that the gender variable along with high or low levels of FL listening anxiety can not affect the learners' listening comprehension skill.

To seek the answer of the third research question of the present study, which sought the effect of gender on the listening comprehension an independent t-test, was applied. The results are shown in the following table and graph.

**Table 5.7 The Results of the T-test Compared the Means of Females' and Males' Scores of the Listening Comprehension Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening Comprehension Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27.90</td>
<td>5.62</td>
<td>0.562</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>0.575</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>27.24</td>
<td>5.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graph 5.7 The Comparison of the Means of Females' and Males' Scores of the Listening Comprehension Test**

As the table and graph 5.7 indicate the p-value is 0.575. This value is higher than the probability level of 0.05, which implies that there is no statistically significant difference between the performance of females and males on the listening comprehension test. As a result, it can be noted that gender has no significant effect on the listening comprehension skill.
The last premise of this study was to investigate whether there were any significant differences between females and males in terms of their level of FL listening anxiety. The following table and graph shed light on this fact.

**Table 5.8** The Results of the T-test Compared the Means of Females' and Males' Scores of the FLLAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>105.19</td>
<td>13.00</td>
<td>-0.269</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>0.789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>105.95</td>
<td>14.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Graph 5.8** The Comparison of the Means of Females' and Males' Scores of the FLLAS

The table and graph 5.8 shed light on this fact that there is no statistically significant difference between the females' and males' level of FL listening anxiety. This claim is based on the p-value shown in the table 5.8. In this case, the p-value is 0.789 which is higher than the probability level of 0.05. It confirms the fact mentioned above.

**6. Discussion**

Inconsistent with expectations, the findings indicated that the learners with high level of FL listening anxiety did not tend to have lower scores on the listening comprehension test than those learners with low level of FL listening anxiety. The main point that is of great importance here is that the differences observed in their performance were not statistically significant.

In light of the findings, it could be concluded that there was at least preliminary support for the existence of FL listening anxiety as a phenomenon which had a negative effect on the listening comprehension skill but these findings were not statistically significant. In fact, the findings of the present study were not consistent with the results of
previous studies of language-skill-specific anxiety and its relationship to certain language skills, for example, reading in Spanish (Sellers, 2000), reading in Japanese (Saito & Samimy, 1996), and speaking and writing in English (Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999). These studies all indicated that high levels of anxiety could have adverse effects on students' FL performance overall and for specific language skills.

This study was not only concerned with the effect of FL listening anxiety on the listening comprehension skill but also examined the effect of FL listening anxiety attributable to gender on the listening comprehension skill. The findings showed that there is no significant effect for FL listening anxiety attributable to gender on the listening comprehension skill. It should be added that not only the performance of females and males with high or low levels of FL listening anxiety on the listening comprehension test was not statistically significant, but also the females' and males' scores obtained from the FLLAS revealed that there was no significant difference between females and males in terms of their level of FL listening anxiety. However, the scores obtained by the females were higher than the scores of the males. It yields that the females' level of FL listening anxiety is somehow higher than the males' level of FL listening anxiety. Aida (1994) and Chang (1996) came to the same conclusion in relation to FL learning anxiety attributable to gender; however, Elkhafaifi (2005) got adverse results. In another unexpected finding, females' and males' performance on the listening comprehension test was not statistically significant. However, the mean obtained by the females group was somehow lower than the mean of the males group. It implies that males outperformed the females relatively.

References


Title

The Role of Integrated Social and Cognitive Classroom Activities in Developing Oral Fluency and Naturalness in Iranian EFL Learners

Author

Asgar Mahmoudi (Ph.D)
Department of English Language, Ardabil Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ardabil, Iran

Biodata

Asgar Mahmoudi, assistant professor of TEFL at Islamic Azad University, Ardabil, Iran. His research interests include oral fluency and naturalness, theories of language learning and teaching and research methodology.

Abstract

Learning spoken English in situations like Iran that do not support adequate and rich exposure results in English which is slow-paced and unnatural. The purpose of this study was to explore the ways by which these two problems can be accounted for. The theoretical bases of the study were sociocultural and cognitive approaches to language learning. Sociocultural theorists emphasize learners’ involvement in social activities while cognitive theorists accord greater importance to memory and rote learning of instances of language. Adopting an integrative approach, this study employed interaction and rote learning activities in the experimental classes as its independent variables and measured their effects on students’ fluency and naturalness, which were the dependent variables of the study. Findings from the experimental classes were compared with findings from the control class in addition to being compared with each other. The performances of participants in the experimental classes were also compared with each other because the rote-learned materials were offered to them in different formats. The results of the study revealed that while interaction alone is enough for developing fluency or speed of speech, it is not enough for developing naturalness.

Keywords: Idiom/formula, Fluency, Naturalness, Pause

1. Introduction

1.1. Preliminary remarks
Until recently, finding effective L2 teaching methods had always been a worthwhile goal for both researchers and teachers. In contrast, in the following years and up to the present time, in what is called the post-method era, much of the researchers’ time and energy has been spent on finding an eclectic method. Post-method era is significant largely because of the emergence of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

CLT, however, has not been equally effective in different places largely because of the type and amount of input available to learners. Most students in foreign language situations or “low-intensity, low-exposure situations” (Randall, 2007, 171) after a few years of schooling in English are able to produce grammatically correct sentences but cannot speak as fast and as idiomatically as natives speak.

The need for foreign language learners to develop performance competence is beyond dispute today. Skehan (1998) believes that, frequent opportunities to link together the components of utterances, so that they can be produced without undue effort, is needed to obtain the required automaticity. Iwashita, Brown, McNamara and O’Hagan (2008), similarly, in examining the nature of speaking proficiency in English, found that vocabulary and fluency has the strongest effect on examiners impression about participants’ proficiency.

1.2. Statement of the problem and purpose of the study

Unlike other parts of the world, in Iranian context, because of cultural and political issues, learners of English as a foreign language have almost no access to native speakers of English for communication neither in real world nor in cyber world and their exposure to face-to-face English is limited almost only to their non-native instructors. Therefore, the notion of global “target–language community”, as suggested by Harmer (2008, p. 11), has less applicability to this context. English spoken by Iranian EFL learners is slow-paced and full of contrived English sentences, the phenomenon that Lewis and Hill (1985) call language-like behavior.

Since a lot of situations in our lives are recurrent and we follow certain routines in making reference to similar situations, reliance on word–based invented language instead of chunk–based formulaic and ritualized language foregrounds the oddness in the English produced by Iranian EFL students.

Regarding the problem highlighted above, adopting a mixed method of interaction and memory–based mechanisms with a focus on formulas seems to be what is needed for Iranian EFL learners to approach the natural and fast flow of speech observed among native speakers of English. To this end, the methodology in this study used insights from sociocultural theory by bringing it down to the level of interaction as its major practical import and incorporated it with rote–learned formulas or exemplars as the mainstay of memory–based perspectives to
language learning. However, formulas were offered to the experimental groups in two different ways: decontextualized with meanings and contextualized without meanings. Therefore, the Interaction-plus-Decontextualized-Formula Group (IDFG) and Interaction-plus-Contextualized-Formula Group (ICFG) represented the experimental groups. The final outcomes of these two groups were compared with the outcome of the Interaction-Plus-Movie Group (IPMG), which constituted the control group. The outcomes of the two experimental groups were also cross–compared to find out which level had best materialized the targeted goals.

1.3. Significance of and justification for the study

Kumaravadivelu (2006) sees it the responsibility of the teacher to help learners reach a desired level of linguistic and pragmatic knowledge/ability. On the other hand, Thornbury (2012) points out that “the ability to speak the second language, as opposed to writing or reading it, is typically a priority for most students” (p. 198). These two citations taken together mean that spoken language must be given priority and at the same time taught correctly. It is unfortunate that, neither of the requirements is fully satisfied in Iranian EFL context and the produced language is frustratingly unnatural.

Another important problem, in addition to unnaturalness, is the low speed with which Iranian EFL learners speak. The two problems combined create a sense of inadequacy which is unjustified considering the amount of time and energy that Iranian EFL students invest on the task of learning English.

The inefficiency of remedial interactive programs, too, is due to the fact that this kind of interaction most of the time occurs between people whose English is reduced and impaired. The major source of input for Iranian EFL learners is their own interlanguage not the non-simplified authentic language produced by natives, reflecting a point referred to by Kumaravadivelu (2006).

For Ohta (2000) effective assistance in the ZPD varies depending upon a variety of factors, including the expertise of the helper. This pushes us to conclude that the benefits conceived of for interaction in sociocultural theory, are not directly applicable to Iranian EFL context. In situations like Iran, where access to natural communication is denied EFL learners, it seems the methodology of interaction should be seasoned by an exemplar–based methodology focused mainly on the expressions which are normally and routinely used by natives. This is where cognitive approaches and their corollaries, frequency and memory step in.
1.4. Research hypotheses
The null research hypotheses guiding this study are:

- Teaching decontextualized formulas with meanings and contextualized formulas without meanings both along with interaction are equally effective on developing oral fluency.
- Teaching decontextualized formulas with meanings and contextualized formulas without meanings both along with interaction are equally effective on developing naturalness.
- Fluency and naturalness are related constructs.

1.5. Definition of key terms

1.5.1. Idiom/formula. Idiom or formula refers to all kinds of multi-word constructions in English language with more than chance occurrence.

1.5.2. Fluency. Fluency in this research refers to the speed of speech.

1.5.3. Naturalness. The term naturalness was used to refer to the number of idiomatic or formulaic expressions that a person used in the five-minute time limit available to him or her in each recording session.

1.5.4. Pause. Pause in this study referred to three things: silence, repetition, and substitution or reformulation.

2. Review of the related literature

2.1. Sociocultural theory

“The most fundamental concept of sociocultural theory is that the human mind is mediated” (Lantolf, 2000, p. 1). Mediation typically takes the form of assisted performance within the zone of proximal development. Swain and Lapkin (1998) call the opportunities that arise for learning within the ZPD as occasions for learning. Within the ZPD, as it is usually conceived of, a more competent interlocutor interacts with the learner to provide a supportive discourse framework. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) call this kind of supportive talk as instructional conversation which is goal-directed and jointly constructed teacher-learner discourse. However, communication has a somewhat different meaning in sociocultural theory. For example, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) stress that communication has a place in activity theory if only ontological priority is given to it as a social practice. They reject the idea of communication as sign per se.

vanLier (2004) defines sociocultural theory as a general approach to the human sciences whose goal is to explain the mental functioning and the cultural, institutional, and historical situations relationships. In a similar vein, Ohta (2000) stresses that in sociocultural theory a
learner is neither the processor of input nor the producer of output, but as speaker/hearer involved in developmental processes which are realized in interaction.

“Sociocultural theory is a theory of mind, based on Vygotsky’s belief that the properties of mind can be discovered by observing mental, physical, and linguistic activity, because they are *intrinsically* related” (Roebuck, 2000, p. 80). Vygotsky (1978) saw consciousness as a process through which people construct their environments and dynamically organize and realize higher mental functions such as voluntary attention, voluntary memory, intention, and planning. Vygotsky (1986) advanced the notion of psychological tools, the most important of which is language, in order to explain human consciousness and introduced the concepts of private and inner speech as mechanisms by which individuals regulate their own behavior.

### 2.2. Cognitive theory

Cognitivism is the position that complex mental processes play an important role in shaping human behavior. From a cognitive perspective, learning is an intramental phenomenon inferred from what people say and do. A central theme is the mental processing of information, its construction, acquisition, organization, coding, rehearsal, storage in memory, and retrieval or nonretrieval from memory. Mitchell and Myles (2004) define cognitivists as people who view SLL as one instantiation of learning among many others.

In this paradigm, language learning is seen as the acquisition of a kind of complex procedural skill which is practiced and integrated into fluent performance (McLaughlin, 1987). This requires the automatization of component sub–skills. Without automatization no amount of knowledge will ever translate into the levels of skill required for real-life use (DeKeyser, 2001).

In addition to automatization or proceduralizing, frequency, practice, restructuring, and memory are also very important for cognitive theorists. Language for N. Ellis (2009), for example, is estimation from sample. Bybee(2002) also confirms that linguistic knowledge is based firmly on language experience, and frequency of use. People progress from a stage of declarative knowledge to a stage of procedural knowledge (vanPatten&Benati, 2010). The role of short-term memory in this transition is also vital (Carroll, 2008).

### 2.3. Formula

**2.3.1. Definition.** According to Walsh (2010), a feature of spoken language is a category of vocabulary often referred to as fixed and semi-fixed expressions, or variously termed chunks, clusters, lexical bundles, idioms, and multi-word units. Formulas and lexical phrases are other terms that are used in many books and papers to refer to these multi-word structures (e.g.,
Nation & Meara, 2010; Schmitt & Carter, 2004). Recurrent sequences are also variously referred to as n-grams, prefabs, and lexical bundles (Flowerdew, 2008).

These different terms embrace the notion of rote-learned or imitated chunks of unanalyzed language, available for learner use without being derived from generative rules (Myles, Hooper, & Mitchell, 1998). As Pawley and Syder (1983) state, native speakers do not exercise the creative potential of a generative grammar to anything like their full extent. Maximally rapid intelligibility is afforded by the use of frequent, pre-existing chunks in the parole (N. Ellis, 2001). Boers and Lindstromberg (2005), too, state that while rule-based language instruction is a well-meant attempt at making language learning more cognitively economical, it has lately been contended because many naturally occurring phrases fall outside the scope of such rules. According to Wood (2006), formulaic sequences can facilitate fluency in speech by making pauses shorter and less frequent, and allowing longer runs of speech between pauses.

2.3.2. Prevalence. Formulaic sequences are a major component of almost all types of discourse (Axwell, et al., 1998). Biber, et al. (1999) explain that due to the pressure of online production, spoken language tends to consist of self-standing phrases and clauses, most of them prefabs. Wray (2002) also believes that a serviceable core vocabulary will include fixed and semi-fixed, multiword phrases. Current approaches emphasize that authentic sources, especially of native-speaker usage, embody more idiomaticity (Thornbury, 2012).

Research suggests that at least one-third to one-half of language is composed of formulaic elements (Conklin & Schmitt, 2008; Erman & Warren 2000). Corpus linguistic research, also, demonstrates that natural language makes considerable use of recurrent multiword patterns (N. Ellis, et al., 2008). Biber, et al., (1999) found that 3– and 4–word lexical bundles made up 28 percent of the conversation. Howarth (1998) found that 31–40 percent of academic texts was made up of formulas. Estimates by Erman and Warren (2000) stood around fifty percent.

2.3.3. Types. Formulas can be divided to open and closed (Grant & Bauer, 2004; Sinclair, 1991). Grant and Bauer call the most restricted MWUs core idioms. Liontas (2008), too, defines idiom in a very restricted way. However, the accepted idea today is to look at the idiom phenomenon or MWUs as an all-embracing continuum of open to closed formulas and in terms of co-occurrence not in terms of compositionality or non-compositionality. Wright (1999) and Aitchison’s (2012), for example, reject the traditional view of idioms by stating that there is a lot more language which is idiomatic and that the boundary between idioms and phrases is hazy.

2.4. Fluency

2.4.1. Definition. According to Leaver, Ehrman, and Shekhtman (2005), the amount of information you have does not determine your level of fluency; what is important is what you do with your knowledge. The ultimate goal of many second-language learners is to be fluent in the target language (de Jong & Perfetti, 2011). Accumulation but not using language, according to Scrivener (2011), may make learners feel nervous about saying things. Fluent language users have had tens of thousands of hours on task. They have processed many millions of utterances involving tens of thousands types presented as innumerable tokens (N. Ellis, 2001).

The first clear definition for fluency was indeed suggested by Fillmore (1979) based on temporal phenomena. Brumfit (1984) felt that fluency is to be regarded as natural language use with native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking, etc. Today, fluency is regarded a phenomenon which is largely dependent on practice and proceduralization (Anderson, 1995; Ellis, 2001; MacLaughlin, 1987). Logan’s (1988) instance theory is an alternative to these skill-building approaches. This exemplar-based approach suggests that increased automaticity is the function of a growing repertoire of memorized bits of domain–specific instances of language.

2.4.2. Measuring fluency. Wood’s (2006) description shows that it was Goldman Eisler who first measured fluency as syllables uttered per minute or second, length of fluent runs, and pause phenomena in 1967. Foster, Tonkyn, and Wigglesworth (2000) introduced macro- and micro-planning processes. The former may cover quite long (e.g. multi-sentence) stretches of speech, and the latter shorter units similar to clause or sentence. Iwashita et al. (2008) measured fluency with regard to filled and unfilled pauses, repair, total pausing time, speech rate, and mean length of run. Three aspects of pausing are usually measured in fluency research: duration, frequency, and syntactic location. Studies have shown that pause times in L2 speech are generally longer than in L1 speech because of longer planning time or
monitoring mistakes (Scovel, 2001). Gries (2008) used frequency lists to quantify and/or compare the attainment of language proficiency.

2.5. Naturalness or native-likeness

For some researchers native-likeness is a vague and elusive term (e.g., Davies, 2006; van Lier, 2004). Many others believe that achieving a native-like mastery is impossible (Bley-Vroman, 1989; Johnson & Newport, 1989). However, there are researchers who do not see the problem of second language acquisition far from insuperable. For example, Dörnyei (2009) claims that there is accumulated evidence which leaves little doubt that some late starters can master an L2 to an extent that they would be regarded by most people as native speakers of the particular language. There are researchers, too, who do not reject the possibility of becoming native-like but believe that it is a formidable task which is dependent on the fulfillment of some conditions. N. Ellis (2009), for example, believes that extensive exposure is necessary for native-like selection.

3. Methods

3.1. Participants

Participants who served the purpose of this study were all freshmen students majoring in TEFL at MohagheghArdabili University. The students had enrolled in a four-credit conversation course which emphasized the development of communication skills. Since the students had just been admitted to the university, this was their first ever conversation course in a university. Each of the three classes consisted of more than 25 students, a couple of them male students. The age range was quite small, i.e., (18-22). The students were from different ethnic backgrounds and locations.

3.2. Sampling

The sampling procedure involved two stages. In the first stage the entire populations of students were included in the study but in the second stage students were screened based on information from their pretests following a study by Farrokhi and Mahmoudi (2012) for the sake of variance homogeneity. To form the most comparable groups, a number of conditions were defined for students’ eligibility and exclusion from the study as seen in Table 3.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEATURE</th>
<th>RANGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18-22 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of schooling in English</td>
<td>2-4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phonation time in pretest</td>
<td>250-300 seconds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 3.3. Setting

The classes were held twice a week with each session lasting for an hour and a half. All class meetings were held in a language laboratory equipped with computers. The Movie-maker Program was used for recording students’ oral productions. Regular class meetings were held on the empty side of the lab so that students could work in groups or whole class format.

### 3.4. Instrumentation

The researcher decided to use monologues in the pretests and posttests for a variety of problems associated with subjective tests like interviews. To objectively choose the students eligible for the study and to have pretest and posttest measures whose reliability could be verified with high precision, a battery of three tests each comprising of 21 topics was designed. The topics were the same in all three versions of the test but their arrangements were different. The students were free to speak about whichever topic they felt comfortable with. There was no limit also set on the number of topics to speak about, but the students were required to fill the given five-minute time by speaking and produce texts longer than a single sentence for each topic. The reliability of this test was calculated as soon as the post-test was given to the control group. The Pearson’s $r$, representing temporal reliability, turned out to be above .80 for all essential pairs correlated.

Cronbach alpha is one of the most commonly used indicators of internal consistency. Cronbach alpha, however, is sensitive to item number and finds quite low correlation values with small sample sizes. For this reason, a correlation coefficient was calculated for five main scales (SYL, PT, SPR, fluency score, and naturalness score) by cumulating participants’ scores in all three groups in the pretests and a Cronbach alpha value ($\alpha=.772$) was calculated. The validity of the instrument was also established, even though the validity of a scale is determined to some extent by its reliability. Determining validity is an empirical process and involves collecting evidence for tests’ use and efficiency. In the case of oral tests, recording students’ output for subsequent analyses in different situations is a well-documented practice (e.g., Candlin & Mercer, 2001; Hellermann, 2008).

### 3.5. Procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of syllables in pretest</th>
<th>400 and above</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SPR</td>
<td>1.40 and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of silent pauses</td>
<td>0-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of filled pauses</td>
<td>0-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of substitutions</td>
<td>0-25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data for the study were collected in two consecutive semesters in 2012. Data collection procedures were the same in all three control and experimental classes although the activities that students engaged in were somewhat different. In the IPMG, the students were given 60 short movies each of about 2 to 4 minutes long to watch (three for every session) and were tested randomly each session for their ability to reproduce the texts in the movies. Watching movies was an adjunct to interaction, which was the main activity, and was given as a placebo to the control group to keep time on interaction roughly constant for all groups.

Students in the IDFG had received a pamphlet containing 1500 formulaic expressions with their meanings in Persian printed in front of them. These students were required to memorize 100 formulaic expressions every session up to session ten, excluding six sessions prior to the beginning of the experiment, and 50 formulaic expressions from session ten to session twenty. The reason for reducing the number of expressions to be memorized after the tenth session was to decrease the work load and provide students with enough time for reviewing. Like students in the control group, these students were also tested randomly every session to see if they had mastered the introduced formulaic expressions and their meanings.

The third class or ICFG was handled in a similar way. That is, the pamphlet given to the students included the same formulaic expressions, but it differed in that the meanings of expressions were not supplied. Instead, the formulas were embedded within sentences and, in a sense, were contextualized. The students had to explore the meanings of the expressions for themselves.

Selecting formulas for teaching is a very sensitive issue and cannot be done only by considering their frequency profiles. There are a few reasons for this. First, some formulas are so frequent that there is no need for teaching them like How are you? Second, some formulas, like proverbs, are very infrequent but known to almost all people. Third, some idiomatic expressions are frequent among natives but may be out of place in situations like Iran for cultural reasons. Fourth and finally, some idioms are used by select groups of people like addicts.

To make these differentiations and select appropriate formulas, the researcher decided to appeal to the intuitions of two experienced conversation instructors. The 1500-formula collection was the result of five sessions in which the researcher and the instructors put their thoughts together and with feasibility considerations selected intuitively the most frequent formulas.

3.6. Steps taken in IPMG

Figure 3.1 represents a summary of the steps taken in IPMG.
Getting familiar with the students, eliciting demographic information, and explaining the objectives of the course

Creating schematic knowledge in the students’ mind to cancel out the possible effect of topic familiarity

Eliciting recorded oral data (pretest)

Handling the class mainly through interaction and introducing the placebo (20 sessions)

Eliciting recorded oral data (posttest)

Figure 3.1. Summary of the Steps Taken in IPMG

3.7. Steps taken in IDFG and ICFG

Steps taken for data collection and the number of sessions held in IDFG and ICFG were exactly the same as the steps taken and the number of sessions held in IPMG. The treatments given to these classes, however, differed in that students in the IDFG had to rote learn decontextualized formulaic expressions which were provided for them with their meanings and students in the ICFG were to rote learn the same formulaic expressions by extracting their meanings from the sentence-level contexts in which they were embedded.

3.8. Design and variables of the study

Figure 3.2, below shows the design of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Fluency</th>
<th>Naturalness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rote learning of formulas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.2. Design of the Study

The two independent variables of this study were interaction and rote learning of formulas. The effect of interaction was measured by counting the number of syllables produced by participants in the pretests and comparing the obtained values with the number of syllables produced in the posttests. The effect of rote learning of formulas was determined by
calculating and comparing the formulaicity scores (the number of formulas multiplied by 40) for each student in pretests and posttests.

The dependent variables of the study were fluency and naturalness. Fluency meant the speed of speech and was measured by a variety of scales, to be discussed below, whereas naturalness was used to refer to fluency plus formulaicity.

To measure the dependent variable fluency, inspired by previous works and following Farrokhi and Mahmoudi (2011), a variety of scales including substitutions, silent and filled pauses, SYL, PT, and SPR were used. The procedure involved attributing every student an overall number for his or her fluency which was calculated in a series of stages as follows:

1. Calculating the number of syllables for each student and arranging them from the highest to the lowest,
2. Calculating the students’ SPR, multiplying them by one hundred and finally arranging the numbers from the biggest to the smallest,
3. Counting the number of silent pauses in each student’s output and assigning five negative points to each of them and then arranging the numbers from the biggest to the smallest,
4. Tallying the number of repetitions or filled pauses for each student’s production, attributing three negative points to each of them, and then arranging the overall negative scores in a descending order, and finally
5. Counting the number of substitutions for each student, assigning one negative point to each of them, adding them up and arranging them from the biggest to the smallest.

Table 3.3. Calculations of Fluency Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Student A</th>
<th>Student B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SYL</td>
<td>654</td>
<td>661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPR</td>
<td>2.32 x 100 = 232</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silent pause score</td>
<td>4 x -5 = -20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filled pause score</td>
<td>4 x -3 = -12</td>
<td>-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitution score</td>
<td>1 x -1 = -11</td>
<td>-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency score</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3 shows the way by which the participants’ fluency scores were measured. It is clear that the bigger the two first measures the more fluent the person would be considered to be but the last three measures had an aggravating effect on the person’s fluency score because these measures amounted to negative values.

The reason why SPR is multiplied by one hundred is that, this is the most indicative factor of participants’ speed of speech. The number of syllables shows a participant’s overall production of syllables only. It does not tell us about the effect of possible pauses. SPR, in
contrast, reveals the actual speed by which the person has been articulating the syllables, because pausing time effect is eliminated by deducting it from the denominator of the fraction—the phonation time (PT).

The augmentation of SPR, of course, should happen in a way that gives us a number that cannot be exceeded by the negative points. In Table 3.1, it can be seen that the limits set on and the ranges defined for silent pauses, filled pauses, and substitutions do not allow speakers’ negative scores to overtake -140. Since the minimum SPR determined for participants in order to be included in the study was 1.4, even if a student produced the maximum number of silent and filled pauses and substitutions, allowed by the design of the study, the resulting negative number would not exceed the lowest SPR multiplied by 100, which gives 140. Once this number is determined, using bigger numbers is pointless because they will not change the order of outcomes. However, if SPR were multiplied by a number smaller than 100, there would be the danger of a change in fluency order because of some students’ excessive pauses.

The values for other measures of fluency were also decided based on some logical reasoning, although arbitrarily. Silent pauses are the most serious dysfluency markers. Filled pauses fall in the second place and are more serious in their own right than substitutions which fall in the third place. Silent pauses show a speaker’s lack of strategic competence in addition to other disqualifications while those who fill their pauses by repeating themselves suggest a higher level of fluency. Regarding substitutions, it is clear that, most of the time, their function is clarifying.

As it was said above, naturalness embraces the concepts of fluency or speed of speech and formulaicity. We have already suggested a way for calculating fluency. For quantifying naturalness, it was decided to use two principles: the introduced formulas principle and the one-to-forty principle. The first principle says, formulas are the expressions introduced by the researcher to the experimental groups. This principle was applied to pretests and posttests alike to be able to trace the appearance of formulas in the students’ posttest productions and make uniform judgments. The reason for applying this principle was that formulas are so widespread in any text that identifying all of them is almost impossible. According to the second principle, each formulaic expression has the value of forty syllables in spoken speech. This criterion was chosen based on the ratio of syllable number to identifiable formulaic expressions in the outputs of five more advanced students in the pilot study. Since from the perspective of this study, speed of speech and formulaicity both are important for the
perception of naturalness, it was decided that roughly equal importance be given to fluency and formulaicity. No credit was given to the repetitions of formulaic expressions.

4. Data analyses

4.1. Preliminary analyses

The descriptive statistics of all three groups with regard to all attributes measured were calculated in the pretests and normality tests were run to make sure that the distribution of scores were normal. The following tables, each including tests of normality for three important attributes measured in the pretests, represent the results of these tests for the groups.

Table 4.1. Tests of Normality for IPMG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pretest syllables number</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.200*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pretest syllable number</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pretest fluency score</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.200*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2. Tests of Normality for IDFG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pretest syllable number</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.200*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pretest syllable number phonation time ratio</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.200*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pretest fluency score</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>.200*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3. Tests of Normality for ICFG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pretest syllable number</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.200*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pretest syllable number phonation time ratio</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pretest fluency score</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>.023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All three sets of normality tests showed non-significant values. Therefore, we could conclude that the distribution of scores for measured scales in our samples had been normal. However, there is another assumption of parametric tests, i.e., randomness that was necessary to be checked in order to make sure that it was not violated. Since this study was carried out
with intact groups, the Kruskal-Wallis test (non-parametric alternative of one-way ANOVA) was run to reject any significant initial differences among the groups’ means. The p-values .63, .316, .200, .185 in Table 4.4, reject the existence of such initial differences.

Table 4.4. Kruskal-Wallis Test of Mean Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>syllable</th>
<th>SPR</th>
<th>fluency</th>
<th>naturalness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
<td>5.514</td>
<td>2.303</td>
<td>3.224</td>
<td>3.372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Df</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig.</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.316</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td>.185</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Examining the first and second null hypotheses

To examine the first null hypothesis, i.e., to see if explicit teaching of decontextualized formulas with meanings and contextualized formulas without meanings along with interaction have been equally effective on developing oral fluency, we needed a test appropriate for one independent variable with two levels (our two groups) and one dependent variable, in this case fluency. The appropriate test for this arrangement of variables is One-way Analysis of Variances or ANOVA. The assumptions for this kind of test were met in our study because,

1. the dependent variables were measured at the interval or ratio level;
2. the randomness assumption was not violated;
3. the observations were independent;
4. the populations from which the samples were taken were normally distributed; and
5. the samples were obtained from populations of equal variances.

To test this hypothesis we had to create the categorical variable groups before running the test. The result of the test is given in Table 4.5, with no significant difference in fluency results. Therefore, our first hypothesis was not rejected.

Table 4.5. Difference in Gains in fluency from pretests to posttests in IDFG and ICFG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fluency</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>86299.049</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>86299.049</td>
<td>3.985</td>
<td>.055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>628070.371</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21657.599</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>714369.419</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To test the second null hypothesis we followed the same path but this time with posttest naturalness scores as our dependent variable. The result of the One-way ANOVA testing this hypothesis is given in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6. Difference in Gains in Naturalness from Pretests to Posttests in IDFG and ICFG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>naturalness</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Iranian EFL Journal 255
From the table it is clear that the students’ gains in naturalness had been significant and therefore our second null hypothesis was rejected.

4.5. Examining the third null hypothesis

To test the last hypothesis, namely, the relationship between fluency and naturalness and to see if they interacted, three levels of fluency, i.e., five to seven hundred, seven to nine hundred, and nine-hundred above fluency scores were taken into account. In fact, fluency values in all three groups were accumulated and then collapsed into three levels of low, medium, and high fluency represented by 1, 2, and 3, respectively. Then the analysis of variances (ANOVA) was run with a Scheffe post-hoc test to identify where the possible difference(s) lied.

Table 4.7. Comparing Different Fluency Levels with their Related Naturalness Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>posttest naturalness score</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>1061577.598</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>530788.799</td>
<td>23.170</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>985070.228</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>22908.610</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2046647.826</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8. Post-hoc Test of Fluency Levels and Naturalness Relationships

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>posttest naturalness score</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-388.13736</td>
<td>58.29691</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>251.16165</td>
<td>53.31084</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>-136.97571</td>
<td>54.47859</td>
<td>.052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>388.13736</td>
<td>58.29691</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>136.97571</td>
<td>54.47859</td>
<td>.052</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the significant p-value in ANOVA table, the conclusion was that students’ different levels of fluency had been interacting with their different levels of naturalness, however, the patterns of these interactions were not clear in the ANOVA table and we did not know where the biggest and smallest differences lied. Table 4.8, represents Scheffe post-hoc test results.
From the p-values we understand that while the differences between low and high and low and mid groups were significant, the difference between mid and high groups was not. This shift in the pattern of relationships implies that students’ progress in naturalness has slowed down as they have progressed more in fluency. The diagrammatic representation of this relationship is given in Figure 4.1.

![Diagram of Pattern of Interaction between Naturalness and Different Fluency Levels](image)

\textit{Figure 4.1. Pattern of Interaction between Naturalness and Different Fluency Levels}

To explore the relationship between categorical and continuous variables in a study we can also use the chi-Square test for relatedness or independence. The chi-Square test result for the interaction of fluency levels and naturalness scores in these three groups is given in Table 4.9.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{lll}
\hline
 & groups & posttest naturalness score \\
\hline
Chi-Square & 1.348$^a$ & 1.830$^b$ \\
df & 2 & 44 \\
Asymp. Sig. & .510 & 1.000 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{table}

Table 4.9. Levels of Fluency and Naturalness Relationship

Two types of conclusions can be reached from the ANOVA, post-hoc, and chi-square outputs. First, the effect of fluency on naturalness is not uniform and therefore these two constructs are independent from each other. That is, fluency and naturalness are different constructs and do not go hand in hand necessarily. Second, more fluent does not necessarily mean more natural.

\section{5. Discussion and conclusions}

Of three research hypotheses in this study two of them were ultimately rejected while one was not. The accepted hypotheses propose three things:

1. Students make gains in fluency regardless of whether formulas are thought explicitly or implicitly.
2. Students do not make substantial gains in naturalness if formulas not taught explicitly.
3. Naturalness and fluency are not related constructs.
These results confirm that interaction and social contexts are essential for developing spoken language ability and in a way supported the sociocultural dimension of the study. Learning speaking and developing fluency constitute a major part of learning language. However, learning to speak a language is not equal to learning natural spoken language. The rejected hypothesis of the research addresses the naturalness dimension of spoken language and supports a cognitive approach to developing this aspect of language learning. The accepted null hypothesis suggests a practice or rote learning phase of formulas that should be incorporated in any program of teaching spoken language. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that in our operationalizing of naturalness, fluency was considered as part and parcel of the construct naturalness. Thus, from the perspective of the current researcher the social aspect of language learning is primary while memorizing of formulas plays an ancillary role in improving the quality of speech.

On the other hand, we learned from the research that the availability of formulas is not the only needed condition. What is important is the accessibility of formulas to students. The students in our decontextualized formulas with meaning group (IDFG) found formulas easier to memorize and use than our students in the other experimental group to whom the meanings of formulas were not provided. This, however, does not mean that students will not develop a degree of naturalness if they are not fed formulas with their meanings attached to them. Some students are quick to pick up on and develop acceptable degrees of naturalness, but for the majority of students this becomes a very long and never-ending journey. This brings our discussion round to our original claim that social and cognitive activities should both be encouraged in language classrooms, the former for learning language and developing fluency and the latter for naturalizing the learned language.

Also we found that fluency and naturalness are independent phenomena, at least to some extent. The message that this finding sends to curriculum developers and program writers is that naturalness should be attended to separately, maybe by rote learning of formulas, especially after students have developed an acceptable level of fluency.

References


Title

I SWEAR BY GOD! Who Swears More, Men or Women? A Case Study of Iranian Male and Female Teachers’ Use of Swearing

Authors

Ayad Kamalvand (M.A)
Department of Language Teaching, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ilam, Iran

Mohammad Javad Mohammadi (Ph.D Candidate)
Allameh Tabataba’i University

Akbar Azizifar (Ph.D)
Department of Language Teaching, Science and Research Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ilam, Iran

Biodata

Ayad Kamalvand, M.A from Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz in February 2013. He has published in some international journals. His areas of interests include sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and E-learning. He is currently teaching English at difference schools of Ilam city.

Mohammad Javad Mohammadi, M.A from Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz in February 2013. He has published in some national and international journals. He has also published four books and presented in some international conferences. His areas of interests include sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and M-learning. He is currently teaching English courses at Islamic Azad University of Fraydan Branch.

Akbar Azizifar, a faculty member at the Department of English language and literature at Islamic Azad University, Science and Research branch, Ilam, Iran. His research interests include L2 reading, language awareness, material development, and Postmethod Era. He has published papers in both Iranian and International journals and has also presented numerous articles in (inter)national conferences.

Abstract

It is truism that males and females communicate in different ways. Accordingly, the strategies they use in interactions are quite in contrast with each other. Many people in the society swear on different things so as to guarantee the true nature of their deeds and remarks. While people in Iran swear on different things, the swear phrases they use are generally deistic ones. The main reason is that religion has a strong impact on Iranian lives. The current study examined the extent to which Iranian male and female teachers swear in their daily communication. The
statistically analyzed data using independent-samples t-test showed that the difference in frequency of using swearing by the two groups was not significant.

**Keywords:** Swear, Teachers, Religion, Discourse community, Gender, Take an oath

1. **Introduction**

1.1. **Difference theory**

Males and females can be differentiated in various ways concerning both physiological and psychological features. Eisenmen (1997) asserts that women, in comparison to men, are endowed with better memory. Men, contrary to the men, are quite accurate in maintaining a sense of direction. This fact is in line with the claim that men tend to do better than women on visual-spatial tests and in mathematics.

There are also social differences between men and women. One of the most significant theories on social differences between males and females is “difference theory”. According to this theory, men and women, even those within the same group, live in different or separate cultural worlds and, as a result, they promote different ways of speaking (Uchida, 1992).

1.2. **Communicative competence**

The concept of communicative competence, first introduced by Hymes (1966), is defined as “what a speaker needs to know to communicate appropriately within a particular speech community” (Saville-Troike, 1996, p. 362). Hymes’ communicative competence was originally a reaction to Chomsky’s (1965) linguistic competence which discounts contextual appropriateness (Barron, 2003, p. 8). Canale and Swain (1980) developed Hymes’ (1972) theoretical concept of communicative competence into grammatical competence (lexis, morphology, sentence-grammar, semantics, and phonology), and sociolinguistic competence (sociocultural rules and rules of discourse). Canale (1983) made a further distinction between sociolinguistic competence (sociocultural rules) and discourse competence (cohesion and coherence).

In Bachman’s (1990) model of communicative competence language competence was broken down into two discrete components, namely pragmatic competence and organization competence. Organization competence consists of grammatical competence and textual competence, while pragmatic competence comprises illocutionary competence and sociolinguist competence. In other words, Bachman’s (1990) pragmatic competence is concerned with the relationship between utterances and the functions that speakers intend to
perform through those utterances (illocutionary force) and the characteristics of the context of language use that determine the appropriateness of utterances.

Leech (1983) and Thomas (1983) divide pragmatics into pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. In fact, this model clarifies the distinction between ability and knowledge. According to Thomas (1983), pragmalinguistic knowledge refers to the linguistic encoding of pragmatic force, and sociopragmatic knowledge refers to the perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behavior. Moreover, Cohen (1996) proposes two distinct levels of abilities required for acquisition of pragmatic competence, namely sociocultural ability and sociolinguistic ability. Speakers’ sociocultural ability is used to determine which speech act is appropriate given the culture involved, the situation, the speakers’ background variables and relationships. Sociolinguistic ability constitutes “the speakers’ control over the actual language forms used to realize the speech acts (e.g. ‘sorry’ vs. ‘excuse me’, ‘really sorry’ vs. ‘very sorry’)” (Cohen, 1996, p. 388).

In order to assist language learners in developing their communicative competence, researchers tried to investigate different speech acts in various contexts. Their findings revealed that speech acts may vary greatly across speech communities; therefore, lack of enough knowledge of them may result in miscommunication. Thus, applying Bachman’s (1990) notion of pragmatic competence, the present study examines Iranian males and females’ pragmatic competence in performing swearing in different social situations.

Using swearing in social interaction may be considered as an attempt made by those who swear to manifest the truthiness of their utterances. This notion can be confirmed by Grice’s (1975) view holding that in order to an utterance be true, it should not lack adequate evidence or not to be false. There are many people in the society who swear by God, holy men, and religious figures in their conversations. A glance at society shows that there are people who habitually swear and also people who swear to justify, confirm, or assert something. In order to avoid ambiguity and understand the topic explicitly, the researcher ought to clarify an issue of terminology. *Oath, Vow,* and *swear* are terms which are used synonymously. Nonetheless, their semantic features are different.

A vow is merely a personal promise, whereas an oath is a promise made before some institutional authorities. In taking an oath, a person not only assumes an obligation but also becomes liable to prosecution. On the other hand, oaths guarantee the fulfillment of what is promised. To swear is to make a solemn declaration or statement with an appeal to God or a supreme being, or to some sacred object, in confirmation of what is said. In contrast to an oath, swear
does not force a person to assume an obligation or become liable to prosecution. A person who swears may not tell the truth and the mere purpose of swear might be avoiding the consequences of a committing a sin or a wrong action.

Telling truth has been valued and appreciated by human being. Arrow (1974) states that trust functions as a "lubricant" paving the way for efficient operations when people have confidence in other people's words and deeds. To be honest and to tell the truth has not totally observed by individuals in varying contexts. There are occasions and circumstances in which telling the truth becomes difficult for some people. To swear or to take an oath has been a solution applied by law in order to secure the truth. Owing to the fact that God as the creature of human and the universe admired and respected by men, law requires people to swear by God as a witness to the binding nature of the promise or the truth of the statement of the act.

People in west countries raise their right hand while searing, no matter their left hand is laid on the Bible. Swearing mechanism in Islam is somehow similar to that of western countries. The difference between the two extremes is that in Islam people need to lay their right hand on Quran and swear by Allah to tell the truth. Allah calls insincere people who frequently swear to make others believe them as liars and says:

When the hypocrites come to you, they say: "We bear witness that you are indeed the Messenger of Allah." Allah knows that you are indeed His Messenger, and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are certainly liars. They have made their oaths into a cloak and barred the Way of Allah. What they have done is truly evil. That is because they have believed and then returned to unbelief. So their hearts have been sealed up, and they cannot understand. (Surat al-Munafiqun, 63, p. 1-3)

There are occasions when a male or a female is attacked, ill-treated or abused verbally by others. Verbally abusive behavior goes far beyond mean behavior; it involves inflicting psychological violence on another person, attacking the very nature of an individual's being and attempting to destroy his or her spirit. Often times verbal abusers impose their thoughts and viewpoints to their victims. As this behavior harms the mind and spirit of the victims, the man or woman who targeted by verbal abuse try to get revenge by swearing to God or other things that they believe in.

In a society like Iran with the dominant population of Muslims (about 98%) receiving religious practice not swear at all, society members swear frequently for self-confirmation, self-justification and self-defense against the insults of other society members. Swearing in
considered a debauchery and an immoral act in Islam. Sins of the tongue can lead a Muslim to hell. For a Muslim is to be admitted to Paradise, good speech is considered to play an important role in earning that reward.

History manifests the fact that men possess higher level of status than women do in Iran. Because men and women fill different roles, with women more often occupying housekeeping, taking care of children, and lower status occupational roles and men more often occupying higher status occupational roles, people pay more respect to men’s comments and men usually obliged no to use speech strategies like swearing to persuade them believe their comments. As a result, people are more open to be influenced by men’s thoughts, believes, and suggestions and women have to struggle to get acceptance for their comments, believes, and suggestions from others. Therefore, because the majority of the society is religious, they swear by God, holy things, and religious figures to convince other members of the society.

The literature is not rich with works targeting application of swearing in social communication. The research is mainly dealing with the definition of swearing or taking and oath or denoting the purposes of swearing or taking an oath (Johnson et al, 1999; Griffin & Lont, 2011; Maer & Gay, 2008; Revill & Dando, 2006).

In a view that most religions and cultures devalue using swearing, it is of prime importance to study the reasons why some society members persist on including swearing in their conversation and interaction with other members of the society. Therefore, the present study is an attempt to examine the reasons behind swearing or taking an oath by a portion of the society who are considered to be prestigious in the status system of the society and tries to answer the question that who do swear more, male or female teachers?

1.3. Research questions
Using swearing is ubiquitous in Iranian social life. Many questions remain to be answered to discover the reasons and frequencies of using swearing in communication. The present study was guided by the following questions targeting the use of swearing in different contexts by Iranian male and female teachers in different situations:

1. Which group of Iranian community of teachers does swear more frequently, males or females?
2. What is the main reason behind teachers’ application of swearing in social interactions?
2. Review of literature

The seminal work of Jesperson (1992), Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin, created a yardstick for researchers and teachers to investigate gender differences in language classes based on the speech content and language use. Jesperson claimed that men’s language is standard while women’s is a deviant form. He mentioned a long list of different vocabularies which were used by men and women and he concluded that women had limited vocabularies in comparison to men. Later this idea was criticized by Lakoff. She believed that women were socialized or in better words, trained since childhood to be ladylike. She saw the reason as power is in the hands of men and their discourse.

Gender has a great influence on different aspects of human life including language learning and general education. In the other hands, gender provides a worldview for individuals to admire, complain, suggest, criticize, annoy, and it has vital influence on every aspect of human communication. As far as men are from Mars, and women from Venus, the way they use language differs both in writing and speaking. The nature and existence of these differences were subject to many studies in recent decades. The findings suggested that in some languages penetration of gender was just at the level of vocabulary and expression while in other, it entered the realm of grammatical structures as well. Overall, studying the ways men and women use language has captured the interest of many researchers (Newman et al, 2008; Bell et al, (2005); Haas, A, 1997).

Mulac et al, (1988) found that women use questions more than men in conversations (e.g., “Does anyone want to watch the movie?”), whereas directives that ask others to do something (e.g., “Let’s go watch the movie.”) are more found in men’s conversations. Holmes (1995) stated that women, in contrast to men, are more reluctant to impose their views on the other people.

The relationship between language and identity is another phenomenon that has been investigated by some researchers. Kramsch (1998) believes that the connection between language and those members of society who use that language is natural. She claims that speakers exhibit their identity by using a distinctive pattern, accent or vocabulary.

Society as the environment in which people live in sometimes lays expectations that men and women require to meet them in their language. Goddard and Patterson (2000) refer to this pattern of expectations as “shared system of reference”. According to them this system models the template in which males and females should behave or act.
A lot of people are of the opinion that women’s’ language is more polite than that of men’s. Research indicates that there is a greater frequency of the use of polite speech from women than from men. In Iran it is socially acceptable for a man to be forward and direct in his speech. However, society devalues these patterns of speech when it is implied by women. From historical recurrence, it has appeared that women have had a secondary role in society relative to that of the male. Therefore, it has been (historically) expected from a woman to act like a lady and respect those around her. Mills (2002) argues that politeness should regarded as a set of strategies or verbal habits which someone sets as a norm for themselves or which others judge as the norm for them, as well as being a socially constructed norm within particular communities of practice. Holmes (1995) confirms this claim and states that polite people are those who abstain from conducting face-threatening acts (cited in Mills, 2002).

The language people use in the society is a medium by which they state their beliefs, viewpoints, and principles. The system of beliefs by which the members of a society justify and explain their behavior is gender ideology (Shitemi, 2009). Gender ideologies are at variance with respect to nature of male and female. Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, (2005, cited in Shitemi, 2009) claims that language differences is fundamental in expressing the attitudes, roles, and responsibilities.

One of the major differences in women and men’s speech is that men have been found to dominate conversations through the use of interruptions and overlaps, and that the amount of these conversational irregularities that took place rose significantly when men were talking to women. Social interactions require some specific language strategies. The way men communicate with each other differs from that women do. This difference can be attributed to the adoption of different verbal strategies (Goodmacher & Kajiura, 2005). Studying the Japanese males and females conversations, Goodmacher and Kajiura (2005) found that males frequently interrupt the women’s speeches and occasionally fail to recognize the accurate transition of turn taking.

3. Methodology
3.1. Participants
The present study was carried out in high schools of Ahvaz, Iran. The population sample consisted of 40 teachers teaching different subjects. Of these 40 teachers 20 were male and 20 were female. Their ages ranged from 25 to 47 with an average of 33.37.
The schools and participants of the study were randomly selected for the purpose of systematic comparison of using swearing by the male and female teachers. 36 of the participants hold BA and four of them hold MA degrees in different field of studies.

3.2. Instrument

In order to collect required data revealing the frequency of using swearing by teachers in their daily life a researcher-made questionnaire was designed and distributed among them. The questionnaire consisted of two parts. Part (A) included fifteen questions targeting different situations in which the teachers might swear for certain reasons. Part (B) comprised a question asking the teachers the main reason for using swearing. The questionnaire used in this study was designed both in English (Appendix B) and in Persian (Appendix A) because the native language of the respondents of this questionnaire was Persian. The obtained data, then, were transferred and analyzed by utilizing SPSS software.

3.3. Procedures

After defining the objectives of the study and determining the sampling groups, the researcher attended the randomly selected schools and distributed the designed questionnaire among the participants of the study.

Since the participants of the study worked six hours per working time (in morning or afternoon) including 30 minutes break, the researcher designed a closed format items for part (A) with two options, yes or no, so as not to waste the participants’ time. Following describing the different situations included in the questionnaire in which the participants might use swearing in their communication, the researcher asked the teacher to give a brief answer to the question in part (B).

Following collecting the distributed questionnaires from the participants of the study, the researcher used SPSS software to analyze the obtained data. The participants of the study were coded as 1 representing MALE and 2 representing FEMALE. The response options were also coded as 1 for YES, and 2 for NO. The frequencies and percentages of the obtained responses to the 15 items of the questionnaire then were taken. Regarding the part (B) of the questionnaire, since all the participants’ responses revealed that the main reasons for using swearing in social interactions were ranging from building trust to habitual use of swearing, the researcher classified the responses to these categories. Afterwards, the percentage of responses falling into these two categories was calculated.

3.4. Data analysis

The data obtained by the questionnaires were coded and entered by the researcher into the SPSS software. In order to decide whether the observed differences between the obtained
data from the two independent groups were significant or not, the independent-samples t-test was applied. The alpha level was set at 0.05. Table 1 shows the frequencies and percentages of questionnaire items answered positively or negatively by the two groups of the teachers participating in the study.

**Table 1:** Percentages and frequencies of questionnaire items answered by male and female teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question No.1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question No.2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question No.3</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question No.4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question No.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question No.6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question No.7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question No.8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question No.9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question No.10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question No.11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question No.12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question No.13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question No.14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question No.15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>57.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2, shows the statistic descriptions of the male and female teachers who participated in the present study.

**Table 2:** Statistics of male and female teachers of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22.9500</td>
<td>4.05845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24.2000</td>
<td>3.30231</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the independent-samples t-test, the extent to which male and female teachers uses swearing in their communication in different contexts did not differ significantly, t (-1.068) = 0.42, p> 0.05.

Table 3: Independent Samples t-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total</td>
<td>.427</td>
<td>.518</td>
<td>-1.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>1.068*</td>
<td>.383</td>
<td>2.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>-1.068</td>
<td>3.649E1</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p< 0.05

4. Results

This study has attempted to examine the differences between female and male teacher’s language regarding the frequency in using swearing in their communication and interaction in the society and the main reason for using swearing.

The results of the study suggest that in the domain of discourse community of Iranian teachers, the extent and rate of swearing expressions in males and females’ language indicate no significant difference. Therefore, the answer to the first question of the study is that the results indicate no significant difference in using swearing by Iranian male and female teachers. The results obtained from calculating chi-square tests of 15 items of the questionnaire demonstrated that except for the question number 15 (Imagine that you failed to achieve your goal, do you swear that you will compensate in the future?) (Table 4), there is no statistically significant difference found in frequency of using swearing among male and female teachers.
Table 4: Chi-square test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>question15</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>male</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>female</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = 5.013, p < .05, df = 1 \]

Regarding the second question, the results indicate that building trust and habitual use of swearing are the foremost reasons that force the male and female teachers to use swearing or taking an oath in their interactions with members of the society. Table 5, shows the percentages of main reasons for application of swearing.

Table 5: Percentages of responses to the main reasons for swearing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building trust</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitual use of swearing</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Research on gender and language typically claims that the communicative styles applied by males and females have distinguishing attributes and are different. Tannen (1994) identifies women’s conversation as “rapport-talk”, language that maintains social connection, and men’s conversation as “report-talk”, language that asserts male status and authority (cited in Carli, 2006). Furthermore, literature on gender reveals that men are conceived to be more argentic than women and women to be more communal than men (Carli, 2006).

The purpose of the present study was to examine the extent to which gender influences the use of swearing in the communication. The study investigated whether the difference in gender has direct impact on the frequency of using swearing in the social interactions of male and female teachers. The questions the research sought to answer were whether gender differences affect the frequency of using swearing and what is the main reason for swearing? Men historically have possessed higher level of status and power in most setting in Iran than women do. As a result, men are generally considered to be more competent and more knowledgeable than women. For this reason it seems acceptable to claim that people accept men’s statements, claims, suggestions, and thoughts without difficulty. In contrast, women
due to their lower level of status have to make any effort to be accepted. Accordingly, they might resort to swearing so as to convince other people. However, gradually over the course of the present day, the society has seen the promotion of woman social status. Women, today, play an important role in the Iranian families. They are no longer considered to be merely housewives, rather they participate in social affairs and in some cases the economy of the family depends totally to their out-of-house activities. In consequence, society appreciates women’s roles, respects them, and gives value to their remarks.

Iranian females suffered from educational inequality since old time. The literacy rate of men according to 1976 census was 59 percent which much higher than the rate of 35 percent for women (Aghajanian, 1997). Iranian families allocated more resources for the education of their males members (Aghajanian, 1997). As matters stand, men were more educated than women and the society convinced more comfortably by their claims. In contrast, women due to their lower level of education were forced to use swearing so as to convince the society. The difference of 24 percent in the rate of education in 1976 has reduced significantly in recent years and women have occupied more university chairs than men do. The society is not impervious to women’s beliefs, claims, and thoughts and women can more comfortably convince other members of the society without the pressure of using swear.

Though evidence supports the claim that women are less influential than men, the context of interaction occasionally and rather than all of the time modifies the situation (Carli, 2001). In certain circumstances, selling and buying automobiles, for example, in which the society regards the realm to be under the ownership men, the presence of women in that context is uncustomary. Since the majority of deals occur among men, women presence is considered to be bizarre and buyers show less resistance to them and they sell their commodities free from hardship. In contrast, men encounter difficulty to convince the buyers of the proper conditions of their commodity; therefore, they resort to some strategies such as swearing to persuade and convince buyers.

The direction of the present study investigating the attitudes of Iranian men and women teachers towards swearing reveals that most teachers use swearing so as to establish the true nature of their speeches and claims in communication. For many members of the society truth cannot be confirmed unless the speaker swears by God, holy men, or religious figures. Apparently Iranian tradition accentuates that oaths containing the title of deity are binding, but an oath that did not contain His name is not binding. Occasionally, the speaker is forced to resort to his/her children lives such as “I swear on my son/daughter life” or “I will
take my child life on it” as accepted swearing patterns by the society and as the substitution to the name of the God to prove his/her truthfulness and sincerity.

Keeping a promise is regarded as the indicator of personal status. For many members of the society keeping a promise to others is of prime importance. To promise children, friends, and others and failing to keep that promise is considered lying by them. Lies are condemned by the society and the liars are excluded from the social activities. To escape the blame of being a liar and getting the personality blurred, swearing is considered to be an efficient way for convincing others that being unable to keep a promise is unplanned and not intentional.

It seems that success and failure play an important role in Iranian male teachers’ status. As leadership roles have been occupied mainly by men (Eagly&Johannesen-Shmidt, 2001), it is not surprising that their social status or prestige is judged by achievements or fiascos. Men’s efforts ending in failure and feebleness lead them to swear or take an oath that the future will be filled by trophies and achievements. In fact the tension caused by failure proved to be reduced psychologically by using swearing or taking an oath. Lukucs (2008) states taking an oath is a religious act. It is taken when necessary to verify the truth or to corroborate a pledge for a future performance. Proving a claim, getting one’s right, defending the oppressed is one of the issues which happen in every one’s life. This goal can be achieved in a number of ways. Those seeking their rights sometimes strive to prove their viewpoints by using logic and reason and occasionally by bringing witness. Taking oath is one of these solutions to prove one’s claim and getting rights.

Trust is one of the basic functions in the creation and maintenance of communication which allows both participants to keep in touch and develop an atmosphere of confidence, friendship and approval. Trust is based on good, friendly, humane, and respectful interdependent human relationships and belief that neither partner will suffer betrayal, each able to depend on the other. Christopher (2004) states that if communication increases trust and functions as both coordination and trust-building, while both coordination and trust-building serve as important functions, trust-building aspects of communication dominate the coordination effects. Having this in mind, trust is one of important functions of language for building social relationships between people. Rotter (1967) defined trust as “the expectancy that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon” (p. 651). Christopher (2004) suggests that the more time that subjects have to communicate, the greater their cooperation; the more communications that are exchanged, the greater the cooperation. Therefore, it makes sense that communication can increase trust...
meaning the ability to communicate allows individuals to create mutual expectations of cooperation that are symbolic of trust.

Having this in mind, people in their daily communication resort to swearing or oaths to establish trust among them. Oaths or swearing are verbal or formal contracts formed by intent between one or more individuals as a way of clearly stating their intent to fulfill a promise or execute a specific action.

Applying swearing by 70 percent of the respondents in social interactions can be the indicator of low trust or mistrust among the society’s population. Society members have the assumption that they can affect others’ thoughts and ideas through the application of swearing or taking oaths particularly religious ones. Furthermore, using swearing or oath taking may be considered as an attempt made by swear or oath takers to manifest the truth of their utterances. Use of swearing as evidence can be confirmed with Grice’s (1975) view that the utterances should not lack adequate evidence or not to be false. Mutual trust is an important form of social behavior. On the other hand, trust is one of the basic functions in the creation and maintenance of communication which allows both participants to keep in touch and develop an atmosphere of confidence, friendship and approval.

References
Carli, L.L. (2006). Gender issues in workplace groups: Effects of gender and communication style on social influence. In M. Barrett and M. J. Davidson (Eds.), Gender and Communication at Work (pp. 69-83), Burlington: Ashgate.


**APENDICES**

**Appendix A**

*Questionnaire items in Persian*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>بخش الف</th>
<th>بله</th>
<th>خیر</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>فرض کنید قصد فروش مانندتان را دارید، ایا برای اثبات سالم و بی عبودان آن سوگند میخورید؟</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>فرض کنید که دوستان نسبت به شما یک گمان شده است که پشت سر یا حرف زده اید، ایا برای اثبات یک گمان خود قسم میخورید؟</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>فرض کنید که همسران در بعضی موارد به صنافت گفتار زن شک میکنند، ایا برای رفع ظن یا قسم میخورید؟</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>فرض کنید در محیط کاریتان منهم به یک نظامی شده اید، ایا برای اثبات قسم میخورید؟</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>فرض کنید در مدرسه شما را متمیز کنید، ایا برای رفع اثبات، قسم میخورید؟</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>فرض کنید دوستان شما را دوست کنید و شما تنها با دوست او باشید، ایا برای اثبات دوستی گفتارتان قسم میخورید؟</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>فرض کنید به گمی کسانی قبول خرد خوبی را به دیده و بوی فراموش کنید، ایا برای اثبات عمده، نیودن کاریتان قسم میخورید؟</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Iranian EFL Journal 278
### Appendix B

*The translated questionnaire items into English*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part A</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Imagine you want to sell your car, do you swear that the car is free from defections?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Imagine that your friend suspected you for backbiting, do you use swearing to prove your innocent?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Imagine that your spouse is suspicious of your words, do you swear for him/her to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Imagine that you have accused of irregularity in the workplace, do you use swearing to escape the blame?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Imagine that you have accused of remissness at your work, do you use swearing to escape the blame?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Imagine that a person invites you but you cannot accept it for a reason, do you swear for him/her to justify the rejection?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Imagine that you promised to buy something for a person but you forgot, do you swear for him that it was not intentionally?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Imagine your friend asks you to lend him some money but you do not have, do you swear for him that you do not have money?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Imagine that you have bought a book and found it was defective, do you swear for</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**بخش ب**

به نظر شما علت اصلی قسم خوردن چیست؟

Iranian EFL Journal 279
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Imagine that you overtake a car illegally and the police stop you, do you swear for the police that you have not done illegal action?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Imagine that you could not get into your work on time for a certain reason, do you use swearing to justify your claim?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Imagine that a person asks you to do something after his/her death, do you swear for him to perform his/her will?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Imagine that a person insulted you, do you swear to take revenge on him/her?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Imagine that a danger threatens a person, do you use swearing to make him/her believe your claim?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Imagine that you failed to achieve your goal, do you swear that you will compensate in the future?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part B**

What is the main reason for swearing?
Title

Investigating the Effect of the Amount of Familiarity with Web on Iranian EFL Students’ Source-Based Writing

Author

Mustafa Shahrokhi
National University of Arak, Iran

Biodata

Mustafa Shahrokhi, an EFL instructor and teacher educator for the last 7 years. He has taught at some universities as well as a number of private language academies and English schools and institutes. His research interests include spatial intelligence, IELTS studies, psychology of language learning, and writing skill.

Abstract

The World Wide Web becomes very popular recently and plays an influential role in English learning. By burgeoning role of source-based writing as partial fulfillment of TEFL courses and vast use of the Internet, lack of empirical studies to explore these areas is obvious. This study aimed to explore the effect of the amount of familiarity with the Web (Internet literacy) on students’ source-based writing while using the Internet sources. Moreover, correlation between source-based writing and independent writing tasks was calculated. Thirty five university students majoring English literature from Kurdistan University were required to compose a source-based writing using three hypertext resources. It was revealed that those who had had higher Internet literacy wrote better sourced-based writings. Also, the results revealed that students’ performances on source-based writing and independent writing were not related.

Keywords: Source-based writing, Internet literacy, Writing, Discourse synthesis

1. Introduction

Discourse synthesis refers to the process of integrating ideas and information from multiple resources to create essays or reports. Spivey (1984) defined it as a process in which readers/writers read multiple texts on a topic and synthesize them to create new texts. Moreover, in discourse synthesis, readers (writers) organize, select, and connect their ideas
from source texts and previous knowledge as they compose and integrate their own reports (Spivey, 1991).

In the information age, college students have more and more opportunities to search for information on the Internet. As Stapleton (2005) notes, using the World Wide Web has become an increasingly viable way to source information in academic writing. The internet and the Web provide students access to electronic resources online, which may be helpful for their writing.

It is believed that reading on the Web, using the selected information, and making meaning on texts out of the synthesized results will become modern people’s common ways of literacy practices in the near future. Moreover, in order to use the resources on the Web to aid their own language learning, learners have to identify their learning goals, search for information matching their goals, and discern relevant information in the vast amount of Web resources. Such a process is quite similar to the nature of source-based writing -- integrating relevant information from other specialists’ articles into one’s own article to support one’s own views (Spivey, 1989).

Successful academic writing involves, among other things, the ability to integrate information from previous research in relevant areas of study. Even the most original academic papers integrate facts, ideas, concepts, and theories from other sources by means of quotations, paraphrases, summaries, and brief references.

Technologies influence literacy practices in complex ways. The advent of new mediums for reading, such as the Internet, necessitates new research directions. Kern (2000) asserts: “Reading and writing with computers therefore adds layers of complexity to an already complex process” (p. 224).

If learners intend to use Web materials to fulfill their pedagogical needs, certain web literacy is needed. Thomas (1997) defines literacy on the Web as "the ability to find, evaluate, and use information." A number of researchers (including Hill 1999, Uemura 1999) agree that the skills of information access, location, analysis, and evaluation are basic requirements in terms of efficient learning on the Web. In other words, locating and finding relevant Web resources for the task are related to Internet search skills (Web literacy). Organization and synthesis of relevant information belong to learners' writing ability. To what extent learners successfully define their tasks determines the priorities of Internet resources available, and extracting relevant information depends on their reading ability and higher order cognitive abilities. However, the entire complex process still remains unexplored in the foreign language teaching/learning field.
It is, thus, worthwhile to examine how college students go through the process and what pedagogical implications such explorations may provide. However, there is not much done on source-based second language writing, based on our review of the literature. Moreover, hypertext reading and writing, and using electronic sources on the Web still remain unexplored in the foreign language learning/teaching areas. Using electronic sources on the Web is not explored while most of students and researchers, because of some limitations in finding sourcebooks, problems of searching among content of paper books, and lack of new and update materials and sources in this country, prefer to and do use of online articles, e-books, and on-line journals.

2. Review of the Related Literature

Studies which investigate the ways readers/writers compose new texts by selecting, organizing, and connecting ideas from source texts are discussed as follows.

Spivey and King (1989) reported the influence of reading models on writing, when composing from sources. The purpose of this study was to examine the differences in students’ performance on a report-writing task that required students to gather information from source texts. The study examined how the developmental patterns differed across three grade levels and how students of different reading abilities at those grade levels made use of sources to write their own informational reports. The study focused on the textual evidence of selecting, organizing, connecting, and the overall quality of the text. The participants were categorized into more skilled and less skilled readers. Participants were asked to write a report on the topic ‘rodeo’ –the special activities held in Texas at that time. Three encyclopedia articles on “rodeo” were given to students as reading models and their products about the report were analyzed to distinguish ideas they selected from the three source texts as well as content they added. The study results revealed that more skilled readers were more likely to include important ideas across the reading models into their compositions and made use of text structures to organize different ideas into the content of their compositions.

Campbell (1990) studied source-based writing for both native and non-native writers at college level. Twenty non-native speakers were categorized into less proficient nonnative speakers and more proficient nonnative speakers. Thirty participants in five composition classes were asked to write an essay in class within one hour on the topic “fraternities and/or sororities” by using concepts in a source text. The results showed that patterns associated with student groups and sections of composition. In the first paragraph of their compositions, non-native speakers used significantly more information from the source text than the native
speakers did. In the body paragraph, all the students used concepts from the background text as well as many of their own ideas. In the final paragraph, both native and non-native speakers used significantly more information from the source than in their body paragraphs. The result showed that copying concepts from the source text was the primary method for the university students in the study to write in-class compositions.

Perin et al. (2003) investigated the effect of variables such as text density, prior knowledge, and literacy level on composing an informational report using written sources. The researcher gathered students’ background information by means of a survey. Each participant received two high density and two low density texts in two different trials. The researcher divided students into two domains. In the first one, students were asked to write about health and in the other about business. In one trial, students were asked to write about a topic based on either high density text or low density text.

The results showed that the density of texts had no effect on productivity, use of source, reproductions, and accuracy of students’ performance. But, those who had higher general literacy skills wrote more in the high density condition. In the low density condition, there was no difference between high and low literacy groups. Again --in high density condition-- those who had more prior knowledge, represented information more accurately.

Woolfersberger (2008) studied four Chinese first language students whose English proficiency varied. He asked students to write an argumentative essay based on five sources. The results showed that personal factors such as background experience and interaction with the teacher and others within the writing context affect the complexity of tasks. Moreover, low L2 proficiency constrains the writing performance.

Other aspects of source-based writing had been investigated too. Nelson and Hayes (1988) investigated the way in which freshman and advanced writers search for information in a library. They found strategies and plans these two groups applied were completely different. Freshman students mostly had content-driven approach in which they searched for facts about the topic. In contrast, students who were advanced writers were more concerned about finding specific issues or angles of topic.

Jo Lewkowicz (1994) compared the writing of nonnative speaker students provided with background reading texts with that of students who had not been given the texts. The researcher concluded that factors such as students’ background knowledge affect the way in which they perform the task.

Writing from sources poses a number of potential stumbling blocks to L2 writers. The most overarching of these seems to be the need for a minimum level of L2 proficiency, which
is necessary to properly interact with source texts while reading and adequately comprehend their meaning.

In addition to a minimum level of L2 proficiency, reading and writing skills are also necessary. Reading skills allow a reader to interact with a text in order to construct meaning from it and use that meaning while planning for a written composition.

3. Method

3.1 Participants
An intact group was selected from two ‘essay writing’ courses at Kurdistan University. 60 junior English Literature students enrolled in these classes. My goal was to collect a complete set of analyzable data from 60 students. The sample of the study comprised of mixed gender students, their ages varied from 21 to 25, and the mean age of the participants was 22 years. For increasing the possibility of selecting a more homogeneous group of learners, a 1982 version of the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency was administered.

3.2 Instrumentation
Three topics for writing were introduced and participants were asked to choose one of them. Majority of students agreed on topic ‘disadvantages of smoking’. They were asked to write on a piece of paper anything which they knew about this topic. A World Wide Web questionnaire was administered in the two classes. The World Wide Web Experience Questionnaire (WWW Q) was adapted from Morrell, Mayhorn, and Bennett (2000) to gain a precise measure of Web experience. In order to analyze their writing competence, the last essays which they delivered to their teacher were collected too.

Students used the Web site of their university to surf the Internet and find three articles about disadvantages of smoking. Two weeks later they had to deliver a source-based writing. Students' articles were marked by four independent raters. Following the ESL composition profile of J. D. Brown (1991), rating was assigned for six criteria: content, organization, discourse, vocabulary, syntax, and mechanics. As we wanted to control reading comprehension of participants, reading section of the Michigan test was applied as a criterion for checking reading comprehension. In order to have a homogeneous group of participants, descriptive statistics of reading comprehension scores, writing scores, and proficiency test scores were calculated. For the three groups of scores which we had, students with scores in range of one standard deviation above and below the mean were chosen for the rest of the study.
Based on participants’ scores on WWW questionnaire, they were divided into two groups. A group with higher level of familiarity with the Web, and another group which participants had lower Internet literacy.

**4. Results and discussion**

**4.1 Data analysis**

By analyzing the data, interesting results were obtained. The value of correlation between WWW questionnaire scores and source-based writing was 0.619 and significant.

As it was mentioned before, the main goal of this research is to see any possible relation between the amount of familiarity with the Web and writing from sources. So, in order to calculate the related statistical procedures, the mean of T-scores for the groups’ performance on source-based writings was required to be compared.

Group one which its participants had a higher Internet literacy (indicated with ‘1’ in the ‘Internet-literacy’ variable) displays a somewhat higher mean score for source-based writing than group two (5.29 versus 3.94). Because the probability figure was smaller than 0.05, the difference can be considered true. As we wanted to know which group performed better, the means of the two groups on source-based writing were compared and revealed that the group with higher Internet literacy performed better.

**4.2 Discussion**

For the present study, we tested a question that dealt with whether Internet literacy would be associated with source-based writing while students use Web pages as sources. Further, those who perform better in source-based writing were good in independent writing or not.

For this study, the research question is as followed: does students’ previous Web experience have an impact on their source-based writing performance? Further, a null hypothesis was considered. In order to answer this question, participants were divided into two groups. The criterion for grouping was their familiarity with the Web. Then, their source-based writings were compared by means of a T-test. As the critical value of t for degree of freedom of 32 is about 2 and our obtained t was 4.18, the null hypothesis is rejected. The value of reported probability figure (0.000) reveals that the possibility of obtaining this result by chance is so trifling. The Strong value of t confirms that writing performance of two groups is different. So far, it became clear that the null hypothesis that students’ previous Web experience has no impact on their source-based writing performance is not acceptable.
As the performance of the two groups was different, the question is which group performed better. In order to answer to this question, the means of each group’s scores on source-based writing were calculated. The mean of the group with higher Internet literacy was 5.29 while for the other group was 3.94. So, participants with the higher level of familiarity with Web performed better in source-based writing.

The correlation between source-based writing and independent writing was calculated. The results of calculations revealed no significant correlation between them. The correlation value of 0.108 shows that they are not similar processes and we cannot claim students who perform well on independent writing are certainly good source-based writers too. Composing from sources is a kind of interplay between what sources offer writers and what writers, drawing upon their knowledge can do to use and transform as they construct their own meaning. As participants’ amount of familiarity with the topic was controlled, this difference seems to be created by the sources. And as sources were selected by the participants from the Web, those who had had more familiarity with the Web could find better sources and use them in their own writings. Cumming et al (2006) found that there were significant differences at the lexical, syntactic, rhetorical, and pragmatic levels of discourse in the written compositions produced by examinees in the independent essay and in the prototype integrated tasks (involving writing in response to source reading or listening passages).

Furthermore, the correlation between Web experiences and source-based writings was 0.61. Perhaps Web experience is an indicator of students’ writing performance in citing electronic sources to write formal papers. It indicates that more experiences the students have in using hypertextual sources, more familiar they are with the possible formats and contents on the Web, which might contribute to find and select better sources and to write better articles.

5. Conclusion
This study sought to determine whether students who had high Internet literacy produced writings that systematically differed—for better or for worse—from those written by students who had lower Internet literacy. Taken as a whole, the results indicate that Internet literacy affects source-based writing when students use the Web pages as sources. So, it can be concluded that training students with some Web surfing strategies may help them to write better source-based articles.
It also sought to investigate whether the source-based articles had any relation with the independent writings. Lack of significant correlation between participants’ independent writing and source-based writing revealed that performance of students was not similar in these two types of writing tasks. It can be concluded that training English students about just independent writing might not be enough to flourish academic writers. Maybe some courses for practicing source-based writing are useful in academic context.

References


Title

Collocation learning: Direct or indirect written corrective feedback?

Author

Farzaneh Solgi (M.A)
Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran

Biodata

Farzaneh Solgi, holds an M.A. in TEFL from Alzahra University and has been an English language teacher in various Iranian English language institutes for 10 years, and now is an instructor at Azad University. Her fields of interest are teaching vocabulary, CALL, and sociolinguistics.

Abstract

Knowing collocations is one of the most important parts of knowing a word. Researchers (Noonan & Duncan, 2005; Truscott, 2007) believe that using collocations is an evidence of native-like speaking and writing and leads to fluency in language use. Knowing collocations also reduces learners’ difficulty while reading and listening. Providing feedback is a factor that helps learners to be aware of their progress during their learning. It can be used in a variety of forms in different classes. This study tries to compare the role of direct and indirect feedback in promoting English collocations of intermediate students of Alzahra University in Iran. The results obtained revealed that indirect feedback is a more effective tool than direct feedback in improving students’ collocational knowledge both in short and long term.

Keywords: Collocation, Direct feedback, Indirect feedback

1. Introduction

Richards and Renandya (2002) consider vocabulary knowledge as an important component of language proficiency. They claim that without a vast repertoire of vocabulary including collocations, second language learners cannot often achieve their complete potential. Carter(2001) states that "knowing a word involves knowing its spoken and written contexts of use; its patterns with words of related meaning as well as with its collocational patterns; its syntactic pragmatic and discoursal patterns" (p. 43). In the words of Shokouhi and Mirsalari(2010):“collocation is an expression consisting of
two or more words that correspond to some conventional way of saying things” (p. 2). Many learners are interested in learning collocations because as Shin and Nation (2007) state, “it helps learners to develop their fluency and native-like selector” (p. 2). Fahim and Vaezi (2011) note that lack of collocational knowledge makes learners sound odd and not competent in using language.

After presentation of new collocations, most often teachers expect an immediate mastery on the students’ part, which is not feasible considering the complex cognitive processes at work (Baleghizadeh&Dadashi, 2010). Wang (2005, cited in Jafarpour&Sharifi, 2011) also suggested nine sources of mis-collocations: “transliteration, language switch, coinage, approximation of L2 language system, over-generalization, use of synonym, ignorance of rule restrictions, use of de-lexicalized verbs and verification” (p. 6). Instructors can help their learners by providing them with constructive feedback that will test their hypotheses about new collocations. For example, learners may tend to look for one-to-one word-meaning correspondence and then discover that they get into a lot of trouble. To solve this problem, teachers are always in doubt whether they should correct students’ errors, and if so, what kind feedback will be the most effective.

Having taught English at institutes for several years, the researcher many times saw learners making those collocational errors which had been corrected in their previous written work. She thought that students did not pay attention to her corrective feedbacks. Therefore, she decided that this kind of feedback would not work. The researcher attempted to increase students’ contribution in correction because when everything was explicitly corrected, students would take it for granted and did not ponder over them. Therefore, she concluded that instead of providing them with correct forms we should push them to correct and produce. Ellis (2009) claims that “when the exact location of error is not indicated to the learners, they will engage in deeper processing and this mode of indirect feedback is more effective than when the teacher shows the exact location of error” (p. 99). Therefore, the researcher wondered if the learners can improve their collocational knowledge by implicit correcting and achieve discovery learning.

The significance of this study can be justified on the grounds that the importance of collocations, one of the challenging aspects of vocabulary learning, in achieving communicative competence and general language proficiency has been widely acknowledged (e.g. Guenette, 2007; Lewis, 2001; Nesselhauf, 2003; Noonan & Duncan, 2005; Truscott, 2007). There are also many studies (Bitchener et. al., 2005; Rollinson,
showing the positive effect of corrective feedback on different aspects of language, however, few studies have investigated the role of written corrective feedback on the use of vocabulary and collocations, so there appears to be a dearth of research about it.

Since using collocations is an evidence of native-like speaking and writing and leads to fluency in language use and also they are not dependent on the context in which they are used, it seems to be a good subject to receive correction. The results of the present study may offer new information to understand the effect of direct (identifying both the error and the target form) and indirect (indication of an error by underlining or circling the error or providing an error code, etc.) written corrective feedback on one of the important facets of vocabulary learning, i.e. collocation, which receives insufficient attention in the Iranian context both by teachers and learners.

2. Review of the Literature
One of the most difficult parts of vocabulary learning is learning collocations. A major type of lexical errors found in EFL learners’ speaking and writing is related to their collocational knowledge (Jing, 2008). Zinkgraf (2008) believes that collocations are one of the most difficult aspects of foreign and second language to acquire. There has always been a debate among teachers and researchers about correcting learners’ collocation errors. In most EFL/ESL settings the question has more to do with how to provide error correction rather than whether or not to give feedback (Brown, 2001). Comparison the direct and indirect feedback has been a heated subject of discussion in many researches. Lee (2004) asserted error correction can be operationalized in terms of direct and indirect correction. In direct correction the instructor provides the correct forms in students’ faulty sentences. Ellis (2009) refers to one advantage of direct feedback. He believes direct feedback is an explicit guidance that clearly helps learners to correct their errors. This is really pleasant for learners when they cannot correct errors by themselves. He also refers to a disadvantage of direct feedback by saying that it does not involve learners much in the processing and discovery learning and thus, it may help learners to correct their mistakes at that time but it does not contribute to long term learning. It also would cause them to become bored with every error on a paper (Ferris, 1995; Hendrickson, 1978). In indirect feedback, the teacher indicates that there is an error but s/he does not actually correct it. Indirect feedback has different modes such as
underlining the errors, placing a cross in the margin by the line in which error has occurred; this is used when the teacher decides not to show the exact place of an error. Ellis (2009) claims that when the exact location of error is not indicated to the learners, they will engage in deeper processing and this mode of indirect feedback is more effective than when the teacher shows the exact location of error. However, these hypotheses could not yet be confirmed since results from studies exploring the relative effectiveness of direct and indirect corrective feedback (e.g. Chandler, 2003; Ferris et al., 2000; Frantzen, 1995; Lalande, 1982; Rob et al., 1986) are inconclusive.

There is research evidence suggesting that indirect error feedback is more helpful for students’ long-term retention than direct error feedback (Ferris, 2003; Fratzen, 1995). For example, Chandler (2003) examined two ESL undergraduate groups receiving either direct or indirect error feedback during a 14-week semester. The results indicated that indirect error feedback with student self-editing contributes to accuracy more than direct error feedback.

Similarly, Lalande (1982) compared two groups: one with direct feedback and the other with indirect feedback using correction codes over a semester. It was found that the group which had received indirect coded error feedback had more accuracy in writing by the end of the semester. Lee (1997) compared EFL college students’ writing in Hong-Kong and found that students who received indirect feedback performed better than the group with no feedback in self-editing. According to Ferris et al (1997), students who primarily received indirect error feedback make fewer errors in subsequent writings than the students who received mostly direct feedback.

On the other hand, research has revealed that students express preferences for overt correction; that is, they expect their teachers to point out and correct their errors. A growing body of research has accounted for students’ preferences about and their views on the utility and instructional value of instructor direct feedback. Students, regardless of cultural origin, appear to share certain beliefs about the functions of formal education. As Schultz (2001) noted, they see the teacher as an expert “knower” whose role is to explain and provide feedback explicitly. Chandler (2003) found that direct corrective feedback resulted in the largest accuracy gains, not only in revisions but also in subsequent writing. Lalande (1982), who agrees with explicit error feedback, argued that students need detailed feedback; otherwise, they may be misled by implicit and selective error feedback because students may mistakenly think that the rest of their writing is
completely right. Frantzen (1995) and Rob et al. (1986) on the other hand, found that direct and indirect corrective feedback were equally effective.

Guenette (2007) believes in research design, population do not have the same level of proficiency in most studies and, as a result, we do not know whether the effects or non-effects of feedback are related to the learners’ proficiency or the feedback itself. Guenette (2007) also refers to some studies and mentions that many studies were carried out during a short period of time. Although feedback in these studies had positive effect on the improvement of accuracy, we cannot generalize them to development of accuracy over time. She believes some variables that are related to the procedures section of studies are not attributable to the results of many studies, that is, when we compare different types of feedback, other parameters such as teacher, the topic of writing, and activities must remain constant, but as Guenette showed, this is not true about all studies. Regarding Guenette’s points, in the present study the English language proficiency level of the learners was homogenized, their long-term as well as short-term retention was checked, and the parameters such as teacher, the topic (collocation), and activities remained constant.

Although, there are many studies about learning collocations and the effects of different types of feedback on different skills of language, separately, it appears that there are not enough studies considering the effect of direct and indirect feedback on learning collocations of intermediate level learners in both short and long-term retention. Thus, the present study aims to investigate the effects of two types of direct and indirect feedback on Iranian intermediate learners’ collocation learning in short and long term.

Due to the fact that earlier researches do not provide us with conclusive evidence on the question which corrective feedback should be provided, in this research it is tried to compare direct and indirect corrective feedback in short-term and long-term retention. In fact, the study purported to answer the following questions:

1. Is there any difference between direct and indirect written corrective feedback on collocation learning of intermediate proficiency level learners?
2. Is there any significant difference between short-term and long-term retention of collocations through providing direct and indirect written corrective feedback?

3. Methodology
3.1. Participants

The Participants of the present study were initially 80 students at Alzahra University, Iran. Participants were female students, ranging in age from 18-24. They were undergraduate students from different majors except English. Thus, their educational background was not the same. So, in order to homogenize them, all participants were given a Preliminary English Test (PET). Students with very high and low proficiency level were eliminated from the study. As a result, 60 students remained, who constituted the participants of this study and were randomly assigned to two groups of direct and indirect corrective feedback.

3.2. Instruments

For homogeneity of learners and dividing them into two groups of intermediate language proficiency level, a PET test (2010) was conducted. To see whether or not the students had any prior knowledge of the 60 collocations selected from Oxford Collocations Dictionary, a teacher-made pre-test was used. It was in fill-in-the blanks format. The results revealed that 48 collocations were not familiar to students. After conducting the treatment, both groups were given a post-test including a collocation test made up of 30 collocations randomly selected from those taught during the treatment, to check their short-term retention (See Appendix). The test content was validated by a TEFL specialist. For measuring the effect of passing time on retention of the collocation items, the same above mentioned test as a delayed post-test was used two weeks (Mackey & Gass, 2005) later.

3.3. Procedure

First of all, the reading, writing and listening parts of a PET test (2010) were administered. Then 60 out of 80 learners were selected based on the results of the PET test: 60 learners whose scores were between one standard deviation above and below the mean were classified as intermediate language proficient ones, and the other twenty learners whose scores were one standard deviation above or below the mean were classified as high and low language proficient ones. It means 20 participants were excluded from the test. Then the intermediate learners were randomly assigned into two groups in which they were supposed to learn target collocation and be tested through two different ways of direct and indirect corrective feedback. All of the participants took the pretest including 60 collocations selected from Oxford Collocations Dictionary. The Persian (native language of learners) meaning of these collocations were given to the learners and they were asked to write their English collocations in the sentences given.
At the end of this test, 48 collocations not known by any group were chosen. The target collocations were taught in six sessions; each time 8 new collocations were introduced based on Gairns and Redman’s (2006) suggestion for presenting 8 new items each time. In each session, both groups were supposed to learn new collocations through receiving their meaning in Persian (their native language) in addition to different English sentences that these collocations were used in. The learners of both groups were asked to provide sentences using the collocations in written form. Then, they submitted their papers to the teacher. In direct feedback group the teacher underlined the collocational errors and wrote the correct form of them and gave the papers back to the students. In indirect feedback group after underlining their collocational errors, the teacher gave students’ papers back to them. Students were asked to correct their errors at home and bring it next session. Two days after receiving the treatment a test made up of 30 fill-in-the-blank sentences was administrated to both groups as the immediate post-test. The Persian meaning of the collocations needed for completing sentences were provided in parenthesis. In scoring phase each correct answer had one point. After two weeks (Mackey & Gass, 2005), the same test was administered again as a delayed post-test to check the retention of the target collocations (See Appendix).

4. Results

The normality of distribution of the scores of PET test was checked through one K-S test. The results demonstrated the scores of PET had a normal distribution (\(Z = .943, p = .531\)). The descriptive statistics of two types of corrective feedback in post-test is provided in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-test, direct</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19.33</td>
<td>3.100</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test, indirect</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25.03</td>
<td>2.748</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparing post-tests of both groups, it was found that the mean of direct feedback group was 19.33, and that of indirect feedback was 25.03 which show the difference. To check the degree of this difference, an independent samples t-test was used.
The results of Table 2 indicated that the mean difference between the direct and indirect feedback groups was significant ($t_{58} = 7.537, p < .05$). There is, in fact, a mean difference of 5.700 points between the means of the two groups. It shows that indirect feedback group outperformed direct feedback one in the post-test.

For answering the second research question, the descriptive statistics of direct and indirect feedback groups in delayed post-test is provided in Table 3.

Based on Table 3, the mean of direct feedback group in delayed post-test was 17.20, and that of indirect one was 21.37, which shows the difference of means between two groups. For comparing the degree of these scores’ difference an independent samples t-test was conducted.

The results of Table 2 indicated that the mean difference between the direct and indirect feedback groups was significant ($t_{58} = 7.537, p < .05$). There is, in fact, a mean difference of 5.700 points between the means of the two groups. It shows that indirect feedback group outperformed direct feedback one in the post-test.

For answering the second research question, the descriptive statistics of direct and indirect feedback groups in delayed post-test is provided in Table 3.

Based on Table 3, the mean of direct feedback group in delayed post-test was 17.20, and that of indirect one was 21.37, which shows the difference of means between two groups. For comparing the degree of these scores’ difference an independent samples t-test was conducted.
The results of the t-test show statistically significant differences ($t_{58} = 6.101, p<0.05$) between direct and indirect feedback groups with regard to the delayed post-test scores. It means that indirect feedback group had a better performance than direct feedback one.

5. Discussion

Some of the findings of this study are similar to those of the previous ones (Moehkardi, 2002; Nesselhauf, 2003; Pishghadam et. al., 2011; Shokouhi & Mirsalar, 2010; Wei, 1999; Ying, 2009) in that they, like the present study, put emphasis on improving learners’ knowledge of collocations for communicating easily and fluently. But the main difference of the present study with the above mentioned studies is that they emphasized improving learners’ knowledge of collocations using various methods other than using feedback. For example, in the study conducted by Pishghadam et. al. (2011), form-focused and meaning-focused instructions were used to improve learners’ collocational knowledge.

The findings of the study revealed that teaching new collocations through indirect feedback resulted in better short and long-term learning than direct feedback. This result is in line with that of Chandler (2003), Ellis (2009), Ferris (1995), Ferris (2003), Ferris et al. (1997), Fratzen (1995), Hendrickson (1978), Lalande (1982), and Lee (1997). In their studies the learners who benefited from indirect corrective feedback had improvement in their vocabulary knowledge. Also this finding was in line with Allwright (1975), Hendrickson (1978) and Vigil and Oller (1976) who proposed that pushing learners in their output, rather than providing them with correct forms, could benefit their interlanguage development. It confirmed the results of Ferris (1995) and Lalande (1982) who stated that students benefit more from indirect corrective feedback because they have to engage in a more profound form of language processing as they are self-editing their output.

But the finding of the present study was contradictory with the findings of Hyland (2003) who showed that indirect corrective feedback causes misinterpretation and misunderstanding. However, it should be noted that in the present study indirect feedback did not lead to these problems may be because learners knew that they were expected to write only collocations. On the other hand, the Persian equivalents of what students were expected to write were given to them in parentheses. Another reason for
this finding, as Zarei and Mousavi (2012) state, may be due to the educational system of our country. In our educational system, students often receive direct feedback from their teacher; indirect feedback is something new in our educational system. This type of feedback may encourage students to search new materials and words on the net and different sources and engage them more in the learning process. Also this result is in contrast with Bitchener’s (2008) finding, which revealed that students who received direct feedback performed better than the control group. One possible reason for such a difference may be partially due to the fact that in the present study direct feedback was compared with another type of feedback (indirect), and it was revealed that it was less effective than indirect feedback. But in Bitchener’s study direct feedback was not compared with any other kind of feedback and students in the direct feedback group were compared with a control group. Also it was in contrast with the explanation Chandler (2003) gave for her findings. She proposed while students who received direct corrective feedback could instantly internalize the correct form, students who revised their texts based on indirect error correction were unable to do so, since they did not know whether their own hypothesized correction was indeed accurate.

Unlike the study which was conducted by Frantzen (1995) and showed that there is no significant difference between different types of feedback, the results of the present study revealed that there are significant differences among different types of feedback. It is worthy to note that Frantzen’s study was on writing while the present study was on collocations, and this may be the reason for this difference. Another possible reason may be due to learners’ different cultural background. In Frantzen study, participants were Spanish, but in the present study, participants were Iranian.

Another finding of this study was that learners of both groups in post-test had a better performance than delayed post-test. This amount of forgetting was in line with Baddeley (1990, cited in Schmitt, 2008) who stated forgetting occurs within a short time after the learning phase. Schmitt (2008) has also emphasized that learning is a cyclical process in which more involvement with new items would lead to better mastery of them. Moreover, he has pointed that partially learned items would probably be forgotten if the learner failed to fix them in the mind by deliberate repeated exposure and principled recycling. Therefore, the finding that the scores were decreased in delayed post-test was because of natural forgetting that resulted from not recycling the collocations during the interval between the two tests. The results of this research question also confirmed
Schmitt et al.’s (2001) statement that ignoring recycling would cause forgetting many partially-known items and wasting all the efforts already put into learning them. Compared with most of the above mentioned studies which were carried out in ESL setting, the present study was conducted in an EFL context and perhaps this is what makes this study different from other studies. The above mentioned conflicting areas are indicative of the need for further research.

6. Conclusion

The research findings indicated that indirect feedback, in comparison to direct one, contributed considerably to the improvement of students’ collocational knowledge both in short and long term. The results were in consistency with numerous researches (Allwright, 1975; Chandler, 2003; Ellis, 2009; Ferris, 1995; Ferris, 2003; Ferris et al., 1997; Fratzen, 1995; Hendrickson, 1978; Lalande, 1982; Lee, 1997; Vigil and Oller, 1976).

As teacher feedback is believed to be the major and vital component of the classroom events in EFL context and is favored by most Iranian students, the outcome of this study does not devalue teacher feedback but suggests its importance and value more when it comes in the form of indirect feedback along with students’ contribution. Therefore, it is fruitful to design additional classroom activities in which students engage themselves in the process of revision and self-correction. This is possible if teachers find efficient ways of correction and students receive indirect corrective feedback.

The findings of the present study can have implications for textbooks and syllabus designers. By knowing the benefits of indirect feedback in learning and teaching collocations, textbooks and syllabus designers can prepare textbooks and exercises in which teachers can provide indirect feedback for students. In this way learners have to search collocations from different sources such as dictionaries, net, and the other sources. As a result, learner-centered approach and discovery learning will be improved in our educational system.

References


Steendam, V. E., Rijluiarsdam, G., sercu, L., and Bergh, V. H. (2010). The effect of instruction type and dyadic or individual emulation on the quality of higher-order peer feedback in EFL. Learning and Instruction, 20, 316-327.


**Appendix**

**Post-test and delayed post-test**

**Write the correct collocations.**

1. Yesterday, Sara and I went to shopping. She bought some…………………. (لباس های مارک دار)
2. Linda is very talkative but her sister is a……………………………………… (دختر کم حرف)
3. What is the best way to stop a…………………………………………………? (خون دماغ)
4. I bought this jacket for…………………………………………………………… (تقربیا مفت)
5. Fasten your………………………………………………………………………… (کمرند ابستیلی)
6. Sorry, I………………………………………………………………………………. (پاک یادم رفته)

Iranian EFL Journal 303
7. Why doesn’t she……………………………………………………………... (طلاق گشفتی)?
8. Their predictions…………………………………………………………………… (غلط از آب دارد)
9. He believes the black color…………………………………………………….. (شعون نداشتن)
10. They were both………………………………………………….. (در خواب عمیق)
in their rooms.
11. Steve and Iris want to………………………………………………………. (چه دار شوند)
12. The operation has a………………………………………………………... (احتمال پنجم پنجا)
of success.
13. What is the…………………………………………………………..... (سرعت مجاز)
on your street?
14. Who is in the……………………………………………………………..... (تفظیل أول)
15. I give you my……………………………………………………………... (قول شرف)
16. He killed his friend………………………………………………………….. (در کمال خونسردی)
17. She talked for a…………………………………………………………... (یک ساعت تمام)
18. We talked them down and……………………………………………... (معامله رو جوش دادیم)
19. I have to……………………………………………………………..….... (سوا کردن لباس ها)
Can you help?
20. The meal was……………………………………………………………..... (کلام مهم)
21. Dr. Johnson is on………………………………………………………….. (کلاهک شب)
22. He had survived a…………………………………………………………... (سقوط هواپیما)
23. She was treated as a/n…………………………………………………..... (همان ورود)
24. Her dream of being a film star…………………………………………... (به حقیقت پیوست)
25. Please type or write in……………………………………………………... (بیان خط در میان)
26. You can telephone to…………………………………………………………... (وقت گیری)
27. I can’t be expected to……………………………………………………...... (معجزه کردن)
28. The dog was more than…………………………………………………..... (پوست و استخوان)
29. What……………………………………………………………………........ (گروه خونی)
are you?
30. You told me………………………………………………………………........... (یک مشت دروغ)
Title

Translation of Cognitive Schemata in Children Storybooks According to Cognitive Linguistics

Authors

Bijan Bateni (M.A)
Department of English, Quchan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Quchan, Iran

Behnaz Ebdali Takallu (M.A)
Department of English, Quchan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Quchan, Iran

Sharareh Sarsarabi (Ph.D)
Department of English, Quchan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Quchan, Iran

Biodata

Bijan Bateni, academic member of English Department, Islamic Azad University-Quchan, Iran. His research interest is literature.

Behnaz Ebdali Takallu, M.A student of English Translation Studies in Department of English, Quchan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Quchan, Iran. Her interest is translation.

Sharareh Sarsarabi, Ph. D. in Linguistics and teaching English in Islamic Azad University, Quchan Branch, Quchan, Iran.

Abstract

In the current research, the researcher has selected forty eight children in different age groups. The data corpus was composed of five English storybooks and two translations for each of them which had different cognitive comprehensibility depending on the equivalents that translators had chosen for translating keywords and phrases of the source texts. Having described the data, the researcher did two parallel experiments on 48 children from 8 to 12. The results of this enquiry show that in Iran due to the fact that translators of children literature have not access to a set of guidelines for this task, no attention has been paid to the level of understanding of the children who are the target reader of these translated texts. Therefore, according to the analyses done on the children comprehension of different translations of the same source books, came to the conclusion that the books translated for children do not match their age groups. The translators should highly put their emphasis on the equivalents they would choose for the source
keywords in order to trigger the same cognitive schemata of the contents to the target children.

**Keywords:** Cognitive Schema (pl. Schemata), Cognitive Linguistics, Cognitive Semantics

1. **Introduction**

We deal with stories every day and everywhere. They are the oldest and the most natural forms of sense making (Jonassen, Strobe, and Gottdenker, 2005, p.2). They are such powerful tools that enable us to gain knowledge, understand phenomena, and interact with the people around us. Stories can create enormous impacts on children. They can enhance the quality of concepts children possess. In turn, these concepts and patterns of thought enhance their level of interpreting, predicting and understanding stories. Researchers introduce difficulties children may encounter in understanding new concepts, called “schemata”, and the problems translators may have facing them. A schema is a cognitive frame or concept that helps us organize and interpret information. It allows us to take shortcuts in interpreting a vast amount of data by means of information that confirms our pre-existing beliefs; meanwhile, they can contribute to stereotypes and make it difficult to retain new information that does not conform to our pre-established schemata (Cherry, n.d.).

Schema as a basic concept applied first by British psychologist Fredric Bartlett (1886-1969) as a part of his learning theory, which suggested that, our understanding of the world is formed by a network of abstract mental structures (Cherry, n.d.).

Anonymous (2010) claimed that current understanding of child development has been strongly influenced by Jean Piaget (1896-1980), the psychologist whose theories of cognitive development have enhanced our understanding of children’s learning as a process of active construction of knowledge. Piaget proposed child as an architect of his own understanding, implying a reactive role for teachers and adults in the learning process. He described learning as a kind of assimilation of mental schemata; that is, a progress occurring through the maturation of the nervous system and also through experiences children gain by actively experiencing their own environments.

The term "schema" was popularized through the works of Piaget. According to his *stage theory of cognitive development*, children go through a series of stages of intellectual development as experiences happen. Through these stages, new information is presented and then old schemata are changed or modified (Flavell, P.H.Miller and S.A.Miller, 1985).
Children are not just growing physically during their early childhood; they are also developing new cognitive abilities, associated with memory, reasoning, problem solving and thinking improvement, as they mature, so it would be impossible to neglect the importance of these cognitive phenomena in the processes related to children’s psychological behaviours (Cherry, n.d.). Experience assumes to be a critical factor in the development of the story schema.

Yule (2006) believed that as a way of analyzing cognition, one can look at language structure for clues.

2. Review of the Related Literature

Cognitive linguistics is a relatively new school of linguistics, and one of the most innovative and exciting approaches to the study of language and thought that has emerged within the modern field of interdisciplinary study known as cognitive science (Evans and Green, p.5).

Language provides humans a window into a cognitive function. It provides insights into the organization of human’s thoughts and ideas. The principal way in which, cognitive linguistics differ from other approaches is that language is considered to reflect fundamental features of the human mind (Evans and Green, 2006). Cognitive science deals with the operations of human mind and the fact that how it gets the information from the outside world through the five senses, compares them with the previous data and finally categorizes and stores them in memory (Sharifi and Mayamei, 2012, p.1).

As part of cognitive linguistics, Taylor (2006) stated, cognitive semantics is also conceptualist that means it focuses on meaning as a mental entity. In this regard, the study of metaphor and schema is of considerable importance because their concepts are the exact concern of cognitive linguistics. Safavi (2004) explained that schema is the basis of metaphor, forming a deeper cognitive structure and it provides us a relationship between physical experiences and more complex cognitive domains. The prime slogan for cognitive semantics is: meanings are in the head. A principle belief of cognitive semantics is that the structures in our heads that are holding the meanings of words are of the same nature as those that are created when we perceive—when we see, hear, touch, different things (Gardenfors, 2007).

In cognitive semantics, meaning is understood as a cognitive phenomenon; thus, meaning in cognitive linguistics is taken to correspond to dynamic, context-sensitive cognitive construal (Fischer, 2010, p.45).
Human behaviour is an interesting area of study for many researchers. The concept of schema as a way of enhancing our understanding of children’s activities and behaviour, for example, has always been under great interest.

“Schemata (pl. of schema) are ‘patterns’ of actions that children demonstrate when they are exploring the world and trying to find out how things work. Children may try out the same actions on a variety of different objects” (Whalley, 2007, p.132).

The term “schema” originates from the Greek root word σχένα (scheen), which is defined as “to have or to shape” (Young, 1990). Sims & Lorenzi (1992) believed that cognitive schema is the organization of knowledge about a particular concept.

3. Statement of the Problem

Regarding cognitive differences in concepts and formal instruments of their representations in English and Persian, there are some difficulties in translating English texts into Persian. In English, there are some concepts and linguistic forms that are special to English people, so translating these entities into Persian will be difficult or maybe impractical. This shows itself especially in semantic and cognitive representations of concepts in the texts belonging to the two languages.

In this study, children stories are analyzed according to their cognitive tangibility to be simple enough for their low-age audience of culturally different nations. The concepts and schemata in a story should be clear and appropriate for the child’s age so that s/he can have a good understanding of the whole story. Therefore, a translator should pay attention to the concepts, cognitive schemata, and linguistic forms at the same time if s/he decides to translate a story from English into Persian. The main reason is that through reading stories, children may shape or trigger some schemas in their minds. They would link what they have just encountered to the schemas they have had, so translators of children’s storybooks should be careful during translation of the linguistic forms. If they fail to do so correctly, children will be confused. The main point is that human’s cognitions manifest themselves through different entities from which linguistic forms are the most important, at least in the materials translators deal with. It is believed that humans’ understanding of language is related to different levels of cognitive abilities and different forms with different levels of cognitive complexity, take different measures of time and effort to be understood by the addressee. Therefore, a translator who wants to change the linguistic forms from one language to another must consider these cognitive complexities in choosing the most appropriate
equivalence for the forms of the source language depending on the cognitive abilities of his or her addresseees.

4. Research Hypotheses

In this study, the researcher posed two null hypotheses. They are as following:

1. It is proposed that children's age as a correlating factor affecting their overall cognitive abilities, has a significant effect on their level of perception and understanding of the texts they read.
2. It is proposed that different levels of cognitive comprehensibility in different translations, can affect children’s perception reading these translations.

5. Method

5.1 Participants

Our participants were forty-eight Persian-speaking eight to twelve-year-old children including 24 girls and 24 boys with nearly the same social class to control some probable affective factors.

Table 1. Classification of the Participants into the Experiment Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of the participants</th>
<th>Group 1.A</th>
<th>Group 1.B</th>
<th>Group 2.A</th>
<th>Group 2.B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>48 children (8–12)</td>
<td>12 children (8–10) (6 girls and 6 boys)</td>
<td>12 children (8–10) (6 girls and 6 boys)</td>
<td>12 children (10–12) (6 girls and 6 boys)</td>
<td>12 children (10–12) (6 girls and 6 boys)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2 Corpus of the Study

The whole corpus used in this research, was composed of ten translations of five English storybooks, with three characteristics simultaneously: aging level (for 8 to 12 year-old children), having two different translations with two different levels of cognitive comprehensibility, and having translated from exactly the same source texts.

Table 2. Classification of the Different Translations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story Book One</th>
<th>Translation one (T.1.a)</th>
<th>Translation two (T.1.b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Giving Tree</td>
<td>درخت بخت‌شه</td>
<td>درخت بخت‌شه</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>سیما مجیدزاده</td>
<td>علی اکبر جعفرزاده</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Book Two</td>
<td>Translation one (T.2.a)</td>
<td>Translation two (T.2.b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Giraffe and a Half</td>
<td>یه زرافه ونم</td>
<td>یه زرافه ونم</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>طوبي بکانی</td>
<td>سیما مجیدزاده</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Story Book Three</td>
<td>Translation one (T.3.a)</td>
<td>Translation two (T.3.b)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Procedure

The researcher divided translations of the stories into two groups, namely a and b, so that she had 10 translations of 5 English stories and these translations were labelled T.1.a, T.1.b, T.2.a, T.2.b, T.3.a, T.3.b, T.4.a, T.4.b, T.5.a, T.5.b. It should be mentioned that in translations that are named (a), easier equivalents were used than the translations named (b). The children were also divided into two groups, according to their age, having 24 children (12 boys and 12 girls) between 8 and 10 years old and 24 children (12 boys and 12 girls) between 10 and 12 years old. After that, each of the two groups of children were divided into two groups with 12 members (6 boys and 6 girls), so that we finally had four groups of children, two of them between 8 and 10 and two of them between 10 and 12. These four groups were labelled Group.1.A (For group A of the children between 8 and 10), Group1.B (For group B of the children between 8 and 10), Group.2.A (For group A of the children between 10 and 12), and Group.2.B (For group B of the children between 10 and 12).

Each of the children in the four groups, were asked to read five stories in the way that children in group 1.A read translations T.1.a, T.2.a, T.3.a, T.4.a, and T.5.a, and the children in group 1.B read translations T.1.b, T.2.b, T.3.b, T.4.b, and T.5.b. in the same way, the children in group 2.A read translations T.1.a, T.2.a, T.3.a, T.4.a, and T.5.a, and the children in group 2.B read translations T.1.b, T.2.b, T.3.b, T.4.b, and T.5.b. After reading the story twice, the children were asked to rewrite the story in the blank pages given to them.

The procedure of reading the stories and rewriting them was done in one session in Zaban Negar Institute to control the probable affective factors. Each child had to read the translated story twice. Between the two times of reading, there was a half an hour break. Therefore, we could control the children’s attention.

After all, a query was taken from the child, asking him/her to explain the picture or imagination s/he had about the word or phrase in each of the questions. The aim of these questions was defining the existence of cognitive schemata of High and Low equivalents in children’s minds.
6. Theoretical Framework

Cognitive linguistics is a newborn interdisciplinary branch of linguistics that tries to give psychological and cognitive solutions to some phenomena, which are related to linguistics, psychology and cognition simultaneously. This field of study also tries to find some formal relations between linguistic forms and their representations in mind, which are best defined in terms of schemata.

In this thesis, the researcher followed image schema theory in cognitive semantics to find out the answers for our research questions and testing the hypotheses. Children are not just growing physically during their early childhood; they are also developing new cognitive abilities, associated with memory and thinking improvement, as they mature, therefore it would be impossible to neglect the importance of these cognitive phenomena in the processes related to children (Cherry, n.d.).

On the basis of image schema theory, it is believed that the translators not only should find the best suitable equivalents for the source text, but also have to get sure that these equivalents will trigger similar schemata in the mind of the target language reader.

In this study, the researcher has adapted Johnson and Lakoff’s Image Schema theory, to deal with the cognitive differences of schemata, which shape children’s comprehension of translated stories. They are also shaped and manipulated by some formal tools, especially different equivalents that may be chosen in translating a storybook for children.

Cognitive Semantics which is a subset of Cognitive Linguistics is the theory that have used in this study to find the relations between linguistic forms, i.e. words, phrases and sentences, and their mental representation. Therefore, the experimenter has tried to find some formal criteria to measure and describe the relationships between different translations of the same English source text, with different equivalents with different cognitive level, and the children’s level of comprehension in reading these translations.

Therefore, the experimenter has tried to find some formal criteria to measure and describe the relationships between different translations of the same English source text, with different equivalents with different cognitive level, and the children’s level of comprehension in reading these translations.

7. Data Collection

The data corpus was composed of five English storybooks and two translations for each of them which had different cognitive comprehensibility depending on the equivalents they had chosen for translating keywords and phrases of the source texts.
In this paper, the researcher used both descriptive and comparative methods of data gathering and analyses, through which she described and determined the data, to find out their degrees of cognitive comprehensibility. Having described the data, the researcher did two parallel experiments on 48 children aging from 8 to 12.

8. Analysis and Findings
The collected data have been analysed and the statistical results of the presented hypotheses were expressed. This study included two major hypotheses. In order to describe these data, the experimenter had used some indexes of SPSS.18 software like frequency, percentage, and diagrams. In order to deduce from the existing relationship, the researcher have employed the K-S (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) test and t-Test in two independent societies.

In the first phase of data analysis, averages of replies of the both groups (8-10 and 10-12 year old children) who read translations labelled (a) or we can say easier translations were investigated. Therefore, different children in different ages read the same translations. The results and percentages can be seen here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Name of the Translation</th>
<th>T.1.a</th>
<th>T.2.a</th>
<th>T.3.a</th>
<th>T.4.a</th>
<th>T.5.a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of key words &amp; phrases</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of key words labelled H</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of key words labelled L</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 years</td>
<td>Number and percentage of H key words and phrases in child's rewriting of the story</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number and percentage of L key words and phrases in child's rewriting of the story</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of total understanding of the child depending on the total number of key words represented in his/her rewriting</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12 years</td>
<td>Number and percentage of H key words and phrases in child's rewriting of the story</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number and percentage of L key words and phrases in child's rewriting of the story</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of total understanding of the child depending on the total number of key words represented in his/her rewriting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the above table, average percentages of H and L equivalents which were retrieved in children’s rewritings are shown. The following diagram represents the mean percentage of the children perception (group 1.A and 2.A) of the H and L equivalents:
In the second phase of our data analysis, we will represent the data gathered from the children of 8-10 years-old and 10-12 years-old in one table. It should be mentioned that these children read and retrieved translations labeled (b) or we can say more difficult ones. Here is the table that shows the average percentages of H and L equivalents which were retrieved in children’s rewritings:

Table 4. Average Percentage of Replies of the Participants Read Harder Translations (b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Name of the Translation</th>
<th>T.1.b</th>
<th>T.2.b</th>
<th>T.3.b</th>
<th>T.4.b</th>
<th>T.5.b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total number of key words &amp; phrases</td>
<td>2/5</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>26/100</td>
<td>39/100</td>
<td>33/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of key words labelled H</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>10/38%</td>
<td>14/36%</td>
<td>12/36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of key words labelled L</td>
<td>7/28%</td>
<td>6/24%</td>
<td>7/18%</td>
<td>8/24%</td>
<td>6/22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10 years</td>
<td>Number and percentage of H key words and phrases in child’s rewriting of the story</td>
<td>4/33%</td>
<td>4/40%</td>
<td>6/43%</td>
<td>3/25%</td>
<td>4/40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number and percentage of L key words and phrases in child’s rewriting of the story</td>
<td>3/43%</td>
<td>3/50%</td>
<td>3/43%</td>
<td>2/25%</td>
<td>3/50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage of total understanding of the child depending on the total number of key words represented in his/her rewriting</td>
<td>7/37%</td>
<td>7/44%</td>
<td>9/43%</td>
<td>5/25%</td>
<td>7/44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|                  | Number and percentage of H key words and phrases in child’s rewriting of the story | 8/66% | 6/60% | 9/64% | 8/67% | 6/60% |
|                  | Number and percentage of L key words and phrases in child’s rewriting of the story | 5/71% | 4/67% | 4/57% | 5/63% | 4/67% |
| 10-12 years      | Percentage of total understanding of the child depending on the total number of key words represented in his/her rewriting | 1/68% | 10/62% | 13/62% | 13/65% | 10/63% |

The following diagram shows the mean percentage of the children comprehensions (groups 1.B and 2.B) of H and L equivalents representing high and low level of understanding:
In order to test the two null hypotheses, considering the normal distribution of the data, the researcher employed independent t-Tests. Having a general overview on the issues of age and its correlation with children cognition growth in the first hypothesis, one can observe the direct relation between the age and level of perception in children’s groups. The result of this test is showed below:

**Table 5. Independent Samples Test for the First Hypothesis**

<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></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>21.969</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>-11.724</td>
<td>39.135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here is the result of the data analysis of the second hypothesis which stated that different levels of cognitive comprehensibility in different translations, can affect children’s perception reading these translations:

**Table 6. Independent Samples Test for the Second Hypothesis**

<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></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>21.969</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>3.575</td>
<td>43.663</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the basic assumptions in independent t-Test is about the equality of the variances, which should be verified before the main stream of the test is executed. In order to do this, the experimenter used Levene’s test. If the level of significance is raised above 0.05 in this test, then the coherence of variances will be approved with the probability of 95%.

In Levene’s test, statistic F is 21.969 and level of significance is 0.000. Considering the point that level of significance is below 0.05, therefore the hypothesis of variance equality is rejected. According to the above table, the value of statistic t for the hypothesis of variance inequality is 3.575 and the level of significance is 0.000 which is lower than 0.05, therefore one can conclude that with the probability of 95%, there is a significant difference between the perception and understanding of the children who read different types of the translations.

In order to control the difficulty level of the translations, the researcher employed t-Test separately for investigating the degrees of perceptions in children with different ages reading each groups of translations.

9. Conclusion

The results of this enquiry show that in Iran due to the facts that translators of children’s literature have not access to a set of guidelines for this task, no attention paid to the level of understanding of the children who are the target reader of these translated texts. The number of translated children storybooks, especially from English into Persian, is vastly increasing and the needs for adopting these translations to children’s age range and their cognitive abilities are correspondingly increasing. Therefore, according to the analyses which were done on children’s comprehensions of different translations of the same source books, the researcher came to this conclusion that the books translated for children do not match with their age groups. The translators should highly put their emphasis on the equivalents they would choose for the source keywords in order to trigger the same cognitive schemata of the contents to the target children.

To conclude the study, it should be stated that translators of children’s literature play an important role in conveying the contents of the original texts to the children of target culture. To support this claim Lattey (2006) stated that adults dictate what children read because they are the writers, publishers of children’s reading matter, so they ought to be so cautious in choosing the most appropriate equivalents which are in harmony with their age groups. As it is realized from this study, translators of children’s texts have to make a transition to the child’s mindset through the medium of the original writer’s style and also they should pay
attention that children are not just growing physically, their minds and their cognitive abilities also grow year by year. It is understood that children of 8 to 10 years old have different cognitive abilities with children of between 10 to 12 years old. So the translators should follow these differences in their renderings. As Hollindale (1997) declared the ‘childliness’ of children’s texts that means the quality of being a child-dynamic, imaginative, interactive should be followed by the translators.

In order to conclude this study, the researcher believes that translators of children’s texts should highly put their emphasis on choosing the most appropriate equivalents, the equivalents which are suitable for the desired age groups of children.

An important implication can be drawn from the results of this study. The results of this analysis show that most translators during translation of children’s books have not been able or have failed to pay attention to the level of children’s perceptions. This may be allocated to the fact that they have not access to knowledge of a set of guidelines for this task. As it is stated earlier, this may be due to the fact that the area of translation of children’s literature remains largely ignored by the theorists. In view of this, the findings of the present paper aim to contribute to a better understanding of how to translate for different children’s age groups in order to be thoroughly comprehensible for their ages and accordingly to give translators a deeper insight toward translation of children’s literature.

This comparative descriptive analysis located within translations from cognitive linguistic viewpoint can provide a broader analytical angle for translators helping them to understand that the translated texts which are not in parallel with the participant’s age leads to incorrect or we can say incomplete comprehensions.

The results of this study can help related authorities and institutions, working on children’s cultural needs and especially “Khane-e-Roshd”, “Khane-e-Koodak” and other related organizations, make better decisions on the age ranges of translated children storybooks.

The present research offers a concise study on the issue of translation of cognitive schemata in children’s storybooks according to cognitive linguistics. This study only covers linguistic analysis of the texts. One suggestion for further study may be the translation of schemata according to cognitive psychology. Thus, further researches could be done in different genres such as psychology. As we all know psychology is a broad and also interesting field, so this title could catch all attentions.

Because of the limited scope of this research, the researcher was not able to study more participants. Indeed, one could perform this title with wider range of participants or s/he can specify the Sex of the testees in his/her research. For example the future researcher can
compare level of understanding of the girls with level of understanding of the boys regarding their perceptions of the translated texts.

References


Title

Translation of Extralinguistic Culture-Bound Elements in Missing Slouch a Persian novel translated into English

Authors

Najme Hamzehnejadi (M.A)
Islamic Azad University of Bandar Abbas, Iran

Masoud Sharififar (Ph.D)
Shaid Bahonar University, Kerman, Iran

Biodata

Najme Hamzehnejadi, M.A. in translation from Islamic Azad University of Bandar Abbas. She is currently an English instructor at Islamic Azad University of Baft and university of Piam Nour, Baft. Her interest in research area is ingrained in translation and teaching English.

Masoud Sharififar, assistant professor of translation at Department of Literature and Human Sciences in University of Shahid Bahonar, Kerman. His main research interests include critical thinking, instruction and translation.

Abstract

This article investigates the translation problem which may be caused by an Extralinguistic Culture-bound Reference, with particular focus on Novels. Translating cultural elements can be a demanding task due to the fact that such elements have specific meanings in the culture and language in which they arise but not necessarily in others therefore reviewing the existed and defined cultural translation strategies come as necessity. Considering this fact Pedersen's model is proposed, wherein all strategies available to the translator are listed. These are Retention, Specification, Direct Translation, Generalization, Substitution, and Omission. This study also investigates the translating process, in that the parameters that influence the translator’s choice of strategy are explored. Finally, the frequency of the employed strategies was studied in order to find which strategy has the highest potential for conveying the intended meaning and also it is proposed that it is unlikely that a truly unsolvable culture-bound translation problem would exist.

Keywords: literary Translation, Culture-bound elements, translation, novel
1. Introduction

Translating cultural elements can be a demanding task due to the fact that such elements have specific meanings in the culture and language in which they come up but not necessarily in others. Literary texts that are main carriers and introducers of every country’s culture should be translated effectively to transport the essence of culture without being scratched during the course of translation. As a system of congruent and interrelated beliefs, values, strategies and cognitive environments which guide the shared basis of behavior, culture happens to be the greatest barrier to translation success, because "even if people speak one language their lack of common cultural background causes the communication to fail", (New mark, 2001:328).

This study stands to aid the translator in translation of cultural items, which is not merely the random substitution of one image or symbol with another in the target language, but the use of symbols in the target language which will create the same effect and have the same impact and meaning on the target receivers as they had on the source receivers.

Taking this fact into account, the present study investigates the strategies used in translation of culture-bound elements in the Persian novel Missing Soluch and the frequency of such strategies. The culture-bound elements are classified based on the taxonomy presented by Pedersen (2005). The data are gathering from the Persian novel Missing Soluch which was translated into English by Kamran Rastegar.(2007)

To gather the required data, the mentioned novel is critically read and its original text is used. Then, the culture-bound elements of this novel are detected and are compared with its Persian text to identify the strategies used in translating it. Finally, the frequency of the employed strategies was studied in order to find which strategy has the highest potential for conveying the intended meaning.

1.1. Extralinguistic Culture-Bound Terms

"Extralinguistic Culture-bound terms" (ECT) is defined as term that is attempted by means of any culture-bound linguistic expression, which refers to an extralinguistic entity or process, and which is assumed to have a discourse referent that is identifiable to a relevant audience as this referent is within the encyclopedic knowledge of this audience. (P, 38). In other words, ECTs are expressions pertaining to realia, to cultural items, which are not part of a language system.

Newmark (1988, p.78) maintains that translation problems caused by culture-specific words arise due to the fact that they are intrinsically and uniquely bound to the culture.
concerned and, therefore, are related to the “context of a cultural tradition”. There are many ways to categorize culture-specific items, for instance Newmark (1988) points out five areas that cultural items may come from: (1) ecology (flora, fauna, winds, etc), (2) material culture (artifacts food clothes houses and towns, transport), (3) social culture (work and leisure), (4) organizations, customs, ideas (political, social, legal, religion or artistic), and (5) gestures and habits.

2. Theoretical Model for Analysis

In order to analyze the extracted data from the dialogue and settings of the novel under study, the researcher uses the classification proposed by Pedersen (2005). He classified culture-bound terms into two categories, namely intralinguistic and extralinguistic culture-bound references; the former category consists of idioms, proverbs, slang and dialects, while the latter refers to the expressions pertaining to cultural items which are not part of a language system.

As Pedersen (2005) stated extralinguistic culture-bound references consist of two categories, the first one is labeled source language oriented which includes retention, specification and direct translation, whereas the second category, labeled target language oriented, includes generalization, substitution and omission.

The purpose of this study was to find the strategies employed in translation of Persian culture-bound terms in the English translation of the above mentioned Iranian novel and to investigate the frequency of the used strategies to determine which one has the highest potential for conveying the intended meaning.

2.1. Materials

This study is mainly descriptive. In the present study, English translation of the before mentioned Persian novel as research sample will be compared with the original Persian text in order to find Extralinguistic culture-bound terms (ECT) that can assume as crisis points in translation and well defined by Pedersen as follows:

"Extralinguistic Culture-bound terms (ECT) is defined as term that is attempted by means of any culture-bound linguistic expression, which refers to an extralinguistic entity or process, and which is assumed to have a discourse referent that is identifiable to a relevant audience as this referent is within the encyclopedic knowledge of this audience,(p.38).

In other words, ECTs are expressions pertaining to realia, to cultural items, which are not part of a language system. The Missing Soluch which is an Iranian novel contains serious
points about the clergy, religion, society in Iran, and life in general that is filled up with many ECTs which will be analyzed and discussed in this study.

2.2. Procedure
The Procedure for obtaining required information had four stages which are as follows:
1) Reading the novel in order to get the overall idea of it and to find instances of the Persian culture-bound terms in the aforementioned Persian novel.
2) Using the text of Persian novel and focusing on the English translation of this novel.
3) Estimating the correctness of the applied translation strategy and determining the degree to which the translation was close to the original sample.
4) Tabulating the translation strategies according to the taxonomy proposed by Pedersen (2005).

3. Framework of the Study
Strategies which render extralinguistic culture-bound elements as Pedersen (2005) proposed, includes two categories, namely SL oriented and TL oriented. Source language oriented strategy consists of three subcategories:

3.1.1. Retention: It is the most source language oriented strategy, as it allows an element from the source language to enter the target text. Sometimes the retained culture-bound term is marked off from the rest of the target text by quotes and occasionally by italics. This strategy consists of two parts, namely complete and target language adjust.

3.1.2. Specification: It means leaving the culture-bound term in its untranslated form, but adding information that is not present in the source text, making the target culture-bound term more specific than the source culture-bound term. This is done in one of two ways: either through Explicitation or Addition.

3.1.3. Explicitation: Explicitation could be seen as any strategy involving expansion of the text, or spelling out anything that is implicit in the source text.

3.1.4. Addition: This means that the added material is latent in the source culture-bound term, as part of the sense or connotations of the term. By using this strategy, the translator intervenes to give guidance to the target audience.

3.2. Direct translation: This strategy is like literal translation and it could hardly be used on proper names, but it is not uncommon for rendering the names of companies, official institutions, technical gadgetry etc. based on the outcome of translation, it has two subgroups;
the first one is *calque* which is not familiar to target audience and it may sound odd to them, and the second one is *shifted direct translation* which refers to those terms that are common in target culture so the audience are familiar with them.

3.3. **Target language oriented strategy** consists of three subcategories:

3.3.1. **Generalization:** This strategy means replacing a culture-bound term referring to something specific by something more general. Typically, this may involve hyponymy or not.

3.3.2. **Substitution:** This strategy involves removing the source culture-bound term and replacing it with something else, either a different term or some sort of paraphrase, which does not necessarily involve a cultural term. This strategy consists of two subgroups: cultural substitution and paraphrase.

3.3.2.1. **Cultural substitution:** This strategy means that the source culture-specific item is removed, and replaced by a different cultural term.

3.3.2.2. **Paraphrase:** This strategy involves rephrasing the source culture-specific item, either through reduction to sense, or by completely removing all trace of the cultural term and instead using a paraphrase that fits the context.

3.4. **Omission:** As Toury (1995, p. 82), has pointed out Omission is a valid translation strategy, and in the present model it simply means replacing the ST ECR with nothing. The reason for applying this strategy will be non existence of cultural or linguistic equivalents in the target language.

4. **Data Analysis**

Since the strategies to transfer culture-bound terms are of two main groups, namely SL oriented and TL oriented which are further divided into three salient subcategories, first the culture-bound terms of the before-mentioned novel are presented in their context followed by giving necessary explanation and analysis. Then two tables are offered which specified different types of culture-bound terms with respect to the taxonomy proposed by Pedersen (2005) in this novel. Furthermore, the frequency of each strategy used by the translators will be mentioned in charts.

4.1. **Analysis of Culture-Bound Elements of the Chosen novel**

In the following parts the collected data will be analyzed after being classified on the basis of the before mentioned framework. It should be added that although the emphasis of this study is culture-bound elements, but in the following sections some of the culture-bound elements will be offered in their contexts, i.e. the entire
sentence or sentences to help the reader have a clear understanding of culture-bound elements and their meaning in context.

4.2. Analysis of “The Missing soluch”

4.2.1. SL Oriented strategies

This novel contains 196 instances of SL oriented strategies to render culture-bound terms, some of which are discussed below.

4.2.1.1. Retention

There are 41 instances of complete and instances of TL adjust retention in this novel, some of which are analyzed below.

One of characters' name is “کربالایی صفحی” which is retained completely as “karballai safi”.

The translator has resorted to marked complete retention to render some of the names, for instance the name “ملا” is rendered using italic letters as “molla”, and also the noun “حاج سالم” in the SL phrase is rendered as “Haj salem”.

4.2.2. Specification

There are 2 instances of addition and 14 instances of explicitation strategy in this movie.

4.2.2.3. Addition

The instances of this strategy are as follows:

1) “some ruins or fields or in sheets”
Since the SL word “خیرات و خارستان” is known in Iran, it may not be known to the English readers of the novel, thus the translator added the word “some ruins or fields or in sheets” in order that the readers know what this word refers to, more easily.

2) “donkey skin blanket”
In this example the culture-specific term “کپوواي الاؽ” is rendered as “donkey – skin blanket” TL readers may not be familiar with it, the translator correctly added the word “skin blanket” to make it understandable for the English readers of the novel.

4.2.2.4. Explicitation

Some of the instances of this strategy are presented below.

“کدکخدا”

“kadkhoda, the village headman”
This word kadkhoda is unknown in target culture, therefore the translator instead of using retention strategy, resorted to explicitation in order to help the readers to get the sense and meaning of it.

4.3. Direct Translation
There are 26 instances of calque and 5 instances of shifted direct translation in this movie.

4.3.1. Calque

1) “tore his scarf from his head”
The translator has translated the SL words literally regardless of the fact that the outcome seems strange and unusual to the target readers since they cannot make head or tail of such organization.

2) “His cloak”
In the above example, the SL word “چوخاریش” is rendered word for word as “his cloak” which is awkward and meaningless and it is a type of native and indigenous cloth that rural people put it on that can de considered as sign of poverty while clock is part of a fashionable outfit or uniform, as a result it sounds odd to the target readers. The translator should have resorted to shifted direct translation and rendered this word as an appropriate equivalent.

4.3.2. Shifted

“حق خود را از گلی گرگ بیرم کتن ؟”
This refers to the time that a person wants to touch his rights with out missing any privilege. The translator has correctly translated this phrase as “tear it from the belly of a wolf” which shares the same meaning in the target culture as the source phrase.

4.4. TL Oriented strategies
This novel contains 41 instances of TL oriented strategies to render culture-bound terms, some of which are discussed below.

4.4.1. Generalization
There are 4 instances of generalization strategy in this novel, 2 of them are stated here.

Shoes or slippers
A scarf

4.4.2. Hyponymy

1) “A funeral”
There are many religious ceremonies in source culture, since they do not exist in the target culture, the translator has decided to use hyponymy strategy by replacing this culture-specific term with a more general term.

2) “the sound of recitation come from the night - prayers”
In this example since the culture-bound term “قاری” is a unique Persian job and English people are not familiar with this job, so the translator retained uniqueness of the SL referent and replaced the SL word with its superordinate.

4.4.3. Substitution
There are 8 instances of paraphrase and 25 instances of cultural substitution strategy in this novel.

4.4.4. Paraphrase

1) “she wont let herself die before she's dragged me to the edge of death myself”
In this example, the translator translates the SL word “دلووووشگن” with the phrase “dragged me to the edge of death myself” which means a very annoying matter. Not only the TL word conveys the same sense as does the SL word, but also it carries the same semantic loads.

2) “Cleansing for the corpse”
The translator paraphrased the SL word “هووشدٍ ؽووْیی” as “Cleansing for the corpse” which shares the same sense.

4.4.5. Cultural

“برود از کله خواچه هم آن طرف تر”
“let him go to and back”
Since the SL word “کله خواچه” cannot be translated literally, the translator has correctly decided to insert a current existed cultural term.

4.4.6. Omission
There are 6 instances omission strategy which some of them are as follows:
The SL word “اتْالفضوولی” is left untranslated which may be due to lacking of existed equivalent and concept in target language.

The translator has left the SL word “یک پا نجم بوود” untranslated which may be due to his inability to find an appropriate Persian equivalent for it.

4.5. Frequency of the Employed Strategies by the Translators

So far, some of the examples of culture-bound elements have been mentioned. In the following section, the frequency of each strategy will be tabulated in order to show which strategy has the highest potential for conveying the intended meaning.

In doing so, two tables are presented to show the number of different strategies of translation according to Pedersen’s model, and then the frequency of the strategies used by translators for rendering culture-specific items will be shown.

Table 4.1. Number of different categories of SL oriented strategies that appeared in The Missing soluch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL Oriented strategy</th>
<th>retention</th>
<th>specification</th>
<th>Direct translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>complete</td>
<td>TL Adjust</td>
<td>Explicitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing soluch</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2. Number of different categories of TL oriented strategies that appeared in Missing soluch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TL Oriented strategy</th>
<th>Generalization</th>
<th>Substitution</th>
<th>Omission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hyponomy</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>Cultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing soluch</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6. Strategies Adopted For Rendering Culture-bound Elements

There were 196 instances of culture-specific elements in this novel. As it was clear in most of the examples, the most common strategy adopted by the translator of this novel was complete retention.
4.6.1. As it was stated earlier, the data of this study were elicited form descriptive analysis of some of the instances of culture-bound terms and were examined against six major translation strategies proposed by Pedersen, namely 1) Retention, 2) specification a. explicitation b. addition, 3) direct translation a. calque b. shifted direct translation, 4) generalization, 5) substitution a. cultural translation b. paraphrase and 6) omission.

The first three strategies are source language oriented while the other three strategies are target language oriented.

There were 36 instances of SL oriented strategies and 43 instances of TL oriented strategies to render culture-specific elements in this novel.

5. Conclusion

As the results showed retention strategy and more specifically complete retention which is employed 38 times by the translator, is the most common strategy to render cultural elements in translation. Since most of the Persian culture-bound elements do not exist in target culture, the translator preferred to complete retain them.

- The next most common strategy is direct translation which is used 31 times. As the chart 1 showed, 5 instances out of these 31 instances belong to calque which is the second most frequently used strategy after retention.
- The next strategy which consists of 33 instances is substitution strategy. 25 instances of this strategy are cultural and the other 8 instances are paraphrase.
- The next strategy is specification which includes 13 instances that can be further divided into 11 instances of explicitation and only 2 instances of addition strategy.
- The next strategy which is used 6 times is omission. One of the reasons of employing this strategy may be due to the translating novel constraints.

As it was shown in charts 1 and 4, generalization strategy and more specifically hyponymy which is adopted only 4 times in this novel is the least common strategy for rendering culture-bound elements in translation.

References


Title

The Relationship between Iranian EFL learners' Learning Styles and Their Perception of Error Feedback in Oral Activities

Authors

Malihe Afghari
Department of English, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Najafabad, Iran

Azizollah Dabaghi (Ph.D)
Department of English, Isfahan University, Isfahan, Iran

Omid Tabatabaei (Ph.D)
Department of English, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Najafabad, Iran

Biodata

Malihe Afghari is an English language teacher for about ten years in different English language institutes of Isfahan, Iran. She has written many essays about teaching English as a second language in different subjects.

Azizollah Dabaghi, Department of English, Isfahan University, Isfahan, Iran

Omid Tabatabaei, Department of English, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University, Isfahan, Najafabad, Iran

Abstract

This research aimed to investigate the relationship between Iranian EFL learners' learning styles and their perception of error feedback in oral activities by integrating psychological theories. The other purpose behind the present research was to find out whether there is a meaningful correlation between learner's demographic information (Age, Gender and proficiency level) and perception of error feedback. The sample for this study consisted of 131 Iranian EFL Learners who were selected from three English language institutes in Isfahan. They were male and female learners who were divided to three levels 13-15, 15-18, 18-22 years according to their ages. In addition, they were grouped according to their proficiency levels. One OPT test was administered to them and the students were divided to three groups, high, mid and low. Grasha-Riechmann Learning Style questionnaire was administered to reveal the student's learning style. To determine their perception of error feedback a questionnaire with eight Questions was developed by the researcher to be administered to the students. (This test was
done in a pilot study to make sure that it was valid and reliable). The correlation between each group and perception of error feedback was investigated. The findings revealed that there was a meaningful relationship between Iranian EFL learner's learning style, demographic information and perception of error feedback. In fact to present the relationship between these factors might be of great benefit for the learners, teachers and syllabus designers.

Key words: Error Feed-back, Learning Styles, EFLlearners

1. Introduction
There are many studies about foreign language learner's errors and different types of error feedback. Using contrastive analyses, error analyses, and performance analyses, all of these studies attempted to reveal learners transfer processes from their native language to their target languages or to detect their fossilization and find the reasons for the stabilization of error making in learning processes (Han&Selinker 1999). Recently, some researchers have examined teacher's perception of learner's responses to error feedback accurately and learner's noticing of their error feedback by recording learner's interaction and conducting a stimulated recall interview immediately after the completion of the task activities. This study attempts to provide an overview of learner's preferences for error correction methods using a larger number of subjects to establish higher reliability from quantitative research perspective. Various factors could influence the effectiveness of error feedback in second language learning environments. These factors include not only the type, amount and source of correction, but also learner's characteristics such as attitudes towards correction, aptitude, motivation and anxiety.

A lot of research has been devoted to study how a second language should be taught; however, a very good technique or a very competent teacher does not always mean that a better learning process will take place. The good teacher is not actually the one who has got a good competence in the language or has graduated with honors, but the one who is aware of the student's needs and difficulties and focus his teaching on them and interacts with the students as a moderator or guide of their learning process. In other words, the good teacher is actually the one who can see beyond the face of the students and beyond the grammar books he is using to do his teaching.

There is no doubt among teaching professionals that, although we as teachers play a very important role in second language teaching, it is the learner who plays the main role in second language learning. According to the Personal Agenda hypothesis proposed by
Schumann & Schumann (1977), every student has his personal view on what he wants to learn and how he wants to do it. The reason why some learners do pick up some things but not others, could be due to the learners’ ability to take from a lesson only those things that they want and in the manner they want. Thus, as a very important starting point, we need to be aware of the variety of students individual learning styles, individual factors affecting their acquisition and learning and be flexible enough to adapt to the students individual needs; this way, we will have the key for success in both language teaching and language learning.

1.1. Errors in L2 Learning
Although there is a general belief of not leaving an erroneous utterance in the air, but correct it, this is a very complex matter which depends on many factors as will be analyzed below. Sometimes errors should be corrected, others should not; the methods used for correction sometimes work, some others do not... This is a complex issue which will depend basically on the learner personal agenda, his personality and some other individual factors which are implied in his learning style and preferences.

Nevertheless, before going into greater detail about the debate of whether the errors should be corrected or not, I will start by looking at the positive versus the negative concept of errors. Thus, whenever we listen to the word “error” in language learning, we immediately associate it with a deviance from the native language and something which has to be avoided by all means. However, despite the negative connotations this word may have, it also has positive connotations, as it is considered as evidence that the learning process is taking place. Following this idea, Edge (1989) does not use the word “mistake” or “error” but “learning steps”. Thus, from the teacher’s point of view, errors provide them with feedback so as to know the effectiveness of their teaching and enable them to decide whether they should spend more time on a specific item or go on with a new one.

2. Literature Review
Second language researchers have recently begun to examine the pedagogical application of error feedback. In the following paragraphs a brief history of investigations done regarding that has been mentioned.

2.1. Against Error Correction
Although there is the general belief that a wrong utterance should be corrected, some theories in Second Language Acquisition deny the role of error correction by supporting that students go through systematic stages in learning and they just acquire a structure when they are ready
for it, but not before. Thus, the Morpheme Studies and Krashen’s Natural Order Hypothesis account that we acquire the rules of language in a predictable way and this is independent of the order in which rules are taught in language classes (Krashen 1982, Brown 1973, Dulay & Burt 1973, 1974; Bailey et al. 1974). This is a very important aspect which is overlooked by some teachers who keep correcting the student with no successful result.

Moreover, research done by Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope (1986), Tuscott (1996, 1998, 1999), Young (1991) - among others - supports that correction of errors has also been considered to have negative effects. Walker (1973) for instance, found in his study that students preferred not to be corrected for each speaking and writing error because this practice undermined their confidence and forced them to waste so much effort on details that they used to lose the overall ability to use language. Thus, correction turns to be a way to break the flow of conversation when the teacher interrupts the student before he has finished his utterance, and it is also a way to lower the student’s motivation as only his failures and not his goals are highlighted.

Excessive feedback on error can also have a negative effect on motivation and can also prevent learning steps to take place because, if everything is corrected, students do not take risk and do not say anything unless they are sure it is correct.

Edge (1989) criticize what he calls <<the over-corrected teacher>>, i.e. a teacher – normally non-native who focus too much on accuracy when speaking. Although he asks the students to talk freely, the students end up following the teacher’s way and focusing too much on accuracy rather than on communication and fluency. Norrish (1983) also supports this idea by defending that teachers should emphasize the idea of the language as an instrument for communication and encourage their students to express themselves rather than worrying too much on whether they do it right or not. He tries to encourage teachers to be more tolerant with the student’s errors so as to let them risk, guess, enjoy the learning and provide them with a feeling of security to use the language.

2.2. For Error Correction

There is no doubt that conversational interactions are very important; however, focusing too much on “what they say” rather than on “how they say it” can be dangerous. This can result in a situation where learners provide each other with input which is often incorrect and incomplete and which other learners process as if it were right. This can lead us to support that form focus and error correction is also necessary, that correction of errors should be made, otherwise they can create false hypothesis and fossilize. However, we cannot take it too seriously as too much emphasis on accuracy will inhibit students to talk. The right
balance is again sought and we must not forget that when correcting it is important to take into account the students sense of achievement, success and learning preferences.

The positive influence that corrective feedback has in SLA is supported by research done by Carroll & Merrill (1993), Doughty and Varela (1998) Iwashita (2003), Long, Shhunji, Ortega (1998), Lyster (2001), Lyster and Ranta, 1997 and White, Spada, Lightbown and Ranta (1991). The theory of SLA by excellence which accounts for error correction is the Behavioristic theory (Watson 1924, Thorndike 1932 and Skinner 1957) which suggests that it is through correction that learning happens, i.e. when a mistake is made, the teacher should correct it immediately and then repeat the correct version to be learnt by the rest of the class. Learner's attitude towards correction is sometimes positive, especially in advance levels where students want to be corrected in order to improve their language and avoid errors to be fossilized. Levine (1975) also accounts for the positive effects on correction and talks in his book about the dangerous consequences of non-correction. He analyses the effects of non-giving confirmation nor disconfirmation to the students´ guesses and accounts that if an error is not corrected, both the speaker and the rest of the class will consider it a right utterance to be learnt. He carries out an experiment and proves his hypothesis that the teachers response to wrong utterances is very important as part of the learning process as they cause the subject to alter a negative hypothesis he had wrongly thought of.

As pointed out before in this article, errors are learning steps and we have to look at them in a positive way and make the most of them in order to overcome them and go a step beyond in the inter-language stage.

2.3. Do`s and don´ts of error correction

As we have analyzed in the previous sections, the correction of errors is sometimes necessary and positive but some other times it has a negative effect. Being able to know about our students individual learning styles and preferences will give us the clue so as to know whether we should correct them or not and how error correction could improve their linguistic and communicative competence. So as to start, it is important to distinguish that there are two types of correction, the implicit and the explicit one. The problem with the first one, i.e. feedback on error which takes the form of recast or repetitions may be interpreted by the learners as a continuation of the conversation, therefore, explicit correction may also be needed and it is more effective sometimes. Another problem implicit correction can mislead us to is that teachers sometimes do not highlight where the error is, therefore, the student may not realize where the focus of difficulty is and changes other elements which are completely right.
The most typical way of correcting is by interrupting the student before he has finished speaking. This could have a negative effect, among anxious students as they normally lose the track, forget what they were talking about and their anxiety levels are increased.

Some other times teachers do not wait the time necessary for the student to assimilate the correction. A useful technique is to wait, write down the correction and find correction at a later time. This issue has to do with the Incubation Hypothesis which accounts that students need an incubation period before the new structure starts to appear in their performance. This is also another reason why teachers should correct an error which is performed by the student some minutes later. Another problem occurs when teachers correct students’ errors which are beyond the students’ level. They just correct them because it is not the English standard form without realizing that this correction is beyond the students’ capacity.

The problem with this is also that the teacher has to stop and explain the new concept. Therefore, only those errors which correspond to the grammar it is being learning should be corrected.

Moreover, emphasis on error should be done on the lexicon, intonation and pronunciation because they are the main areas for the understanding of the message. According to Vázquez (1987) pragmatics and semantics play a more important role than morpho-syntax in the comprehension of the message, so we should take this into account when deciding which type of errors to correct.

A very useful, practical and effective way of correction is the use of an inductive method in which the teacher asks the student to correct himself (self-correction) and realize on what he did wrong. This way it will allow the student to carry out an error processing which actually helps him more to retain the right form in his mind.

Another effective way of correction if we think of the teacher not only as the great source of knowledge but as a moderator or guide in the language classroom is to wait until someone comes out with the right answer. It is also important to encourage self-correction rather than teacher correction and it is also very useful to discuss correction with students.

3. Conclusion

Error correction is definitely needed at some point in the learning process to a lesser or a wider extent; however, a very wide range of individual factors defining our students make this task a very complicated one which will depend on factors such as the learner’s age, aptitude, stage in the language process, proficiency level, motivation, anxiety, metalinguistic
sophistication, individual preferences, learning styles, learning strategies and previous achievement, factors which turn to be crucial information for the language teacher in order to improve the learning process. Teachers should try to get the most information as possible from the students in order to know what their learning styles and preferences are. Thus, teachers should consider on the first hand the students’ reaction to error correction, because some want to be corrected and others do not, and also which errors should be corrected and which ones should be left uncorrected, depending on the students level and students’ needs.

4. Statement of the problem

Various factors could influence the effectiveness of error feedback in second language environments. These factors include not only the type, amount, and source of error correction but also learners characteristics such as attitudes towards correction s, aptitude, motivation and anxiety. Some studies have shown that learning styles affect the learners perceptions of error feedback in the classroom, for example Crichton(1990) revealed that peer correction turned out to be problematic, in his study problem arose when peer correction caused humiliation, resulting in a crisis at the elementary proficiency level. As a result it is important for the teachers to be able to develop appropriate methods of error feedback back for their students.

5. Objectives of the study

An attempt has been made in this study to identify a combination of learning styles that can be effective in perception of error feedback in oral activities. This study aimed to show that the reflection of different learning styles can be observed in student's perception of error feedback in oral activities. In fact, learning style seems to be an important factor in achieving the educational goals for the student's learning a foreign language.

This study of 120 Iranian EFL learners attempted to identify that learners' characteristics such as (age, gender and proficiency level have meaningful relationship with perception of error feedback during oral activities, also this study attempted to signify that student's learning styles and their perception of error feedback is correlated to each other.

Therefore, this research would provide meaningful suggestions for overcoming the problems that might arise regarding the learning styles of students and how to meet the various needs of the learners in EFL classrooms. To this end, this study sought appropriate answers to the following questions.
6. Research questions

The present study intended to answer the following research questions.

1. Is there any relationship between student’s learning styles and their attitudes towards error feedback?
2. Is there any relationship between EFL learner’s proficiency level and their attitudes toward error feedback?
3. Is there any relationship between EFL learner’s age and their attitudes toward error feedback?
4. Is there any relationship between EFL learner’s gender and their attitudes toward error feedback?
5. To what extent knowing about the Iranian EFL learners help their teachers provide appropriate error feedback to students with different learning characteristics?

7. Method

7.1 Participants

The sample for this study consisted of 120 EFL learners who were selected from three English language institutes in Isfahan. They were male and female learners whose age range was between 13 and 22. 62 female and 58 male EFL students participated in the research. Selection of the students was based on convenience sampling in which the researcher selected whoever was available and was willing to participate in the study. All of the participants were Persian L1 speakers. For this study, low, mid and high proficient learners were chosen. The data in current study were collected during the period of time from October 15th, 2013 to November 16th, 2013.

7.2 Instruments

Oxford placement test (OPT) was used to select 40 elementary, 40 intermediate and 40 advanced male and female learners. The (Grasha-Riechmann) learning style questionnaire was administered to signify the EFL learner's learning styles (see Appendix B). The questionnaire was translated in Persian language for elementary students to be able to answer easily. The participants were administered an anonymous attitudinal questionnaire in Persian divided into two parts (see Appendix A). The first part gathers personal information including age and gender of participants. The second part consisted of 8 questions related to learner's attitudes towards error feedback.
7.3 Procedures
At first OPT test was administered to a group of EFL males and females learners (N=131) in order to select 40 elementary, 40 intermediate and 40 advanced learners from the EFL learners at Sadr, Zabansara and pooyesh language institutes. 40 students whose scores was between one standard deviation above the mean and one standard deviation below the mean were selected as intermediate group according to their age and gender. The 40 elementary and 40 advanced learners were chosen from the students who were above or below that range with different gender and age level. The second stage was administration of Grasha&Riechmann learning style questionnaire to the students and dividing the students according to their learning styles. This questionnaire has 60 questions. Each twenty questions was designed according to one learning style. There is no right or wrong answers to each question. However, as the learners answer each question, form their general attitudes and feelings toward all of their courses. The six learning styles are (1) Avoidant, (2) Collaborative, (3) Competitive, (4) Independent, (5) Participant, and (6) Dependent. The third stage was administration of attitudinal questionnaire. The first part of it gathers personal information including age and gender of participants. The second part consisted of 8 questions each one clarify one of the student's attitudes towards error feedback. In the fourth stage, the correlation between each group and perception of error feedback was investigated.

8. Significance of the study
The ultimate goal of this study is to recommend to foreign language instructors, especially instructors of Japanese as a second language, suitable methods of providing error feedback to students with different backgrounds, learning styles, and epistemological beliefs. Instructors should not claim that one universal approach to error feedback solves problems for all learners; therefore, these studies were pedagogically motivated to identify the learners’ characteristics and their perceptions of error feedback and to find the error feedback method tailored to each individual.

9. Data Analysis
9.1. Results
The relationship between students’ learning styles and their perception of error feedback
The first half of the statistical analysis revealed that (a) respondent's perceptions of learning can be examined both as a social entity and separately as an individual entity and that (b) the degree of dependence of learning style characteristics on class structure influences learners' attitudes towards error feedback, whereas the degree of dependence of these beliefs on class structure does not affect student's attitudes. The results of this study showed that social learning styles, as measured by GRSLSS (1994), relate closely to students' perceptions of social aspects of classroom activities.

First, the findings revealed an overall positive attitude toward error feedback. Eighty-nine percent of the survey participants self-reported positive attitudes toward error feedback. However, additional examination revealed that the competitive learning style correlated negatively with learners' attitudes toward error feedback (p<.05) (Question 1). The majority of the learners exhibited a preference for error correction by instructors and fellow students (Instructor and Fellow Students=84.2%; Yourself=15.8%). The competitive and dependent learning style correlated negatively with learners' attitudes toward error feedback (p<.05)(Question 2).

Correlation analysis showed two positive relationships between dependent and competitive learning styles and error correction made by students in pronunciation and grammar activity. Dependent, competitive and participant learning style preferred immediate correction and (p<.05). In the question number five, the competitive learning style correlated positively by getting error correction while doing grammar exercises.

In answer to the six question (75.0%) the students revealed preferring to receive correction in incomprehensible errors no to other choices. On the other hand, students with the collaborative and competitive learning styles do not prefer to receive correction when errors are acceptable and comprehensible but ungrammatical. The proportion of respondents who preferred error feedback with an explicit explanation versus the proportion of those who prefer other types of error feedback (With an explicit explanation=71.0%, Without an explicit explanation=18.0%, Telling incorrect=5.8%, Confirmation check=4.2%) showed that, the majority of learners wanted to receive explicit explanations when they received error feedback. Comparing error feedback without explicit explanation and error feedback with explicit explanation revealed that error feedback with explicit explanation is better because learners can internalize the concept with the explanation, facilitating the development of their language abilities. Collaborative and competitive learners prefer to receive Error Correction for logical coherence in their speech.
9.2. Results

The relationship between Learners’ Proficiency Level and Their Perception of Error Feedback

The findings revealed positive attitudes toward error feedback. 89% of the students with different proficiency levels intended to receive error correction, in addition learner's proficiency correlated positively with preference to get error correction and there was a meaningful correlation between the results (P=0.217< .05).

In answer to the second question 84% of the learners intended to receive error correction by their instructors and fellow students, also learner's proficiency correlated positively with preference to get error correction by their instructors and fellow students and (P=0.010<.05).

Answer to the five question revealed that low proficient learners wanted to receive error correction in pronunciation and grammar and the high proficient learners in skit and free conversation (P=0.002<.05).

Answer to the four question explored that learner's proficiency correlated positively with learner's preference to get error correction immediately (P=0.217<.05).

Answer to the six question revealed that low proficient learners intended to receive error correction in incomprehensible errors and learner's proficiency correlated positively with learner's preference to receive error correction in ungrammatical errors (P=0.024<.05).

Answer to the seven question shows that the lower proficient learners prefer to receive error correction in pronunciation and grammar and the higher proficient learners in skit and free conversation (P=0.009<.05).

At last answer to the eight question explored that learner's proficiency has negative correlation with their preference to receive explicit explanation (P=0.020<.05).

9.3. Results

The relationship between Learners’ Gender and Their Perception of Error Feedback

In this study, the relationship between learner's gender and their perception of error feedback shows that gender influence the learner's preferences for error feedback.

Answer to the first question revealed that 84% of the learners wanted to receive error correction and the female learners showed more preference to get error correction among the other learners. There was a meaningful correlation between gender and perception of error feedback (P=0.120<.05).
Answer to the third question shows that 84% of the students intended to correct their error by themselves and male learners showed more tendency in contradiction to the females (P=0.683<.05).

Answer to the four question revealed that female showed more preference for receiving error correction in contradiction to male learners (P=0.281<.05).

Answer to the five question revealed that female learners showed more tendency to receive error correction in grammar practice (p=0.120<.05).

Answer to the six question explored that male learners tended more to receive error correction in incomprehensible errors and there was a meaningful correlation between the results (P<.05).

Answer to the seven question revealed that female learners showed more preference to do error correction in usage of words and conjugation of verbs and adjectives (P=0.307<.05).

Answer to the eight question female learners tended to receive explicit explanation. The male learners showed more tendency in receiving simply stating incorrect and confirmation check (P=0.189<.05).

9.4. The Relationship between Learner's Age and their Perception of Error Feedback

In this section, the relationship between learner's demographic information and learner's perceptions of error feedback shows that age influences the learner's preferences for error feedback.

Answer to the first question revealed that students who were between 16-18 years didn’t show tendency to receive immediate correction and there was a meaningful correlation between the results (P=0.033<.05).

Answers to the second question revealed that younger learners who were between 13-15 years old didn't like to get error correction by their classmate and it was humiliating to them (P<.05).

Answers to the third question showed that as the learner's age increase their preference to do error correction by themselves increase (P<.05).

Answer to the four question showed that students who are between 16-18 age level didn’t sow tendency to receive correction immediately after doing error (P<.05).

Answer to the five question showed that Students with lower age level prefered to receive error correction in pronunciation and grammar activity and higher age level learners in free conversation (P<.05).
Answer to the six Question reveals that as the age increase tendency to get correction in errors that are comprehensible but are grammatically incorrect increase. Student between 16-18 years of age prefer to do error correction by themselves (P<.05).

Answer to the seven question revealed that the younger students showed tendency in receiving error correction in usage of words and older students in pronunciation and logical coherence (P<.05).

Answer to the eight question showed that younger students preferred to receive explicit explanation and older students confirmation check and simply stating incorrect (P<.05).

10. Applications and Implications

The ultimate goal of this study is to recommend to foreign language instructors, especially instructors of English as a second language, suitable methods of providing error feedback to students with different demographic information and learning styles. According to a 2008 study of young learners at Northwestern University, girls and boys process language differently and according to many researchers for example Mathew (1991), Hutt (1972), Eiszler (2001) and others, there is gender differences in learning style. Also different studies for example Cornett (1983), Canfield (1979), Develbiss (1984), showed that learning style always change with age and experience.

Instructors should not claim that one universal approach to error feedback solves problems for all learners; therefore, these studies were pedagogically motivated to identify the learner's characteristics and their perceptions of error feedback and to find the error feedback method tailored to each individual. In this way, they may try to incorporate new teaching techniques such as teaching by knowing about student's demographic information. The results are especially of great value to teachers in Iran, who despite devoting much time to teach are usually faced with student's complaints of learning and will not get the best results.

11. Discussion & conclusion

Learner's perceptions of error feedback in oral activities revealed two significant findings. First, more students preferred to receive correction for unacceptable errors during oral activities. This result suggests that learners believe that oral activities have more emphasize on communication flow. Second, many studies revealed that both teachers and students prefer comprehensive error correction focused on grammar, regardless of whether or not it has long-term significance. In these studies a consistency of error correction in oral activities was
shown. These studies attempted to show the relationship between learner's learning style and demographic information and their perception of error feedback in oral activities by considering psychological theories. The findings of these studies could suggest ways for language teachers, especially teachers of English as a second language to develop appropriate methods of error feedback for students with different learning styles and different demographic characteristics in oral activities. Furthermore, the findings of these studies could suggest two steps involved in finding a solution to error feedback problems, though the real classroom settings are not dichotomously separated by individual and social variables. The first step is to identify students’ characteristics regarding their dispositions of learning as well as their demographic information. The second step is to consider whether the problematic issues exist in individual learners or in the social construction of the classroom. However, this investigation was conducted mainly from learners’ perspectives of feedback. Therefore, further studies could explore error feedback strategies from instructors’ perspectives and analyze long-term effectiveness of each error feedback strategy.

Appendix A

Learner's Perception of Error Feedback during Oral Activities

1. Do you usually want to receive consistent correction of your errors? Please circle one.
   Yes No
2. When your errors are corrected, from whom do you generally prefer to receive the error correction?
   Please circle one.
   Instructor Fellow students Yourself
3. After your instructor states that your utterances were incorrect, do you want to correct them by yourself? Please circle one.
   Yes No
4. When do you want to receive the error correction? Please circle one.
   Immediately after making an error After finishing a conversation
5. During what kind of classroom activity do you most want to receive the error correction?
   Please circle one.
   Pronunciation practice Grammar practice
   Skit Free conversation
6. What kinds of errors do you think should be corrected in class? Please circle one.
   a. All incomprehensible errors
   b. If the errors are unacceptable, even if they are comprehensible.
   c. If the errors are ungrammatical, even if they are acceptable and comprehensible.
7. For what grammatical items do you want to receive the error correction the most? Please circle one.

Pronunciation Particles Conjugation of verbs or adjectives Usage of words Logical coherence

8. When your errors are corrected, what kind of correction do you prefer to receive? Please circle one.

a. Receiving a correct utterance with an explicit explanation
b. Receiving a correct utterance without an explicit explanation
c. Simply stating that your utterance was incorrect
d. Receiving a confirmation check by repeating your incorrect utterance with rising intonation

References


Allwright, R.L. 1986."Why don’t learners learn what teachers teach?" In Singelton and Little. (eds) language learning in formal and informal contexts. Dublin: IRAAL.


Chan, K. (2007). Hong Kong teacher education students” epistemological beliefs and their relations with conceptions of learning and learning strategies. The Asia Pacific-Education Researcher, 16(2), 199-214.


Norrish J (1983) Language Learners and their Errors, Macmillion Publishers


Title
The Effect of Using Semantic Network of Word Net on Intermediate EFL Vocabulary Learning

Authors

Niloofer Mansoory (Ph.D)
Payame Noor University, Rasht, Iran

Leila Armal (M.A)
Payame Noor University, Rasht, Iran

Biodata

Niloofer Mansoory, assistant professor in the English Department of Payame Noor University, Rasht, Iran. She has published several articles in national and international journals and conferences.

Leila Armal, M.A in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) from English Department of Payame Noor University, Rasht, Iran.

Abstract

The present study investigated the effect of using a new instructional tool, WordNet, on Persian EFL learners' vocabulary learning and retention. For the purpose of this study, the researcher conducted a quasi-experimental research and included two control and experimental groups of forty participants at an intermediate level of proficiency. The treatment sessions lasted for nine weeks. She taught ten units of "Vocabulary in Use" to the learners during the treatment sessions. The only difference between two groups was related to the presentation of vocabulary items and dictionary use; in the experimental group, it was based on WordNet and its semantic relations; in the control group, it was based on traditional dictionary and wordlist. The results of the immediate and delayed post-tests showed that, the participants in the experimental group had a higher performance than the control group. Furthermore, a Likert scale questionnaire was given to the experimental group at the end of the treatment to investigate their opinions about the new instructional tool. Almost all learners had a positive opinion about WordNet and preferred to use it instead of a traditional dictionary.

Keywords: WordNet, Vocabulary Learning, Vocabulary Retention, EFL
1. Introduction

In the domain of second language acquisition (SLA), vocabulary knowledge has a definite role and has long been identified as a central element in second language achievement. Many researchers have approved this significance (Richard, 1976; cited in Meara, 1996; Nation, 1990; Lewis, 1993; Wolter, 2006; Xu & Li, 2011). The importance of vocabulary knowledge is accentuated more, when learners encounter a reading text or when they are in free-spoken interactions. Most of them have difficulties having a poor vocabulary and problem in retrieving them (Nagy & Herman, 1987; cited in Bishop & Yopp, 2009). What lies at the root of the problem denotes to the methods that teachers use for teaching vocabulary items. As Changhong (2010) put it, learning new words via wordlists and memorizing them by students has still been a prevalent approach conducting in EFL classrooms. Such lists are excluded from every communicative context; the belief that supports this technique seems to be that learners do not require much, if any, context to learn vocabulary, and that rote memorization is absolutely sufficient (Oxford & Crookall, 1990). Following this method, learners learn the new vocabularies in some events and therefore, they have difficulties with longer retention of words. For this cause, learning vocabulary becomes a tedious and meaningless work for learners. In the context of vocabulary teaching, the chief subject is that teachers should utilize suitable methods to alter learners into independent ones who deal well in different occasions with a long retention of vocabularies (Dligach, 2003).

The most basic method in current years has been the theory of semantic field. From a semantic point of view, the meaning of a word is elucidated when it is examined within the lexical field to which the extra lexical entries of that word belong (Pablo, 2000). As Aitchison (1987; cited in Hatch & Brown, 1995) put it, based on the mental lexicon and network theory, every word meaning in our mind is a unit, which attaches to semantically connected ones, and a semantic network is organized by the association of each unit. It means that the words of the language would not be understood as the isolated elements, but slightly as the natural grouping of the semantically related items. Accordingly, when learners associate the meaning of unfamiliar words with last ones, this will result in deeper learning and longer retention of the learned words. Consequently, vocabularies in our lexicon are greatly connected to each other and should be taught accordingly to augment learning.

A suitable tool that is based on semantic field theory and the framework of the mental lexicon is WordNet (Miller, 1995; Fellbaum, 1998). It is a semantic electronic dictionary that can be used for teaching vocabulary efficiently to EFL learners. English WordNet is built.
according to psycholinguistic reality of the mental lexicon of a native speaker. It is an effort to group words based on semantic relations and according to features of the mental lexicon.

1.2 Word Net Overview

The reinterpretation of the idea of lexicon and its advantages led psycholinguists and computational linguists to advance an electronic lexical database. In 1986, George Miller started the improvement of this lexical database concentrated on semantic relations. ‘‘His main aim was to activate the systematic patterns and relations of the mental lexicon in the database in order to supply the computational linguistics community with a store of lexical knowledge as broad as human lexical storage’’ (Miller, 1995; cited in Mansoory, Shamsfard, & Rouhizadeh, 2011, p.1). The second goal of this electronic dictionary was to have an extensive coverage of English vocabulary to be applied for teaching, learning, and research motives (Gu, 1995). This product was called ‘WordNet’. It is also provided for other languages. WordNet lexicon donates a good semantic framework by computing semantic similarity between words. It is a combining of traditional lexicographic information and modern computing. According to Dligach (2003), it is the single attainable resource dictionary that offer lexical as well as syntactic information. It involves phrasal verbs, collocations, and idiomatic phrases, but the central unit is word. The basic organizing connection to link words is synonymy.

The present study focuses on the following three questions and two hypotheses:

1. Does teaching words through semantic network of WordNet enhance intermediate EFL learners’ vocabulary learning?
2. Does teaching words via WordNet result in longer retention of vocabulary items?
3. What is the attitude of participating EFL learners towards the use of WordNet?

Hypothesis 1: Using "WordNet" as an instructional tool is not effective in vocabulary learning for intermediate EFL learners.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between using "WordNet" as an instructional tool and longer retention of vocabulary items.

2. Review of the Related Literature

There are several studies with semantic field theory as the theoretical framework underlying their work. Some of these studies are in favour of this theory and some others are against this theory. Crow and Quigley (1985; cited in Chypyshko & Truscott, 2010) applied two methods of traditional and semantic field to investigate the effectiveness of the new approach in their
passive vocabulary instruction. The result of the post-test showed that, the performance of students in the experimental group was higher than the control group and the researchers concluded that presenting words in semantic domains is more effective and result in long retention of vocabulary knowledge.

Lin (1997) in another study showed that, text for vocabulary learning supply context from which students can judge the definitions of the new words and explore semantic fields of new words. He referred to the organization of the lexicon and supported his work with findings in psycholinguistics and its implementation to teaching. As an example, he presented three verbs *Jump*, *Walk*, and *Run* and decomposed them into two components: *Move* as the common verb was shared by the three verbs and a phrase as a distinguishing feature.

The common verb move is called the hypernym. The distinctive phrase connected to the hypernym contrasts each meaning from that of other verbs. The three verbs that share the same hypernym are called hyponym. The common hypernym and the hyponyms forma semantic field.

Regarding vocabulary instruction, he mentioned that semantic field allows teachers to arrange the learning order of target vocabulary according to their structure obtained from the analysis.

Abdollahzade and Amiri (2009) examined the relationship between using this technique and different perceptual modalities of learners. The result of the test was analyzed using independent sample t-test. The analysis of the scores showed that the experimental group outperformed the control group. Regarding perceptual styles, the participants with a visual modality did better than other groups.

Etren and Terkin (2008) introduced their study with referring to the importance of vocabulary instruction and the fact that there is not an agreement among authors as to the methodology for teaching vocabulary items. The result showed that presenting new words in semantically unrelated sets was faster than presenting vocabulary items in semantically related sets.

The last study belongs to Papathanasiou (2009; cited in Chypyshko & Truscott, 2010). She conducted her experimental method for two groups of participants; the first group were young intermediate learners of English and the second group were the novice adult English learners. The results of the experiment were different for two groups; learning vocabulary items in semantically related sets had a negative effect on adult learners, but it had no effect on intermediate learners. The researcher concluded that this method might not be suitable for beginners, but not for intermediate and higher level ones.
3. Methodology

3.1 Participants
The participants who took part in this study were a sample of 40 female students. They had studied English for at least 4 years in an English institute. Their age ranged between 17 and 19 years old. The mean age was 18.5. The participants of the study were tested to determine their level of proficiency using Oxford placement test (2007). All of the participants were found to be in the same level of proficiency, namely, intermediate level. After that, they were randomly divided into two classes, one control, and one experimental group, each consisting of 20 students.

3.2 Instrumentation
The first test used in the study was Oxford placement test (2007) to homogenize the participants and specify their level of proficiency. Its reliability was calculated via statistical package, SPSS 16, Cronbach’s a; the result was 0.76 that was more than 0.50 and thus it was acceptable. The second test was a vocabulary test that was devised by the researcher; it included 80 items in three forms of Matching, Gap filling, and Multiple-choice. The third instrument used in the study was a likert-scale that was only used in the experimental group to elicit their opinions about the new instructional material, WordNet. (See appendix).

3.3 Pilot Study
Before using the vocabulary test as the pre-test in the study, it was piloted with 15 participants. First, the reliability of the test was calculated via the SPSS 16, Cronbach’s a; the result was 0.78 that was more than 0.50; therfore it was acceptable. Then, in order to make sure about the content validity of the test, the researcher did Item analysis in which difficulty level of the test and the structure of the test items were determined. In this stage, the amount of P-value and Point biserial correlation were calculated through excel software; the result of item analysis were in line with the acceptbale range of these values according to Henning (1987; cited in Fulcher and Davidson, 2007, p. 102). After this stage, the participants of the study answered the vocabulary items as the pre-test.

3.4 Treatment in the Experimental group
The first topic was human feelings and actions. In this unit, the writer presented the new words under three sub-titles; for instance, Pride and Jealousy under the heading: Feeling; Whisper, Stroll, Stare, and March under the heading: Ways of speaking, looking. The third heading was: Things we do with our hand, and the related vocabularies were Wave, Point, and Press. There were some pictures related to the words too. This way of presentation
provided a semantic field, in which, the words and headings were related to each other and made the lesson easy to understand. Then, a short definition accompanied the word. First, the researcher illustrated the relationship between the words and the heading like the following figure:

Figure 3.1 Display of the target words semantic field

Then, the researcher tried to attract the students attention first to the heading, then to the words related to it. For instance, Pride and Jealousy are two different words, but both of them are a kind of feeling in the human being. Whisper, Stare, March, and Stroll are different kinds of speaking that each one can be used in a different situation. Wave, Point, and Press are different works that can be done using hands. For the word Pride, a short definition was provided too. Next, she used the definitions given in the book and made the meaning of the words clearer. In the second section, in order to use WordNet, and test the effect of the hierarchical relationships that were in the hypernym and hyponyms, she both showed the meaning of the words in the WordNet, and furthermore, displayed the same meaning in a form of semantic representation for the participants. The representation of Pride is in the following figure:

Figure 3.2 the semantic representation of “Pride”

As the above table shows, this kind of presentation creates a kind of semantic field and context for the target word.

3.5.2 Treatment in the Control group

Pride: a feeling of self-respect and personal worth. 
Self-esteem/ Self-pride: a feeling of pride in yourself. 
Self-importance/ ego: an inflated feeling of pride in your superiority to others. 
Hypernym: Feeling  
Antonym: humility  
Synonym: Pridefulness
In this class, in order not to provide a semantic field for the words, the researcher did not present the words under the related topic; instead, she only used the text itself that included short definitions of the words and the accompanying pictures. After that, she presented the vocabularies in a table like a wordlist.

4. Results

4.1 Pre test

The vocabulary test was given as the pre-test to all the participants in two classes of control and experimental prior to the treatment. The instructions to answer the test were clear and understandable by the participating EFL learners. They had 100 minutes time to answer the test. The aim of pre-test was to make sure that there was not a significant difference in the participants, regarding their vocabulary knowledge. The result of 2-independent samples t-test and the statistics is presented in the following tables:

Table 4.1 Group statistics for the pre-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>score Experimental</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35.05</td>
<td>.395</td>
<td>.312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34.50</td>
<td>.289</td>
<td>.256</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 Independent sample t-test for pre-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>score</th>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.396</td>
<td>.533</td>
<td>1.454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>1.454</td>
<td>37.582</td>
<td>.154</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above tables show the result of the independent t-test for control and experimental group. As it can be concluded from the table, the mean score for the control group is 34.50 and the mean score for the experimental group is 35.05. The mean difference of the two groups is .55 and the p value is p = .154 > .05. t = 45 that is less than the critical t. The results show that the two groups are almost the same or it can be said that there is not a significant
difference between them. As a result of this statistics, the researcher concluded that, the two groups were almost equal in terms of their vocabulary knowledge.

4.2 Immediate Post-test

After treatment, the vocabulary knowledge test was given to participants as the first post-test (immediate post-test); the result of the independent sample t-test is given in the following tables:

Table 4.3 Group statistics on post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Statistics</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>Std. Error Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>65.30</td>
<td>.812</td>
<td>.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>58.45</td>
<td>.623</td>
<td>.591</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 independent samples t-test on post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Samples Test</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>Mean Difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>score</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>t-test for Equality of Means</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td>.676</td>
<td>.416</td>
<td>7.086</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.086</td>
<td>35.743</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>6.850</td>
<td>.967</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the tables 4.7 and 4.8, the mean for the experimental group was 65.30 and the same value for the control group was 58.45. The result showed that the experimental group performed better than the control group. The result of the t-test also showed that the experimental group has performed significantly better than the control group; the p value (sig) was zero and the t score was 7.086 that was more than the critical t. The result proved that the two groups were significantly different from each other at this stage. The following graph shows the result of the immediate post-test explicitly:

4.2.1 Comparison between pre-test and post-test for Experimental group
Although the result of the immediate post-test showed that the experimental group was better than the control group, at the same time it showed that both groups had a better performance than the pre-test; the result of this progress for the experimental group is depicted in the following table and graph:

Table 4.5 Comparison between pre test and post test for experimental group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35.05</td>
<td>.395</td>
<td>.312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>65.30</td>
<td>.812</td>
<td>.765</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table and shows that there was a better performance after the treatment for the experimental group.

4.2.2 Comparison between pre-test and post-test for Control group

Table 4.6 Comparison between pre and post test for control group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Score</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34.50</td>
<td>.289</td>
<td>.256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>58.45</td>
<td>.623</td>
<td>.591</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that the control group also had a better performance after the treatment.

4.3 Delayed post-test

In order to investigate the second hypothesis in this study, the researcher used the vocabulary knowledge test for the third time and gave it to the participants as the delayed post test 5 weeks after the treatment; the result of this test could show the retention of vocabulary in the participants. The result of the test showed that there was not a difference between immediate and delayed post-test for the participants in the experimental group:

Table 4.7 Descriptive statistics in the delayed post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Statistics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 immediate</td>
<td>65.30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.812</td>
<td>.765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
<td>65.60</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.864</td>
<td>.816</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 Correlation statistics in the delayed post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Correlations</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 immediate &amp; delayed</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.912</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the above tables, the result of the paired sample t-test showed that p value (sig) = .204 > .05, and t = 1.314 that was smaller than the critical t. The correlation between the two tests was also .91. The result demonstrated that there was not a significant difference between immediate and delayed post-test for the participants in the experimental group and it refers to the retention of the vocabulary items.

For the control group, the result of the delayed post-test is presented in the following tables:

Table 4.10 Descriptive statistics for the delayed post-test in the control group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>immediate</td>
<td>58.45</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.623</td>
<td>.591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>delayed</td>
<td>56.95</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.516</td>
<td>.456</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11 Correlation statistics for the delayed post-test in the control group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>.358</td>
<td>.121</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12 Paired sample t-test for the control group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Std. Difference</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Deviation</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>t</td>
<td>df</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1</td>
<td>immediate –</td>
<td>1.500</td>
<td>2.236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>delayed</td>
<td>.453</td>
<td>2.547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the above tables show, the p value (sig) = .007 < .05, and \( t = 3.000 > \) critical \( t \). The result revealed that there was a difference between immediate and delayed post-test for the control group. Thus, there was not a significant retention in terms of the vocabulary knowledge.

The following chart shows the comparison between experimental and control groups throughout the study:

![Comparison chart](image)

Figure 4.1 Comparison of the Experimental and control group throughout the study

### 4.4 Likert-Scale Questionnaire

After the participants answered the post test, in order to explore the attitudes of the experimental group towards WordNet and the treatment in the class, the researcher designed a likert-scale Questionnaire; it included 6 items, and for each one there were 5 choices. It is presented in the appendix. Generally speaking, all the participants liked to use WordNet as a dictionary to learn vocabularies.

### 4.5 Discussion

As it can be understood from the findings of the study, the experimental group that was being taught using WordNet at class performed better than the control group, which was taught without WordNet and used the printed dictionary. Although, at the beginning of the study both groups were almost the same, based on the result of the pre-test, after treatment, and as the result of the immediate post test showed, their performance were significantly different from each other. Thus, it can be concluded that the treatment (using WordNet and its semantic relations) was more effective. Although as a course of instruction the control group made some progress at the end of the semester, the point that should be considered is that the experimental group had a better performance that was a reliable proof of the effectiveness of the treatment. In both immediate and delayed post-tests the result of the \( t \)-test in the two groups confirmed the superior effectiveness of the experimental treatment than the control
treatment. Furthermore, the result of the delayed post test showed more retention of vocabulary items of the participants of the experimental group than those in the control group. At last, a Likert-scale questionnaire was distributed among the participants of experimental group; the result of the descriptive statistics showed that, more than 80 percent of the learners liked the new instructional tool, WordNet, and enjoyed working with it. The significance of the present study lies in this fact that no research study so far used WordNet as a dictionary for teaching and learning vocabulary items; the only similar characteristic of the present study is related to those researches that used semantic field theory as a linguistic basis for their work. Of course, those studies were also limited in this presentation since they did not use the hierarchical relationships such as hyponymy, hypernymy, meronymy, etc. thus; the findings of this research are in line with the studies like Khosravizadeh & Molaei (2011), Amer (2011), Changhong (2010), Abdolahzadeh & Amiri (2009), Al jarf (2006), Hashemi & Ghodasai (2005).

An important point regarding learning vocabulary items was a long-term retention for the participants. That is why she decided to have a delayed post-test, and after a longer time tested the participants learning of the target words. According to the result of the delayed post-test that was analyzed earlier in this chapter, as a result of comparison between immediate and delayed post-test, there was not a statistically significant difference in participants in the experimental group who used WordNet as an instructional material both at class and at home. This result confirmed that not only they learned the words in a short term, but also they learned the vocabulary items for a longer time that it could refer to the retention of these words in their memory. On the other hand, in the control group, it seemed that learning of the vocabulary items was not kept for a long time for them; the result of the delayed post-test and the comparison between the same test with immediate post-test confirmed that there was a difference in the participants' retention of vocabularies after a while; although they had learned the vocabulary items in a short time and had made a progress due to the course instruction, they could not retain them for a longer time. This difference between control and experimental group was quite clear due to the result of two tests administered in the study.

Since it was the first time that WordNet dictionary was used in the class and the participants got familiar with some semantic terms (e.g. hyponymy, hypernymy, etc.), the researcher was eager to know the participants' opinions toward the treatment; A Likert-scale questionnaire was designed to investigate their ideas. As it was mentioned before in the same chapter, if not all, but the majority of the participants enjoyed and preferred using WordNet.
than a traditional dictionary for learning words. They believed that, the semantic relations in the WordNet were helpful for them to understand the vocabulary items better and they remained in their memory for a longer time. The result of the Likert-scale questionnaire did also confirm that the new instructional tool was effective in learning words. Due to the result of both tests, and Likert-scale questionnaire, both null hypotheses in this study could be rejected, since the results showed that using WordNet was effective in both learning and retention of the vocabulary items in the participants. Regarding the structure of WordNet, and its similarity with the mental lexicon, the result of the study can be logical and acceptable.

5. Conclusions
In this section, the research questions already presented in the first chapter are dealt with one by one. The questions will be answered on the basis of the findings of the present study.

Question One: Does teaching words through semantic network of WordNet enhance students' learning?

According to the data obtained from the post-test of the study in the experimental group, the answer is 'yes'. The participants' performance in the experimental group after treatment via WordNet was higher than pre test before treatment. It shows that semantic network of WordNet was effective in the learner's vocabulary learning.

Question Two: Does teaching words via WordNet result in longer retention of vocabulary items?

According to the data obtained from the delayed post-test of the study in the experimental group, and its comparison with the immediate post-test in the same group, again the answer is in the affirmative. The scores that the participants gained in the second post-test were not different from the first one, and it shows that the learners could keep the learning in their mind for a longer period of time.

Question Three: What is the attitude of participating EFL learners towards the use of WordNet?

According to the data obtained from the Likert-Scale questionnaire, the participating EFL learners in the experimental group had positive ideas toward WordNet; the result of the descriptive statistics based on this survey revealed that most of the participants enjoyed working with WordNet.

5.1 Pedagogical Implications
The data obtained from this research study revealed that WordNet that is an electronic dictionary based on human mental lexicon is effective for teaching and learning vocabulary items for EFL learners. As a result, it can be wildly used for learning and teaching vocabulary items; EFL learners can use it along with traditional dictionaries, and teachers in schools, institutes, and colleges can use it for teaching purposes; Besides, policy-makers can also benefit from the findings in that they can include the use of such devices and advances in the preparation of syllabi and curricula.

5.2 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study
The limitation of the present study was due to the number of students; since language institutes did not cooperate with the researcher well, she was forced to select a limited number of participants, and as a result, the research design was a quasi-experimental study instead of a true experimental one. The first delimitation of the study was the proficiency level of the participants; since the number of students was limited, she could not run her research for different proficiency levels and test the effect of the new instructional tool on them. The second delimitation of the research is related to the gender of the participants; all the learners present in the study were female and the researcher could not see the result of the WordNet application on male learners. The third delimitation of the study concerns the fact that, the research was limited to EFL context.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research
In order to find more information about the effect of the new instructional tool, WordNet, on learners, researchers can select the participants from both EFL and ESL population; they can choose different proficiency levels to see the result; in addition to females, they can have males too, and compare the results of the two genders. Moreover, they can increase the time of their experiment; besides, other training environments such as schools and colleges can be used in the research studies. As a result, the findings would be more generalizable to a larger population.

References


**Appendix : Likert Scale Questionnaire**

**Dear student:**

Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree Nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. WordNet was easy to use.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I enjoyed working with WordNet more than working with other non-semantic English to English dictionaries.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Using WordNet caused a positive motivation in me for learning vocabulary.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Graphic presentation of vocabulary items based on WordNet was helpful in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Iranian EFL Journal* 363
learning target words.

5. Using WordNet, words stayed longer and better in my memory.

6. I like to use WordNet frequently to learn English vocabulary.

1. استفاده کردن از وردنت آسان بود.
2. از کار کردن با وردنت بیشتر از کار کردن با نیگرفته‌های های غیر معناشنازی انگلیسی به انگلیسی لذت بردم.
3. استفاده کردن از وردنت انگیزه مثبتی برای یادگیری لغت در من ایجاد کرد.
4. نمایش تصویری وازگان بر اساس وردنت در پادگیری لغات وردنظیر گلک کنندنه بود.
5. با استفاده از وردنت لغات بهتر و طولانی کر در ذهنم مانند.
6. دوست دارم اغلب از وردنت برای پادگیری لغت استفاده کنم.
Title

Beautification of Metaphor in William Shakespeare’s Sonnets

Authors

Mokhtar Ebrahimi (Ph.D)
Shahid Chamran University, Ahvaz, Iran

Maryam Ebrahimi (M.A)

Biodata

Mokhtar Ebrahimi, assistant professor of Persian literature and language at Shahid Chamran University, Ahvaz, Iran. His research interests include Ferdowsi, Hafez Shirazi, comparative literature, and Khaghani Shervani.

Maryam Ebrahimi, M.A in English literature and language. His research interests include Ferdowsi and William Shakespeare.

Abstract

In this study, metaphors of Shakespeare’s sonnets are to be regarded in terms of the relationship that exists among line’s elements in horizontal axis and the link that establishes among lines in vertical axis; therefore, both verbal and semantic proportions of metaphors is regarded, and also the function of metaphorical elements that play in the general function of the sonnet is studied. Thus, the secondary role of metaphors in its semantic texture is also dealt with, because Shakespeare organizes metaphors in the whole sonnet in which the narration turns to be a symbolic form in a way which can create a widespread semantic circle based on the view of each reader. What is considered as the characteristic feature of the device of metaphor by Shakespeare is the specific type of selecting metaphors and their association next to each other, which projects both real aspects of life and also approaches beyond the contemporary society of the poet or border of timelessness, in order to explain significant words of human life for future readers of human society. Therefore, article focuses on the beauty of the sonnets or beautiful signs of metaphors from a semiotic viewpoint.

Keywords: Beauty, Metaphor, William Shakespeare, Semiotic, Sonnet

1. Introduction
Literary techniques and devices become diverse and various in relation to literary works. Hence all texts should choose a proportionate technique based on status and mood of its addressed, subject matter, and era in order to follow its own defined and specified function and influence, and achieve its own ultimate end or ends. These devices have been altered and diversified during history of literature. They have found multifarious forms and portraits in terms of themes in connection with chronotope capacities. In other words, literary devices, including metaphor, use themes in connection with cultural, social, financial, and continental issues in order to deservedly establish its link with addressed. Accordingly, the most significant factor of acceptability of a literary text is its sonority premise. And metaphor is responsible for designing a part of this sonority (eloquence and rhetoric) of text.

This article discusses beauty of William Shakespeare’s sonnets in connection with semiotics. Beautiful signs of metaphors are studied in order to reveal beauty of the sonnets. These beautiful signs stir up artistic and beautiful aspects of metaphors. These artistic significations are considered as the dominant goal of this article.

Therefore, in an analysis of beauty of the sonnets, studying signs of metaphors in connection with semiotics is very significant. The sentimental and beautiful signs of metaphors control and overturn impression and experience of the addressed.

Metaphor is one of the poetic images besides simile, figure, and irony. Metaphor can be more artistic and beautiful in connection with its more activation of mind of addressed in dealing with the beautification of the text. Of course, this condition depends on the technique of use of literary devices in connection with the principle of mood appropriateness which is the most important principle in expressiveness of any literary text.

Metaphor is a succinct simile in terms of structure; therefore, two sides of comparison, tenor and vehicle, are mentioned in simile, but only one side is mentioned, and the other side is omitted in metaphor. Another point that is proposed in the discussion of metaphor, and is related to the fundamental principle of discourse, is its accurate application. In other words, in every period, a particular style in connection with the use of metaphor and its type is current. For example, in the poem of an era, most metaphors refer to beautiful and sensual similes, and it is actually the succinct aspect of concrete simile. In addition, in another era, based on the trend of literature in immaterial and subjective affairs, metaphor also inclines to mental, subjective, and immaterial concepts.

Metaphors can be viewed from a different viewpoint. The use and application of metaphor can have completely varied forms in various texts. For example, in epic genre, the use and themes of metaphors in regard to warlike and epic atmosphere lead to heroic metaphors,
whereas, in lyrical and sentimental genre, metaphor and its related concepts have a completely different style from epic genre in terms of elegance and subtlety of language and sentimental and emotional atmosphere. Accordingly, the applications of metaphor are not the same in literary texts, and it has a special kind of feature in regard to period, setting, genre, and style of every poet.

2. Discussion

Roman Jackobson’s (1985) and Roland Barthes’ (1986) theories of semiotics are associated with the study of beauty of the sonnets. Literariness and beautiful aspects of metaphors can be inferred from Jackobson’s theories. Metaphor’s beauty includes expanding the literariness of language and improving the discourse. The beautiful aspects of Shakespeare’s sonnets are revealed by artistic study of his sonnets. Jackobson (1956) looks at language of metaphor from a different and artistic viewpoint. According to Jackobson (1956) “the development of a discourse may take place along two different semantic lines: one topic may lead to another either through their similarity or through their contiguity. The metaphoric way would be the most appropriate term for the first case” (pp. 76-82).

Metaphor is created by the supremacy of selection and combination of “paradigmatic axis” (Jakobson, 1985, p. 29), although “syntagmatic relations” (Jakobson, 1985, p. 29) are also necessary. According to Jakobson (1956) declares: "the poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination" (cited in Bradford, 2005, p. 9). Therefore, sonnets’ superior beautiful device is metaphor. The artistic meaning of second order language is created through proceeding from first order, and the addressee addresses the addressee with beautiful names. Therefore, this relationship between the levels of selection and combination in equivalence is very significant in artistic poetry. The beautiful signs of a metaphor can be appreciated from a surface level to deeper levels. Signification of metaphors begins the beautiful process of creating signifiers. This moving from first order to second order language allows growing signs based on preceding metaphors or signs. According to Barthes (1986), a denotative statement is a first-order statement: a statement which concerns the literal (first-order) meaning of the words that make up that statement. […] To move from the plane of denotation to connotation involves the same processes we have already seen in the reading of myth: we move from a first-order meaning (denotation) to a second-order meaning (connotation). […] As Barthes puts it: 'the
first system becomes the plane of expression, or signifier, of the second system. [...] As Barthes adds: 'the first system is then the plane of denotation and the second system (wider than the first) the plane of connotation. We shall therefore say that a connoted system is a system whose plane of expression is itself constituted by a signifying system.' (cited in Allen, 2004, pp. 50-51)

In sonnet three, the youth should look in the mirror in order to decide to preserve his beauty. He will be old, and betray himself in future. The youth should be remembered by the beauty of another beauty: "disdains the tillage of thy husbandry" (sonnet 3, line 6) makes a similarity between "thy" and "cultivation":

Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
Of his self-love to stop posterity?"
Thou art thy mother's glass and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime,
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
Despite of wrinkles this thy golden time. (Sonnet 3, lines 6-12)

Therefore, the association of "thy," "tillage," and "husbandry" create a metaphor that can be perceived through these signs. "Thy" is cultivation that should dig, seed, farm, and prepare in order that the land be grown and made many other seeds. In sonnet three, "calls back the lovely April of her prime," (line 10) means the poet reveals the equivalent relationship between "her" and "plant" in the paradigmatic axis. This metaphor refers to the beauty and fresh age of the youth's mother and the youth himself that has been compared with spring. Lines nine and ten "Thou art thy mother's glass and she in thee/calls back the lovely April of her prime" suggest that youth and beauty are the lovely April in prime. This freshness and the image of beauty can be seen in the child.

In addition to paradigmatic relation, similarity, or equivalency, syntagmatic relation does also create and direct metaphors. Sonnets’ metaphors are signifiers to preceding signs; therefore, they are linked to other metaphors of the sonnets, as signifiers. As Jakobson (1956) put it:

in poetry one syllable is equalized with any other syllable of the same sequence; word stress is assumed to equal word stress, as unstress equals unstress; prosodic long is matched with long, and short with short; word boundary equals word boundary, no boundary equals no boundary; syntactic pause equals syntactic pause,
no pause equals no pause. Syllables are converted into units of measure, and so are morae or stresses. (cited in Lodge, 2000, p. 38)

Here, we can see the analogous relationship among the lines of the sonnet. Metaphors of the sonnet can be found out through line one. Sonnet three "now is the time that face should form another" (line 2) links with and creates the next metaphors:

Look in thy glass and tell the face thou viewest,
"Now is the time that face should form another,
Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,
Thou dost beguile the world, unblemish some mother.
For where is she so fair, whose uneared womb
Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
Of his self-love to stop posterity?"
Thou art thy mother’s glass and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime,
So thou through windows of thine age shalt see,
Despite of wrinkles this thy golden time. (Sonnet 3, lines 1-10)

"Form another," (line 2) prompts "fresh repair," (line 3) "so fair," (line 5) "the lovely April of her prime," (line 8) and "thy golden time" (line 10) are metaphors that focus on continuity of the youth’s beauty and youth in future. First stratum or signifier of sonnet three sparks the next metaphors of the sonnet. In other words, as Barthes (1972) put it, "it is again this duplicity of the signifier which determines the characters of the signification" (p. 122).

Jakobson regards metaphor either as a literary device and the development of a discourse. A metaphor can be recognized through "understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain" (Kovecses, 2002, p. 4). They have been derived from one metaphor or another. Moreover, the abstract domain is the target domain, and concrete entity is called the source domain; therefore, these two domains are linked and arranged in order to make a metaphor. This provides the beautification aspect of the sonnets.

Source and target domains in the sonnets show their own close links beautifully. Metaphors are abstracts, and the beautification of these sonnets show that these abstract metaphors are revealed by concrete imageries. There are beautiful bridged parallel between these two domains that makes a metaphor. These beautiful relationships of imageries are based on similarities or equivalency between domains. As Jakobson (1956) put it,
the selection is produced on the base of equivalence, similarity and dissimilarity, synonymity and antonymity, while the combination, the buildup of the sequence, is based on contiguity. The poetic function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination. Equivalence is promoted to the constitutive device of the sequence. (cited in Lodge, 2000, p. 38)

"Painting thy outward walls so costly gay" of sonnet one hundred and forty-six suggests that the speaker is upset because of his devotion to his own appearance. We start our semiotic of architecture from the previous signifier of splendid castle to the second meanings of the sonnet. Therefore, the multiplicity of signs is shown:

Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
   Why so large cost having so short a lease,
   Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
   Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
   Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body’s end?
   Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant’s loss, (Sonnet 146, lines 4-9)

He reproaches his own doings. "Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend" asserts that his physical body is a "mansion" that is declining gradually. Death catches body, and time destroys a mansion. The only thing that remains is soul, because body lives in brief. Therefore, "then, soul, live thou upon thy servant’s loss" suggests that soul dominates this "fading mansion." In other words, this restricted body should be subjected to the soul. For this reason, the youth gains eternity.

Sonnet fifty-five shows the "marble" cairns, and splendid "monuments" of noble men. He challenges the endurance of those splendid architectures:

Not marble nor the gilded monuments
   Of princes shall outlive this pow’rful rhyme,
   But you shall shine more bright in these contents
   Than unswept stone, besmeared with sluttish time. (Sonnet 55, lines 1-4)

The speaker makes everybody, especially the youth, sure that all beautiful architecture are being destroyed by the destroyers of all times and "injuries of time." In contrast, the speaker's verses will remain throughout the history; therefore, the youth also survives in the poems, emits light or rays; thus, all future generations will be attracted towards him. Nothing can destroy his verses, even ruinous battles, but these destructive battles can destroy those splendid architectures. The youth "shines" in the verses continues to exist opposes to this issue that all natural or artificial forces can ruin noble architectures.
"And thou in this shalt find thy monument, /When tyrants’ crests and tombs of brass are spent" in sonnet one hundred and seven also refer to this point that the speaker's poetry can maintain the youth's beauty. Again, the speaker asserts that the youth's beauty is preserved in his poetry. In addition, this poetry should be the youth's last eternal "monument".

Furthermore, he compares the youth's endless monument with that of tyrants. He adds that the tombs of noble men that are made of brass being destroyed by passing of time. Here, like sonnet sixty-four and sixty-five, brass has been compared and contrasted with the speaker's poetry. Accordingly, the poet itself and the youth continue to live in an eternal tomb. These lines of sonnet sixty-four bring out the overturning of the statues and monuments in sonnet fifty-five:

When I have seen by time’s fell hand defaced  
The rich proud cost of outworn buried age,  
When sometime lofty towers I see down razed,  
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage; (Sonnet 64, lines 1-4)

All statues, monuments, and architectures have been destroyed during the centuries. Tall and beautiful "towers" of aristocratic cities and noble metropolitans are subordinated to the destruction of time. Even the most endurable metal like "brass" decays. As a result, the speaker warns the death of everything, even he thinks about the death of the youth that "this thought is as a death." "Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea" in sonnet sixty-five can be associated with the "lofty towers" and "brass" in sonnet sixty-four, and "monuments" in sonnet fifty-five:

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,  
But sad mortality o’ersways their power,  
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,  
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?  
O how shall summer’s honey breath hold out  
Against the wrackful siege of batt’ring days  
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,  
Nor gates of steel so strong but time decays?  
O fearful meditation: where, alack,  
Shall time’s best jewel from time’s chest lie hid?  
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?  
Or who his spoil or beauty can forbid?  
O none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright. (Sonnet 65, lines 1-14)

Time attacks all the "mortal" splendid buildings that are made of brass, stone, and earth. Particularly brass, that is assumed to be eternal, has been put against poetry. However, all these elements are defeated. But time destroys the noble kingdom and its "power"; accordingly, this power with its great art of architecture reaches its end. In sonnet sixty-five, the speaker declares that the youth will be alive just in his verses, although other noble arts cannot resist the "rage" of time. Therefore, "that in black ink my love may still shine bright" means that beauty of the youth emits light in the verses, and attracts the people’s eyes.

"And ruined love when it is built anew/Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater" of sonnet one hundred and nineteen show that the speaker's love's palace has been demolished:

O benefit of ill, now I find true
That better is by evil still made better.
And ruined love when it is built anew
Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.
So I return rebuked to my content,
And gain by ills thrice more than I have spent. (Sonnet 119, lines 9-14)

He turns, however, to declare that this destroyed palace can be reconstructed again, so that it will be more beautiful, stout, and splendid than before. The previous lines also emphasize this issue that he can take advantage of his wrongs and errors. "So I return rebuked to my content./And gain by ills thrice more than I have spent" focus on this point that speaker conceives himself that reproach for his mistakes gives him hope to continue the rest of his way logically, and captures more advantages out of this "evil" and blames thrice.

"Or laid great bases for eternity" in sonnet one hundred twenty five shows that humankind constructs stout foundations for great architecture, like "pyramid," and "monument," in order to make them live forever. Based on semiotics, Shakespeare used different already existed ancient signs of architecture, and represented these signs beautifully:

Were’t ought to me I bore the canopy,
With my extern the outward honoring,
Or laid great bases for eternity,
Which proves more short than waste or ruining?
Have I not seen dwellers on form and favor
Lose all, and more by paying too much rent,
For compound sweet forgoing simple savor,
Pitiful thrivers, in their gazing spent?
No, let me be obsequious in thy heart,
And take thou my oblation, poor but free,
Which is not mixed with seconds, knows no art,
But mutual render only me for thee.
Hence, thou suborned informer, a true soul,
When most impeached, stands least in thy control. (Sonnet 125, lines 1-14)

But they fail to do so, because all monuments have been destroyed by different unpleasant events. For this reason, eternity finishes, and destruction continues to live. Longing to build an eternal masterpiece of architecture did not happen. The speaker, therefore, turns to his unique valuable living thing in the world, and asserts that he is deserved to be praised and adhered. The only gift of the speaker for the friend is himself. Therefore, the speaker is the only true friend of the youth forever.

Furthermore, the interpretations of sculptures are possible through studying its beautiful metaphors. Like previous examples of the sonnets, Shakespeare evolved preceding first level of signs. These signs turn to be a connotative signifier in Shakespeare's metaphors. Semiotic of these signs shows the beautiful second order language of Shakespeare. In sonnet twenty-seven, the speaker is tired physically; therefore, he starts thinking and imagining at night in his bed:

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travel tired,
But then begins a journey in my head
To work my mind when body’s work expired.
For then my thoughts (from far where I abide)
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
Looking on darkness which the blind do see.
Save that my soul’s imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
Which like a jewel (hung in ghastly night)
Makes black night beauteous and her old face new.
Lo, thus by day my limbs, by night my mind,
For thee, and for my self, no quiet find. (Sonnet 27, lines 1-14)
His thoughts go far away in order to meet his addressee, his eyes are open in darkness, and he gazes at darkness like the blind. His thought about the addressee's image evolves from his "soul's imagery sight." Then he sees the addressee's "shadow" in darkness or "sightless view." Image of the addressee is like a shining and valuable stone that emanates and diffuses rays or light in darkness. In addition, it "makes black night beauteous and her old face new," night turns to be attractive and novel in association with that "jewel." Here "night" refers to Michelangelo's sculpture in Florence that is called ‘night’. Therefore, this mysterious night changes to be sweet and beautiful; in other words, this hidden dark night turns to be seen and brighten, and diffuse light everywhere "like a jewel." Thus, night achieves a different and novel appearance. Here, Shakespeare changed the sign of sculpture beautifully.

Sonnet forty-four shows that the speaker has made of two elements, water and earth. He wishes that he could pass very long distances, if his "flesh were thought," had this capacity to control over huge distances, and "nimble thought can jump both sea and land":

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,

    Injurious distance should not stop my way,
    For then despite of space I would be brought,
    From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.
    No matter then although my foot did stand
    Upon the farthest earth removed from thee,
    For nimble thought can jump both sea and land, (Sonnet 44, lines 1-7)

When line one "if the dull substance of my flesh were thought" is studied, it seems that it focuses on a sculpture, because sculptures’ ingredients consists of these two "heavy" elements. The speaker confines in these "heavy" elements from which he is made of. Thus, he cannot move in order to reach his beloved. The speaker reaches this conclusion that his "flesh" or sculpture is too heavy to be moved, because of the bulky elements of earth and water. Like a sculpture that cannot move, he laments for confining in the jail of these elements.

As sonnet fifty-three shows the elements of earth and water as ingredients of men and implicitly sculptures, it can be said that "on Helen's cheek all art of beauty set/and you in Grecian tires are painted new" (sonnet 53, lines 7-8) focus on the praise of the sculpture of Helen of Troy. As a result, as if the sculpture of the youth reproduced from the painted sculpture of Helen. He is the "ideal" of worldly living creatures. Therefore, studying semiotic of the sculptures of the sonnets manifests that we confront with a fabric of existed signifiers that entered into Shakespeare's metaphors beautifully.
These signs of metaphors of time show the beauty of the language of the signs. The combination of these metaphors focuses on signification. The metaphors of the sonnets carry the signs and voices of metaphors outside the text. Therefore, metaphors of the sonnets are second order language that relate to first order system of metaphors. In other words, the meanings of metaphor are achieved through preceding sign system to connotative signifier. These weaves of combining metaphors manifest the beautiful beauty of the sonnets.

Many systems of signs turn to be texts in which one text transfers to another text and this process is limitless. This mutual communication also exists in literary texts. That is, each text contains endless statements, words, and names that have "already said" (Barthes 1986, p. 168) and written.

3. Conclusion

Metaphors of Shakespeare’s sonnets, like a text, are created by a texture with warp and woof of vertical axis among lines and horizontal axis among each lines’ elements. He, in order to bestow his sonnet a unified structure, creates proportion among the metaphors of sum total of lines which lead readers to both superficial meanings (first layer) and significantly, the very depth of meanings. He does not deal with unrelated and scattered words, but he strongly continues to establish a beautiful proportion among metaphorical elements of a poem. Thus, when they are to be organized in a coherent narration; consequently, they transform to a discourse among varieties of readers with different thoughts, and then a text is created. And the text of the sonnets render additional interpretations in each reading based on the especial view of the reader. What is significant in this ambivalent relationship between reader and text is that the sonnet causes a continuous effect in developing the appreciation and understanding of the reader and provides the beautiful devices for its eternal continuity. Furthermore, Shakespeare, with rendering his own artistic and beautiful metaphors, does maintain the principle of responsiveness from preceding texts, and beautifully revives those texts in his own poetical invention and creation.

References


Title

Translation Universals: A Case Study of Explicitation in Persian-English-Persian Translations

Authors

Masoud Sharififar (Ph.D)
Shahid Bahonar University, Kerman, Iran

Seyed Mahmoud Reazi (M.A Candidate)
Shahid Bahonar University, Kerman, Iran

Biodata

Masoud Sharififar, assistant professor of translation studies at Shahid Bahonar University, Kerman, Iran. His research interests include comparative linguistics, applied linguistics, and discourse analysis.

Seyed Mahmoud Reazi, M.A candidate in translation studies at Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran. His research interests include literary translation, translation universals, and comparative linguistics.

Abstract

“Any science seeks generalities; the aim is to transcend knowledge of particular cases by discovering general regularities or laws” (Chesterman, 2001, p. 1). Blum-Kulka (1986) is among translation studies scholars who investigated ‘translation universals’ since the mid-nineties and who proposed ‘explicitation’ as a universal feature of translation, i.e. an inherent feature of translation process, regardless of languages involved. The present study, therefore, aims at analyzing the applicability of explicitation hypothesis in translations from Persian into English and vice versa. Cohesion is chosen as a significant medium through which explicitation was observable. This study analyzes three Persian as well as three English short stories and their translations. Subsequent to close reading, frequencies of three items of cohesive ties, namely, ellipsis, conjunction, and reference are calculated. The results show that all the three Persian translations from English STs support ‘explicitation hypothesis’. Two out of three English TTs from original Persian texts, however, are less explicit than their STs and thus do not follow explicitation hypothesis. This may be due to the relatively higher degree of influence of English on Persian. The results also show that the TTs,
both Persian and English, tend to approximate the norms and patterns of their STs, which may be an inherent feature of translation process.

**Keywords:** Translation universals, Explicitation hypothesis, ST, TT, Cohesive ties

### 1. Introduction

Translation studies as an interdisciplinary field has received much attention throughout the world in the past few decades. ‘Universals of translation’ is a term referring to a concept developed by translation scholars in order to describe the inevitable results of the process of translation between any given language pairs. Baker in her Encyclopedia of Translation Studies, defines universals of translation as “features which typically occur in translated rather than original texts and are thought to be independent of the influence of the specific language pairs involved in the process of translation” (2001, p. 288). Baker goes on to identify these ‘features’, retrievable through ‘contrastive analyses of translations and their source texts’, as simplification, avoidance of repetitions present in the source text, explicitation, normalization, discourse transfer, and distinctive distribution of lexical items (ibid).

The subject of ‘universals of translation’, as one of the controversial areas of translation studies, has been focused upon by many scholars and translators across the world. The problem is that no translation scholar can be found who knows all the languages, so, when analyzing, the scholar reflects and discusses the two or three languages in his/her area of knowledge. Most of the studies on this area focus on American and European languages. Thus there’s a need for those involved in translation training and practice in Iran to analyze this widely believed universal features of translation to add to our understanding of translation and translating.

The present paper, therefore, aimed at investigating explicitation, as a translation universal, in Persian to English as well as English to Persian translations and original Persian texts, through analyzing ‘cohesion’ as a prominent medium representing explicitation. The degree of explicitness of translated and non-translated original Persian as well as English texts will also be analyzed to point out the patterns and preferences of cohesive devices. The author hypothesized that English translated texts (from Persian) do not follow explicitation hypothesis, i.e. they are less explicit than their STs and that The degree of explicitness in translated Persian texts is lower compared to that of non-translated, original Persian texts.
2. Review of the Related Literature

2.1. Universals of Translation

Toury (1977) was among the first to propose that finding ‘general laws’ of translation process is ‘a fundamental task of descriptive translation studies’. In his article, Toury attempts to clarify what it means for a feature to be referred to as translation universal. For him “as one [the translator] increases one’s knowledge, or expands the field one takes into account, certain phenomena start repeating themselves and gradually become more predictable than others” (p.2).

Mauranen in her article (2003) utilizes a comparable corpora of Russian and English to obtain the result that “translations bore a closer affinity to each other than to untranslated texts” (as cited in Mauranen & Kujamaki (Eds), 2004, p. 79).

Blum-Kulka, on her seminal article (1986), analyzes English-Hebrew and English-French translations concerning five types of cohesive devices namely, substitution, ellipsis, reference, lexical cohesion and conjunction, and proposes the ‘explicitation hypothesis’ which sees explicitation as, possibly, an ‘inherent’ feature in the process of translation ‘regardless of […] differences between the two linguistic and textual systems involved [ST and TT]’ (in Venuti Ed. 2000, p. 300).

2.2. Explicitation Hypothesis

Blum-Kulka’s article (1986) is the basis for the theoretical framework of the present study. She, in her study, adopts a ‘discoursal and communicative approach’ to translation and analyzes shifts of cohesion and coherence.

In the category of shifts of cohesion, she maintains that ‘shifts in types of cohesive markers used in translation seem to affect translations in one or both of the following directions’:

a. Shifts in levels of explicitness; i.e. the general level of the target texts’ textual explicitness is higher or lower than that of the source text,

b. Shifts in text meaning(s); i.e. the explicit and implicit meaning potential of the source text changes through translations. This category is not the subject of the present study, hence not elaborated.

Furthermore grammatical differences between languages will be expressed by changes in the types of ties used to mark cohesion in source and target texts. Such transformations might carry with them a shift in the text’s overall level of explicitness (ibid).
She later on points out that for lack of empirical data the only way is to ‘examine different interlanguages’ and that ‘difference in length [of ST and TT] reflects the trend toward explicitation’.

She states that changes in the levels of explicitation occur ‘as a result of differences in stylistic preferences between two languages (i.e., one language showing a tendency for higher levels of redundancy through cohesion) or as a result of an explicitation process suggested to be inherent to translation.’ Hence, she argues that in order to obtain a valid set of findings one has to ‘first carry out a large-scale contrastive stylistic study (in a given register) to establish cohesive patterns in SL and TL, and then to examine translations to and from both languages to investigate shifts in cohesive levels that occur through translation. […] Such studies will need to establish independently: (1) the preferences in choice of cohesive ties in a given register in language A; (2) the preferences in the parallel register in language B; (3) the shifts in cohesive ties in translated texts of the same register from language A to B, and vice versa.

The results of the said study will reveal any of the following:
1. That cohesive patterns in TL texts tend to approximate the norms of TL texts of the same register.
2. That cohesive patterns in TL texts tend to reflect norms of SL texts in the same register, which may be due to processes of transfer operating on the translation.
3. That cohesive patterns in TL texts are neither TL nor SL norms oriented, but form a system of their own, possibly indicating a process of explicitation (ibid).

2. Methods
2.1. Corpus
The corpus of the present study entails a number of twelve short stories in Persian and English of 2000 to 4500 words, containing three Persian short stories and their translations into English and three English short stories and their translations into Persian again by native TL translators, selected by available sampling. However, in selecting the intended short stories the author initially searches for Persian short stories translated into English by native speakers of English, which have been but a handful, and then chooses the English ones considering the approximation of the register of the ST-TT pairs to be analyzed. There have been instances of poor translations which are eliminated according to the author’s opinion subsequent to close reading and analysis of translation procedures employed, and hence reselected. Another point to be mentioned is that some important yet not analyzable variables
such as the translation purpose, individual background, as well as the taste of the translators were inevitably considered as constant variables.

The texts are as follows:

- "بچه ی مردم" by Al-i Ahmad translated as “Someone Else’s Child” by Gochenour (1968);
- "داستان آکل" by Hedayat (1932) translated as “Dash Akol” by Brown (1999);
- "بعد از ظهر آخر پاییز" by Chubak (www.sokhan.com) translated as “An Afternoon in Late Autumn” by Bryant (1982).

And as for English short stories:

- “Interlopers” by Saki, translated as “هیاًدیگشاى” by Hayati and Naghshbandi (www.dibaketab.com);
- “The Heart of a Broken Story” by Salinger (1941), translated as “قلب یک داستان یاره پاره” by Amjad and Tabaraei (2009);
- “The Tell-Tale Heart” by Poe (2005), translated as “قلب افسانه” by an anonymous translator (قلب افسانه, n.d.).

2.2. Procedures

In order to study the degree of explicitation, cohesive ties are employed as the most distinctive medium through which explicitation is observable (see figure 1). Instances of the five modes of cohesive ties, namely, ellipsis, reference, conjunction, substitution, and lexical cohesion, are analyzed by the researcher, the last two of which have been eliminated due to limited instances in both ST and TT. Subsequent to close reading of the twelve short stories, instances of ellipsis, conjunction, and substitution are counted out by the researcher manually, in lack of a more objective instrument, followed by a second review. The numbers of instances of cohesive ties are recorded regardless of their language pair. Instances of cohesive ties in both Persian and English texts are pointed out according to their definitions in English for preserving the consistency. Except for the fact that suffixes attached to verbs and representing person, were considered as reference in Persian even the zero-morpheme suffix for third person singular.

The results are juxtaposed in tables, initially for ST-TT pairs by the number of instances, and secondly by the percentage of occurrence of cohesive ties according to the words of each text. Number of instances of ellipsis has a reverse relationship with the degree of explicitness, i.e. the higher the instances of ellipsis, the lower the level of explicitness. While the higher the number of instances of the two other cohesive ties, namely, conjunction and
reference, the higher the level of explicitness. Thus the conclusions will be pointed out considering the above statements.

Figure 1, Summary of Forms of Explicitation as Represented in the Literature (Pápai, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>Forms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blum-Kulka 1986</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ségainot 1988</td>
<td>+*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klaudy 1993</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shlesinger 1995</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touy 1995</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Överås 1998</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ishikawa 1998</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olohan &amp; Baker 2000</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a conscious strategy on the part of the editor
**some languages express the same message with a higher number of words than others (French compared to English)

3. Results

The findings subsequent to analysis of instances of cohesive ties under study are shown in the following tables prior to which a number of examples are provided:

Note: the symbol ‘×’ indicates cases of ellipsis.

- **Examples regarding instances of ellipsis:**
  - Of these 5,000 × only 1,000 × were not ugly (Salinger, 1941, p. 1).
  - از همین 5000 تا × فقط و فقط 1000 نفری به ترکیب نیز ندند.
The owner picked up the purse, weighed it, and grinned. (non-elliptic)

Examples regarding instances of conjunction:
- And it was the mournful influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel – although he neither saw nor heard – to feel the presence of my head within the room. (Poe, 2005, p. 243)

- I had promised myself I wouldn't get angry from the time I left the house until the thing was finished. I wouldn't hit my child or fuss with him. But how my heart ached now!

Examples regarding instances of reference:
- A famous law suit, in the days of his grandfather, had wrested it from the illegal possession of a neighbouring family of petty landowners (Saki, n.d.).

Table 1, Instances of Studied Cohesive Ties in the First English-Persian Pair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>A Tell-Tale Heart</td>
<td>قلب افشاقر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellipsis Rate</td>
<td>3.34 %</td>
<td>2.92 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunction Rate</td>
<td>4.92 %</td>
<td>5.31 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The first pair of English-Persian texts follows the hypothesis under discussion therefore the TT is more explicit than ST;

*Table 2*, Instances of Studied Cohesive Ties in the Second English-Persian Pair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>The Heart of A Broken Story</td>
<td>بعداز ظهور آخر پاییز</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellipsis Rate</td>
<td>2.35 %</td>
<td>1.07 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunction Rate</td>
<td>4.39 %</td>
<td>4.23 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Rate</td>
<td>13.69 %</td>
<td>14.01 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The TT can be considered slightly more explicit than ST, which follows explicitation hypothesis.

*Table 3*, Instances of Studied Cohesive Ties in the Third English-Persian Pair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Interlopers</td>
<td>میانجیگران</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellipsis Rate</td>
<td>1.53 %</td>
<td>0.94 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunction Rate</td>
<td>2.98 %</td>
<td>3.11 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Rate</td>
<td>11 %</td>
<td>14.72 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the final English-Persian pair, the TT is again more explicit than the ST, following explicitation hypothesis.

*Table 4*, Instances of Studied Cohesive Ties in the First Persian-English Pair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>بعداز ظهور آخر پاییز</td>
<td>An Afternoon in Late Autumn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellipsis Rate</td>
<td>0.42 %</td>
<td>0.92 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunction Rate</td>
<td>9.21 %</td>
<td>4.83 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Rate</td>
<td>17.5 %</td>
<td>12.63 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As observable the TT maintains higher ellipsis rate and lower conjunction and reference...
Table 5, Instances of Studied Cohesive Ties in the Second Persian-English Pair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>بچه ی مردم</td>
<td>Someone Else's Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellipsis Rate</td>
<td>0.93 %</td>
<td>1.88 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunction Rate</td>
<td>5.68 %</td>
<td>3.76 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Rate</td>
<td>32.80 %</td>
<td>19.29 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instances of cohesive devices regarding the second Persian-English pair are similar to those of the first pair, hence the TT is less explicit that the ST and the ‘explicitation hypothesis’ is not supported by this pair either.

Table 6, Instances of Studied Cohesive Ties in the Third Persian-English Pair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>ST</th>
<th>TT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>داش آکل</td>
<td>Dash Akol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellipsis Rate</td>
<td>1.03 %</td>
<td>1.70 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjunction Rate</td>
<td>1.49 %</td>
<td>3.76 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference Rate</td>
<td>9.73 %</td>
<td>12.56 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third case of Persian-English pairs show a different result were the rate of cohesive ties exposed a more explicit text than the ST and therefore supported explicitation hypothesis.

Table 7, Average Rate of Cohesive Ties in Persian STs & TTs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Persian STs</th>
<th>Persian TTs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Ellipsis Rate</td>
<td>0.79 %</td>
<td>1.64 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Conjunction Rate</td>
<td>5.48 %</td>
<td>4.21 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Reference Rate</td>
<td>17.24 %</td>
<td>16.95 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Persian translated texts are slightly less explicit than original non-translated Persian texts.

Table 8, Average Rate of Cohesive Ties in English STs & TTs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>English STs</th>
<th>English TTs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Ellipsis Rate</td>
<td>2.40 %</td>
<td>1.50 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Conjunction Rate</td>
<td>4.09 %</td>
<td>4.11 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Reference Rate</td>
<td>13.03 %</td>
<td>14.82 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
English translated texts are more explicit than original non-translated English texts.

4. Discussion & Conclusion

4.1. Findings

The degree of explicitness observed in Persian translated texts support ‘explicitation hypothesis’ in a manner that in all three pairs of English – Persian translations, the TTs are more explicit, with lower ellipsis rates and higher reference and conjunction rates. However two out of three pairs of Persian – English translations, do not follow explicitation hypothesis, i.e. the translated texts are less explicit than their source texts. Both Persian and English translated texts tend to approximate the norms of their source texts in the other language which seems to be an inherent feature of translation. However the degree of approximation is different with Persian translated texts following more closely the pattern of cohesive ties of their English source texts. Persian translated texts show a lower level of explicitness compared to original Persian texts. On the contrary, English translated texts portray a higher level of explicitness compared to that of original English short stories.

Two out of three English translated texts did not follow ‘explicitation hypothesis’, thus the first hypothesis was proved to be % 66.6 correct. The second hypothesis was also proved to be correct as translated Persian texts show lower explicitness than the original Persian texts.

Considering the presented results from the selected texts studied, it can be concluded that when translating from English, Persian translators approximate the patterns of English source texts while English translators from Persian source texts studied in this thesis were not that much obliged to do so. This may be due to an inherent property of process of translation according to which TTs tend to approximate ST patterns and norms regardless of the languages involved.

4.2. Conclusion

The fact that the degree of approximation is different between English and Persian translations may be due to the so-called ‘dominance’ of the language under study; meaning that, the English translator may, unconsciously, feel free to domesticate the Persian text with higher confidence, while the other way around does not occur. Persian translator, when translating from a more dominant language, English in this case, may be absorbed to the ST patterns and norms.

4.3. Applications and Implications
A translator, when conscious of the probable and invisible effect of a ‘hegemonic’ language, will be able to resist against its patterns and norms imposed on the translation product even if partially, which eventually paves the way for higher quality translations regarding the naturalness level, which most of the translations into Persian lack these days.

The process of informing the future translators regarding the matter discussed must start from classrooms in universities and translator training programs, which prevents the ST norms to overwhelm Persian norms, already on the brink of extinction.

4.4. Suggestions for Further Research

Any researcher attempting to tackle this area may want to consider a larger corpus and application of machine textual analysis, which will definitely result in more accurate and conclusive findings.

Also, other text-types can be studied for comparison of degrees of explicitation. Comparing the results may give insight as to translations from which text-types show a higher degree of dominance by source language and culture.

References


**Persian References**


Title

Output-based Instruction: Investigating the Interaction between Pedagogy and Motivation in Iran

Authors

Majid Farshid (Ph.D Candidate)
University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

Azizollah Dabaghi (Ph.D)
University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

Mansoor Tavakoli (Ph.D)
University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran

Biodata

Majid Farshid, Ph.D candidate of TEFL at University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. His research interests include second language acquisition, pragmatics, and ELT methodology.

Azizollah Dabaghi, associate professor of TEFL at University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. His research interests include second language acquisition, and ELT methodology.

Mansoor Tavakoli, associate professor of TEFL at University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. His research interests include second language acquisition, language testing, and ELT methodology.

Abstract

One aspect of motivation which has rarely been investigated is the interaction between motivation and pedagogy. This article is an attempt to examine this interaction, if any, in Iranian public high schools where pedagogy has long been considered a de-motivating factor for language learners. In this regard, this paper by offering output-based instruction as an alternative to the mainstream ELT methodology in Iranian public high schools, tries to investigate the interaction between pedagogy and motivation and to see how it might affect both students’ motivation and achievement. To do so, a three-month experiment was conducted with 54 unsuccessful high school students. Two groups were evaluated: an experimental group and a control group. The control group received instruction through the mainstream ELT methodology in Iranian public high schools and the experimental group received output-based instruction during which the subjects
were exposed to a great deal of output practice. The results of the experiment indicated that the experimental group outperformed the control group both in motivation and achievement. Two implications are drawn from the findings of the present paper: 1) the effect of motivation be incorporated into the construct validity of motivation questionnaires, 2) sometimes language learners are demotivated simply because of the method used, so a change in methodology can have beneficial repercussions on language learners’ motivation and consequently on their achievement.

**Key words:** Output-based Instruction, Motivation, Achievement, Pedagogy, Interaction

1. **Introduction**

Despite the importance of English as the first international language in the modern world, ELT in Iranian public high schools, it seems, has never been successful. This is because nearly almost all high school graduates are not able to read a very simple English text, let alone using English for communication. Given this, it is surprising that ELT in Iran has rarely been thoroughly investigated. Farhady (2006), for example, is of the opinion that “Since there has been little systematically obtained empirical evidence on the quality of teaching and learning EFL in Iran, no firm judgment can be made in this regard. However, despite the great attention being paid to EFL by the educational authorities, and despite the considerable amount of money, time, and energy spent on EFL, there is no positive public attitude toward EFL achievement in Iran; some people question the quality of the teaching materials and others cast doubt on the efficiency of teaching methods” (p. 436).

1.1. **TEFL in Iranian public schools**

In Iran, Public education lasts 13 years: one year of preschool, six years of elementary school, three years of junior high school, and three years of high school. The formal instruction of English begins at the first year of the junior high school and continues for six years. During the junior high school English is offered for four hours a week and in high school for two hours a week. In addition to these public schools, there are some private language centers where English is taught as a foreign language. Although students attending these private institutions have much better language abilities, a large number of language learners cannot afford them and are consequently deprived from a better education.
The instructional materials are mainly a series of books prepared by some university instructors and approved by the ministry of education. English teachers are trained in both universities and teacher training centers.

1.2. Problems with ELT in Iran

Stressing the importance of program evaluation, Ross (1992) claims that most long-term programs are not frequently evaluated and suggested that regular evaluation be carried out at school levels. On the other hand, Genesee (2001) holds that evaluation can focus on different aspects of teaching and learning including “textbooks and instructional materials, student achievement, and whole programs of instruction” (p.144).

In evaluating programs, it is necessary to take into account teachers, learners, as well as those who are involved in the process of education in one way or another (Farhady, 2006). Considering all these claims, the problems with ELT in Iran could be categorized into three categories of unqualified language teachers, out-of-date instructional materials, and lack of instructional facilities. Below each is discussed:

1.2.1: Unqualified language teachers:

Farhady (2006) is of the opinion that language teachers should enjoy three qualities: “they should a) possess a treasonable command of the language he teaches, b) have an understanding of the process of learning, and c) obtain comprehensive information as possible about his students” (p. 430).

Most language teachers teaching in the educational system of Iran hold a BA degree in TEFL, English literature, or English Translation. A few, of course, hold MAs as well. These teachers are either trained in teacher training centers or in universities. The most important problem with the English teachers in Iran is the fact that a good number of them do not have the necessary command of English. In other words, most of them are not qualified. This is partly due to the fact that the only qualification required is a university degree.

This problem is also well attested by some recent studies; Pishgadam and Mirzaee (2008) claim that:“Considering Iran, we witness that due to the centralized educational system teachers are not autonomous to take decisions or do any type of classroom-orientated action research, and, in most cases, they are not even familiar with the ABCs of reflective teaching” (p. 56).

Yet, another problem is the lack of supervision on teachers. There is no organization to monitor how teachers are chosen, how they are trained, how they have to be tested periodically, and on what criteria they can get a promotion.
1.2.2: Out-of-date instructional materials

ELT textbooks play such an invaluable role in any language programs that Sheldon (1988) refers to them as “the visible heart of any ELT program” (p.237). In selecting textbooks, Cunningsworth (1995) suggests that care be exercised so that a good selection is made and “the materials selected closely reflect [the needs of the learners and the aims, methods, and values of the teaching program” (p.7). Although English textbooks used in Iranian public schools are written by experts in the field of ELT, rarely do they conform to the new developments in TEFL. For instance, in his study of ELT textbooks produced locally in Iran, Saeed Taki (2008) concluded that: the preparation of the high school books appears to have been influenced by post-revolution norms and standards. In another study, Jahangard (2007) evaluated four EFL textbooks being used in Iranian high schools. Using 13 common criteria extracted from different materials evaluation checklists, he concluded that “although the reading skill, among others, looks to be of first priority in the design of the books, a big share of the lessons is devoted to grammar drills and the various forms of grammatical exercises throughout B1, B2 and B3.” (p.9)

Yet in another study of English textbooks used in Iranian public schools, Riazi and Mosalanejad using Bloom’s taxonomy of learning objectives (2010) found that in all grades lower-order cognitive skills were more prevalent than higher-order ones. In investigating the English teachers’ opinions of the ELT textbooks, Gholami (2013) contends that most teachers regard the textbooks as boring, out-of-date, grammar-based, and insufficient to develop students’ speaking ability. Solaimani (2013) evaluated the current ELT textbooks in Iran based on Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences and concluded that they are not benefitting from the theory.

1.2.3: Lack of instructional facilities:

The third problem having to do with the dissatisfying situation of ELT in Iranian public high schools has to do with lack of educational facilities. Most classes, for example, are very crowded and most schools lack a computer centers. In the last decade, however, a great deal of money has been spent to equip the schools with computer centers and language laboratories. Today a few schools have access to the internet so that both students and teachers can catch up with the new developments in the fast-changing world. The point, however, is that a lot of language teachers do not have even the rudimentary knowledge of how to use computers; consequently, computers and language laboratories have, in fact, contributed nothing to TEFL in Iranian public high schools.
2. Research purpose and hypotheses

Motivation plays such an important role in learning that if teachers were asked to identify the most powerful influences on learning, it would probably be high on their lists. Although the literature of motivation is rich, Lightbown and Spada (2006) believe that “little research has directly investigated how pedagogy interacts with motivation in the second language classrooms” (p.65). In an attempt to investigate this neglected aspect of motivation, the purpose of the present study is twofold: on one hand it is intended to investigate the interaction, if any, between pedagogy and motivation. More specifically it is intended to see whether changing the methodology and textbooks of TEFL in Iranian public high schools can have any effect on students’ motivation or not. On the other hand, it is an attempt to see whether these changes can affect students’ achievement or not.

Since two of the main problems associated with ELT in Iranian public high schools are the textbooks and the methodology, the research hypotheses concerned changing the methodology and textbooks for teaching English. In other words, it was intended to see whether introducing output-based instruction could affect students’ motivation and achievement. Consequently, the following two hypotheses were made:

1) Output-based instruction has no effect on Iranian high school students’ motivation.
2) Output-based instruction has no effect on Iranian high school students’ achievement.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The participants were 54 beginner Iranian high school learners of English with a mean age of 18. They made up two intact classes, taught by the researchers. They were randomly assigned to two groups, namely an experimental group (26 students), and a control group (28 students).

3.2. Procedure

The experimental group:

Using the Intro book of the interchange (4th edition) and for three months, the experimental class received instruction through input-output design. The class met three sessions a week during the period. The instruction had the following stages:

Stage one: the instructor explicitly introduced the grammar and vocabulary of the unit.
Stage two: the students were presented with a dialogue and were required to listen to it carefully.

Stage three: they listened to the dialogue again and were supposed to answer some comprehension questions about it. These questions were designed to make students produce English sentences.

Stage four: the students were engaged in mechanical drills (repetition, chain drill,) of the structures and lexical items of the dialogues.

Stage five: the students were asked to close their books and practice the same dialogue without changing it (oral reconstruction of the dialogue).

Stage six: the students engaged in the written reconstruction of the dialogue.

Stage seven: they were required to make a similar dialogue based on their experiences having to do with their lives.

Stage eight: the students were presented with a listening passage. They were required to treat the passage in two ways: first they answered some general comprehension questions about it, and then they listened to it and repeated the listening passage in meaningful chunks.

Stage nine: through tasks, the students were required to use what they had learned during the session to engage in oral interaction. (Conversation)

Stage ten: the students were required to use what they had learned during the session to produce some grammatically correct sentences or short paragraphs related to their lives.

The control group:

Using the current textbooks and the mainstream ELT methodology in Iranian public high schools, the control class was instructed for 25 sessions each lasting one and a half hour for three months. The class met three sessions a week during the period. The instruction had the following stages:

1. The words of each unit along with their equivalents in students’ L1 were presented to students.
2. The teacher read the reading part of each unit, translating it into students’ L1 (Farsi). The students wrote the translation.
3. The teacher explained the grammar points of each unit, providing them with a few examples of each grammar point.
4. The students did the grammar drills of each unit.
5. The students took turns writing their answers to the grammar drills on the board.
3.3. Instrumentation

Two instruments were used in this study; one in the form of paper and pencil test (the achievement test) and the other in the form of questionnaire (the motivation questionnaire). A brief explanation of each follows:

a) Achievement test:

40 multiple choice achievement tests from second grade book were constructed, pretested, and revised to satisfy the psychometric characteristics to a reasonable degree. The tests, which were based on the table of specification of the book, included items on structure (10 items), vocabulary and expressions (20 items), reading (8 items) and pronunciation (2 items).

It should be mentioned that no achievement test from the Intro book of the Interchange series was constructed because all the points in the second grade book were also covered in the Intro book as well.

b) Motivation questionnaire:

The questionnaire which had 30 five-point Likert scale items was developed and administered in Farsi (see Appendix for the English translation of the questionnaire). The items were written based on the constructs proposed in Expectancy Value theory proposed by Eccles and Wigfield, 1995(cited by Setsuko Mori and Peter Gobel, 2005). Those constructs include students’ expectancy for success in Learning English, attainment value, intrinsic value, extrinsic utility value, and cost of Learning, attitude toward cultural and people speaking communities, grade-related, and effort.

4. Data analysis

To perform the relevant statistical analysis, descriptive statistics was applied in order to examine the distribution and normality of test scores obtained on both motivation questionnaires and the achievement tests. The descriptive statistics of pre and post test motivation questionnaire are respectively shown in Table 1 and Table 2 below. As it is shown, the motivation of the experimental group receiving output-based instruction significantly improved. Furthermore, the statistics of the achievement test for both control and experimental groups is shown in Table 3. In order to provide a plausible answer for the research hypothesis concerning the effect of output-based instruction on the achievement of the participants, T-test was run. To do so, the level of significance for rejecting the null
hypothesis was set at .05. As the results shown in Table 4, the experimental group outperformed the control group in achievement.

Table 1: Statistics for Motivation Questionnaire (pre-test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VAR02</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXP</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>71.28</td>
<td>11.77</td>
<td>.663</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNTL</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>73.38</td>
<td>11.46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Statistics for Motivation Questionnaire (post-test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VAR02</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXP</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>74.28</td>
<td>11.79</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNTL</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>87.84</td>
<td>10.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Achievement Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VAR02</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXP</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10.71</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNTL</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14.61</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Result and discussion

This study set out to answer two questions. The first question concerned the interaction between pedagogy and motivation. More specifically, the question asked was: can out-based instruction affect the motivation of Iranian language learners in an EFL context or not? The second question concerned whether output-based instruction had any impact on the achievement of Iranian language learners in an EFL context or not.

The answer to the first question is positive in that the subjects receiving output-based instruction had a significant improvement in their motivation to learn English. This clearly shows that the current ELT methodology in Iranian public high schools is a de-motivating factor. In other words, this study claims that pedagogy interacts with motivation so that different ELT pedagogy can have different effects on language learners’ motivation. In this study, for example, increased levels of motivation for students in relation to pedagogical practice were observed. This supports work done in educational psychology in this regard. (See Graham Crooks and Richard Schmidt, 1991). The findings of the present study with regard to motivation have also implications for language teachers: Sometimes the problem with students’ motivation has to do with the methodology used; consequently, a change in the pedagogy can have beneficial effects on students’ motivation.
The answer to the second question was also positive because students receiving output-based instruction significantly outperformed those receiving instruction based on the mainstream pedagogy in Iranian public high schools. This indicates that motivation like other socio-psychological factors, which may be claimed to have a positive role in second language learning or acquisition, also has a significant effect on test performance. This finding would probably support those researchers who have claimed that socio-psychological factors have a direct bearing on language learners’ performance on language tests and their devotion of time for learning (e.g., Gardner 1985 & 1988; Bachman, Cushing and Purpora, 1993; Dornyei & Schmidt 2001; Purpora 2004).

Therefore, certain theoretical and pedagogical implications can be derived from the present study in the context of English language teaching in schools. First, sometimes second language learners are de-motivated simply because there is something wrong with the method used; therefore, a change in methodology can have beneficial repercussions on language learners’ motivation and consequently on their achievement. Second, it seems that the role of methodology in second language learning motivation has totally been ignored. Accordingly; based on the findings of the present paper on the interaction between pedagogy and motivation, it is strongly suggested that the role of ELT methodology be incorporated into the construct validity of motivation questionnaires.

References


Issues/beymonth.html.


**Appendix: English translation of the questionnaire**

Read the following statements and choose the number that best matches your opinion of each statement

5. Strongly agree

1. I am good at English.
2. I am interested in American lifestyles and cultures.
3. I am interested in British lifestyles and cultures.
4. I am interested in lives and cultures of other English speaking countries.
5. I like studying English.
6. Studying English is important because it will be conducive to my general education.
7. Studying English is useful.
8. By studying English, I hope to be able to read English novels, newspapers and/or magazines.
9. I am studying English merely because it is a required subject.
10. I try to study hard in English classes.
11. English is one of my weak subjects.
12. I would like to make American friends.
13. I would like to make British friends.
14. I would like to communicate with people in other English speaking countries.
15. My grades for English classes at junior and senior high schools were not good.
16. Studying English is fun.
17. Studying English is important because it will broaden my view.
18. I liked English classes at junior and senior high schools.
19. I would rather not to study English if possible.
20. Studying English is important because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.
21. Even if there were no homework, I would try to study outside of class.
22. I am studying English because I would like to live abroad in the future.
23. I would like to use the English I studied when I travel overseas.
24. I am studying English merely because I would like to get good grades.
25. I would like to get a job that uses the English I studied.
26. I procrastinate about doing my homework/assignments until right before the due date.
27. By studying English, I hope to be able to understand movies in English.
28. I work on my assignments according to a preplanned schedule.
29. I work on my assignments just to the extent that I will not fail a class.
30. Studying English is a waste of time.
Title

Moving Towards an Objective Scoring Assessment in Interpreting

Author

Sima Ferdowsi (M.A)
Shahid Bahonar University, Kerman, Iran

Biodata

Sima Ferdowsi, lecturer of translation at Shahid Bahonar University, Kerman, Iran. Her research interests include interpretation, audiovisual translation, and translation for children.

Abstract

The present study aimed at introducing a more objective way of assessment in interpreting. It pinpointed that by eliminating the inconsistent examination procedures and decreasing the level of subjectiveness in interpreting evaluation, teachers can move toward a more objective system of assessment in interpreting at universities. To start, teachers should define the four critical elements of the assessment cycle appropriate for educational setting. They should deploy an integrated norm-referenced approach, i.e. a combination of process-oriented and product-oriented approaches which allowed the evaluation of students against a scale of absolute criteria (rubrics) rather than in relation to one another. In other words, intermediate assessment as a kind of process-oriented approach should be used during the course. Since, it allowed the division of the required tasks for interpreting at educational setting into its component parts, which in turn created the opportunity of focusing on various required skills and examining them separately. This approach could be further complemented by the final testing method of assessment as a kind of product-oriented methods for the final examination of interpreting. The study revealed that creating rubrics was a tactful device to achieve the constituting elements of objective assessment, i.e. validity, reliability and authenticity. The designed rubrics should vary based on the modes of interpreting, i.e. simultaneous and consecutive interpreting due to the distinguishing features of each mode.

Keywords: Interpreting assessment, integrated approach, assessment cycle, objective assessment, rubrics
1. Introduction
The issues of education and assessment are closely related to each other. Sawyer (2004) claimed that “high quality education is based on sound assessment” (p. 5). Assessment is vital in educational setting since it created feedback for both teachers and students. However, evaluation can achieve its aim provided that it is accurate and objective. In objective assessment there is no need for personal evaluation, rather evaluation is based on predetermined criteria which reduced the subjective interpretation of students. Furthermore, other issues such as validity, reliability, and authenticity should also be observed in educational assessment. The present article tried to reveal how rubrics as predetermined criteria can be applied to reach a more objective assessment in interpreting.

2. Review of the Related Literature
2.1. The role of assessment
The measurement community unanimously accepted the importance of “appropriate, useful, and meaningful assessment” (Sawyer, 2004, p. 5) which according to Tyler (1951) was believed to be an “integral part of” instruction (p. 47). In other words, assessment and testing were known as vital and inseparable components of the educational environment. The outcomes of assessment provided feedback for both instructors and students. It allowed instructors to detect the operation of an educational system, to identify the proper learning material and to design a useful curriculum. Sawyer (2004) believed that it also “provides a vehicle and framework for problem-solving through self-assessment” (p. 106).

The importance of assessment in educational setting revealed that ignorance and inadequacy of assessment practices, as was mentioned by Sawyer (2004), would end up in “a lack of clarity as to whether educational goals are being met [which] marks the degree of success or failure of a program” (p. 8). Furthermore, inconsistencies in examination procedures in interpreting added to the subjective evaluation of trainees which changes from one instructor to another. Subjective and objective testing were two common terms in assessment. The first one referred to a method which evaluated the examinees performance based on “subjective interpretation of the scoring criteria” (Bachman, 1990 b, p. 76). With the second term as was mentioned by Bachman (1990b) “the correctness of the test taker’s response is determined entirely by predetermined criteria so that no judgment is required on the part of scorer” (p. 76). Thus, establishing apredetermined criteria and reducing the personal interpretation of the examiners ability could result in achieving a more objective
kind of assessment. In other words, to move toward a more objective scoring assessment in interpreting studies, different issues such as reliability, validity, authenticity, and rubrics should be the focus of attention.

Moreover, according to Berger and Simon (1995) mentioned in Clifford (2001) to create a satisfactory assessment instrument, four different steps should be observed in the cycle of assessment development which are explained in the following table.

**Table 1. Steps in the assessment cycle (From Clifford, 2001, p. 374)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intentions</td>
<td>This is arguably the most important step, since it guides all others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement</td>
<td>This step of the cycle includes collection of data (through the administration of an assessment), as well as organization of the data and marking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judgment</td>
<td>Judging the value and quality of the data must be done using a common system for interpretation understood by all assessors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision</td>
<td>Fairness and equity of decision making depends on how rigorously the previous steps were followed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering these four steps in the assessment cycle, it could be stated that in educational setting (universities), the intention of assessment was to examine the competencies of student interpreters in order to mark them. The measurement was based on students’ performances and the judgment is made against a previously defined rubric. Finally, the decision about the grade was made by comparing their performance against the aspects specified in the rubric.

**2.2. Types of assessment in interpreting**

Three different areas of assessment have been introduced in interpreting studies. They, according to Sawyer (2004) were entry-level aptitude, intermediate and final testing.

The entry-level testing had a diagnostic purpose which was to “determine eligibility” of the novice “for entry to a degree track” (Sawyer, 2004, p. 109). This way, instructors “determine the extent to which students possess the skills and abilities that are needed to begin instructions” (Gronlund, 1998, pp. 4-5). This kind of assessment was typically appropriate for professional setting but was not viable in educational setting. In professional setting, the entry-level was used to detect the level of the required skills for the “candidate to be ready to enter the profession” (Sawyer, 2004, p. 109). If candidates did not reach that required level, they could not enter the course from the beginning. However, in educational settings, the entry-level could not play the same preventive role, as all the students have to pass the course Interpretation at universities and nothing can impede their entry to the course. Furthermore, as it was mentioned before, the entry-level assessment was used to examine the required
skills for the act of interpreting. However, student interpreters have not gained any skill before attending the course. Rather, they attended this specific course to acquire all the necessary skills.

The second type of testing was intermediate assessment which was on the level of apprentice and was conducted after the completion of introductory courses. In professional setting, it was used to determine “whether the candidate has the potential to continue and successfully complete the degree program” (Sawyer, 2004, p. 112). This kind of formative and diagnostic testing was called process-oriented assessment by Gile (2000), since as Sawyer (2004) explained it “focuses on the skills required to carry out a task, i.e., the process of interpreting” (p. 94). Therefore, intermediate testing is unerringly practical in educational setting too. Teachers could apply it during the process of teaching 1) to monitor the level of progress of trainees, and 2) to offer corrective suggestions to students to improve the process of learning. In other words, it could be used to find out whether different skills for interpreting have been acquired by students or not, on which skill students show failure? On which ones they perform satisfactorily? After detecting the strong and weak points of each individual trainee, teachers have the rest of the term to pay more attention to the weak points by dedicating more practices to those special skills.

Final testing was the last method of assessment used in professional practice. Sawyer (2004) stated that this kind of assessment was “on the level of journeyman” and tried to determine “whether the candidate is ready to enter the profession” (p. 113). It also allowed instructors to realize the usefulness of their instruction and the amount of learning. Final testing was a kind of summative assessment or product-oriented testing in Gile’s term (2001) which focused on interpretation as a product. It could be used in educational setting as well. Since, it helped teachers to determine whether the students fail or pass the course at the end of the term.

Consequently, in assessing interpreting in educational setting, a kind of integrated assessment seemed vital, i.e., assessment should not be solely summative. Therefore, a combination of students’ during the course achievement as well as their final performance was required in grading them. In other words, trainers should start with formative assessment that “takes place during the course of teaching and is used essentially to feed back into the teaching/learning process” (Gipps, 1994, vii). The offered feedback by this kind of assessment helped both trainers and trainees to detect weak points and eliminate them by further working. Moreover, formative assessment as a kind of process-oriented assessment (Gile, 2000) allowed teachers to investigate interpreting as a process. In addition, instructors
should employ summative assessment at the end of the course to decide about the final grade of each student. This kind of assessment focused on the product, thus allowed examiners to study the interpreted text as a product which was a combination of various processes.

To sum up, the grade of student interpreters at universities should be built on criterion-referenced tests and the combination of formative assessment during the course to study the process of interpreting and summative at the end of the course to examine the created interpretation as a product.

2.3. Validity

One of the most important considerations in evaluating and assessment was validity. It according to Gipps (1994, vii) referred to “the extent to which an assessment measures what it purports to measure”. Validity, as Weir (2005) stated was multifaceted and multicomponential. Thus, to support the validity of scores on a test different kinds of evidences are required. In other words, according to Weir (2005) mentioned in Angelleli and Jacobson (2009),

Test validity is not to be considered in isolation, as a property that can only be attributed to the test (or test design), nor as an all-or-none, but rather it is immediately linked to the interfaces that are made on the basis of test score. (p. 16)

Therefore, three categories of validity evidence has been introduced, i.e., “construct, content, and criterion-related validity” (Angelleli & Jacobson, 2009, p. 96).

Construct validity unified all types of validity. It was defined by Cronbach and Meehl (1955), as “some postulated attribute of people, assumed to be reflected in test performance” (p. 283). Consequently, offering a clear definition of the construct was very important in assessment as was mentioned by Gipps (1994, p. 58) it “relates to whether the test is an adequate measure of the construct, that is the underlying (explanatory) skill being assessed”. Therefore, instructors should meticulously define the constructs for trainee assessment in educational setting. However, they should keep in mind that constructs as was expressed by Anglelelli and Jacobson (2009) were “multifaceted and will vary according to the type of assessment and its purpose (formative, summative, ipsative) and the stage of assessment in curriculum (entry-level, intermediate, final testing)” (p. 99). According to Gipps (1994) to assure construct validity, the issue of criteria should be the focus of attention. Criteria have been defined as “clearly articulated and public descriptions of facts or dimensions of student performance” (McMillan, 1997, p. 29). Considering the issue of criteria, Arjona (1984 b) distinguished between norm-referenced versus criterion-referenced assessment in interpreting
and translation studies. Criterion-referenced testing according to Glaser (1963, p. 519) “depend[s] upon an absolute standard of quality”, which are “designed to enable the test user to interpret a test score with reference to a criterion level of ability or domain of content” (Bachman, 1990 b, p. 72). In other words, students were evaluated with regard to their ability in course content. The relative ranking of students in the class was not the standard of evaluating them. However, norm-referenced testing “depend[s] upon a relative standard” (Glaser, 1963, p. 519). Bachman (1990 b) explained that these kinds of tests “are designed to enable the test user to make normative interpretations of test results. In other words, test results were interpreted with reference to the performance of a given group, or norm” (p. 72). Arjona (1984 b) concluded that for interpreting assessment criterion-referenced testing is more appropriate, since it allowed the evaluation of students against a scale of absolute criteria rather than in relation to one another. Therefore, to apply criterion-referenced assessment in interpreting instructors should clearly define the desired criteria. Considering construct validity in interpreting, the need to creating scoring rubrics was emphasized once again.

The second type of validity evidence was content validity. To emphasis on the inseparable relation between test construct and test content, the APA standards (1999) explained that: important validity evidence can be obtained from an analysis of the relationship between a test’s content and the construct it is intended to measure. Test content refers to the themes, wording, and format of the items, tasks, or questions on a test, as well as the guidelines for procedures regarding administration and scoring. (p. 11)

According to Sawyer (2004) different factors should be examined to determine the content validity. These factors included: “the authenticity of the subject matter” which relates to “the frequency with which the topic of an interpretation is encountered in real-life interpreting situations” (p. 99), the “difficulty of the exam material” and “the modes of interpreting” (Sawyer, 2004, pp. 100-101).

Content validity talked about the appropriateness of including material in the test, i.e., as Gipps (1994) stated, it asked whether “the test covers the skill necessary for good performance, or all the aspects of the subject taught?” (pp. 58-59).

Criterion-related evidence was the last type of validity evidence. It was a kind of measurement based on an external criterion. It predicted the performance of students on the external criterion, i.e., “a test, observation, or judgment” (Sawyer, 2004, p. 100) from their scores on the test. In other words, it investigated whether students` ability could be predicted
from their test scores. It forecasted, whether a student interpreter who has gained a good grade in interpreting exam coulds be a skillful interpreter on the market.

2.4. Reliability

Another technical term which was used in the field of assessment is reliability. It described “the amount of consistency of the test measurement in a given construct” (Angelelli & Jacobson, 2009, p. 17). Reliability, according to Sawyer (2004) was “a prerequisite for test validity” (p. 101). Angelelli and Jacobson (2009) claimed that to determine the reliability of a test:

1) The same test could be given to the same student for the second time to see whether he got more or less the same result. This was known as test-retest reliability.

2) Different versions of a test could be given to a student to see if he got similar grades on both versions. Sawyer (2004) called it parallel forms. To achieve this kind of reliability the level of difficulty of the exam should not change from one exam session to the next.

3) The scores of different raters for the same examinee could be compared to see if they all gave the same score to that student. This was known as inter-rater reliability, which has been defined as “agreement between raters on the same assessment” (Sawyer, 2004, p. 101). To achieve this kind of reliability, raters should apply a consistent criterion for scoring each trainee.

4) Different scores of the same or very similar rater for the same examinee on different occasions could be examined. This was known as intra-rater reliability.

Except for test-retest reliability which according to Sawyer (2004, p. 102) “is impractical in interpretation due to familiarity with source speech” it seemed that the other three kinds of reliability were not elusive in interpreting examination, provided that instructors benefited rubrics. Since, they offered a consistent criterion for grading students on different occasions. Furthermore, factors outside of what was being tested may influence the reliability of a test. These factors as mentioned in Angelelli and Jacobson (2009) included the: “1) variation in test administration setting, 2) variation in test rubrics, 3) variation in test input, 4) variation in expected response, and 5) variation in the relationship between input and response types” (p. 17).

As was mentioned above, an important factor that influences the reliability of a test was variation in the “test setting and the physical conditions under which a test is administered” (Angelelli & Jacobson, 2009, p. 18). These variations could impact the performance of students on the exam. Some variations may seem unavoidable, but it should be tried to
minimize these variations as much as possible. For instance, to avoid variation in administration setting, the interpreting exam should be held in language laboratories. It should be emphasized that due to the nature of the interpreting course, the only favorable place for interpreting classes was the language laboratories, wherein each student sat in a cabin equipped with the required interpreting devices. This way, all interpreting students experienced the same site and physical condition for their final examination and as they have attended the same place during a semester, they did not experience a new environment. Thus, this familiarity with the test venue and the interpreting equipments (recording devices, headset, simultaneous equipments, etc) minimized variation in administration setting to the least amount possible.

On the issue of wording of instructions, teachers were advised to record the instruction part of the exam before the examination. Since, in the interpreting exam students were required to interpret oral tests, they should be tape recorded and prepared before the exam. Therefore, teachers should also record the necessary instruction for each oral test. The result of which is consistency in the wording of instruction for all candidates. Furthermore, the allotted time for the interpretation of each oral text should also be mentioned in the instruction to prevent variation in the allotted time. In addition, to prevent variation in scoring, instructors could make a rubric which exactly specifies the expected knowledge and skill for each activity. Rubrics not only helped to achieve a more objective way of assessment in interpreting, they also decreased variation in expected response, as the required skill for each task was reiterated in the dimension section of a rubric.

Furthermore, variation in test input could affect the reliability of a test. However, achieving consistency in test input seemed an attainable task. Since, all students should listen to the same oral text, the issue of input variation and various level of difficulty is not true here. As, the oral texts were chosen from source language materials such as instances of VOA and BBC news, the issue of authenticity of the material was also considered here. Moreover, as the quality of the recorded voice and the rate of the speech were the same for all examines, again there was no variation in test input.

Another important factor in achieving reliability of examination was the employed measurement scale. According to Bachman (1990 b):

Practically anyone can rate another person’s speaking ability, for example. But while one rater may focus on pronunciation accuracy, another may find vocabulary to be the most salient feature…. Ratings such as these can hardly be
Sawyer (2004) introduced three types of scales for interpreting testing. The first one was nominal which “consists of classes or categories of a given attribute” (Bachman, 1990 b, p. 27). As the name revealed, nominal scale just classified data into categories in terms of their names without any order or structure. The categories could not be ranked since they were not ordered in relationship to one another. For instance, classifying the variable “religion” into different categories such as: Christian, Jewish, Muslim etc is an example of nominal scale of measurement. In interpreting assessment nominal scale could be used to declare pass or fail (Sawyer, 2004).

The second kind of measurement scale was called ordinal scale. It according to Bachman “comprises the numbering of different levels of an attribute that are ordered with respect to each other” (1990 b, p. 28). Ordinal scale contained non-numeric categories that can be ranked such as low, medium, and high. Sawyer (2004) explained that “with ordinal scales, numerical averaging is not possible, as the levels of the attribute are not equidistant from one another” (p. 105). For example, if someone asked you to rank five types of car from the most favorite to least favorite, you were supposed to create an ordinal scale of preferences. For you the top car may be far superior to the second preferred car but, to another respondent with the same top and second car, the distance may be subjectively small. In other words, there was no objective distance between any two points on your subjective scale. In interpreting testing, nominal measurement scale might be presented as: high pass, pass, borderline fail, and fail (Sawyer, 2004).

Interval scale was the third type of measurement scale in interpreting testing. It contained categories in which the actual distances, or intervals, between categories can be compared. In other words, the differences in the distance along the scale could be interpreted. For example, the differences between ages 30 and 25 was the same as the difference between ages 40 and 45.

According to Sawyer (2004) “most scales used in interpreter training are either nominal (pass/ fail) or ordinal (e.g., high pass, pass, borderline fail, fail)” (p. 105). However, it seemed that for educational setting at universities, the interval scale is the most practical one, since the examination system at universities of Iran is usually based on interval scales.

2.5. Authenticity
Authenticity was another important factor that should be considered in testing. It according to Angelelli and Jacobson (2009, p. 20) was “the degree to which tasks on a test are similar to, and reflective of a real world situation towards which the test is targeted”.

To observe authenticity in interpreting testing, instructors should create a real world situation both during the course as formative assessment and at final examination as a kind of summative assessment. Thus, all the audio materials should be chosen from native speakers with the normal pace of speaking in real world. Furthermore, students should listen to different accents of their working language and should not listen just to recorded materials by the same speaker, rather different speakers of both sexes should be selected. In addition, students should learn the skill of note-taking and applying it in examination in consecutive interpreting.

To create a more authentic situation in simultaneous interpreting, the same factors should be considered, except the use of notes. Rather, passive interpreters should be incorporated in the process of interpreter training and examination. This way, trainee interpreters could experience cooperating with and taking the benefit of their passive partners.

Observing all the suggestions in interpreting examinations could add up to the authenticity of test and its being more objective as a result.

Throughout this article, the importance of creating a more objective method of assessment in interpreting at educational setting (universities) has been reiterated. To achieve this aim, i.e., to move toward a more objective assessment in interpreting, there was a need for consistency of scoring. This was attainable through the use of rubrics. Therefore, the following part of this article was devoted to the introduction of rubrics and their applicability in interpreting examination in educational setting.

2.6. What is a rubric?
Stevens and Levi (2005) defined rubrics as “a scoring tool that lays out the specific expectations for an assignment. Rubrics divided an assignment into its component parts and provide a detailed description of what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable levels of performance for each of those parts” (p. 3). A rubric, at its most basic, was composed of four different parts and teachers should set out the parameters of the assignment in these parts. Based on Stevens and Levi (2005), every rubric contains these parts: a task description, a scale of some sort, the dimension of the assignment, and descriptions of what constitutes each level of performance as shown in table 2.
Task Description

Table 2: Basic rubric grid format (From Stevens & Levi, 2005, p. 6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension 1</th>
<th>Scale level 1</th>
<th>Scale level 2</th>
<th>Scale level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimension 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This rubric, as was mentioned before, was a basic form, sometimes it was necessary to construct a rubric with more scales and dimensions for a specific task. However, as it was stipulated by Stevens and Levi (2005), rubric constructors should not exceed “the maximum of five scales and six to seven dimension” (p. 6).

2.7. The process of creating rubrics

In designing a rubric, teachers should follow a step-by-step procedure to create the four different parts of it.

The first part of a rubric was the task description. It usually defined what examinees are supposed to do for a specific task. It should be placed at the top of the scoring rubric.

The second part of a rubric was called a scale. Here, “tactful but clear” terms should be used to “describe how well or poorly any given task has been performed” (Stevens & Levi, 2005, p. 8). There was no fixed formula for the number of the levels of a rubric, but it was better to have at least three and at most five scale levels. As Stevens and Levi (2005) explained “the more levels there are, the more difficult it becomes to differentiate between them and to articulate precisely why one student’s work falls into the scale level it does” (pp. 8-9).

Various instructors might use different labels such as: high level, middle level, and beginning level for their scale. Others might prefer numbers or grades. Huba and Freed (2000, p. 180) introduced the following labels for a scale:

- Sophisticated, competent, partly competent, not yet competent.
- Exemplary, proficient, marginal, unacceptable.
- Advanced, intermediate high, intermediate, novice.
- Distinguished, proficient, intermediate, novice.
- Accomplished, average, developing, beginning.

Dimension was the next part of a rubric. It illustrated different parts of a task. In other words, it explained how a specific task is divided into its various components and which components have received the highest weight. Furthermore, instructors could show the importance of different aspects of a task by “adding points or percentage to each dimension” (Stevens &
Dimensions not only represented the required skills for a successful work, but also they revealed the weakness or strengths of examinees in each dimension after the process of grading.

The last part of a scoring rubric was assigned to the description of the dimensions. When a rubric only described the highest level of performance for each dimension it was called a holistic or scoring guide rubric. This kind of rubric, according to Stevens and Levi (2005) “allows for greater flexibility and the personal touch”, but the process of grading was time consuming with scoring guide rubrics as instructors should “explain in writing where the student has failed to meet the highest level of performance” (pp. 10-11). Thus, they recommended using “a rubric that contains at least three scales and a description of the most common ways in which students fail to meet the highest level of exceptions” (Stevens & Levi, 2005, p. 11).

Preparing rubrics might seem a difficult time consuming activity for the beginners. However, when instructors got used to constructing rubrics, it did not take much time. Creating rubrics provided us with both a more objective system of assessment and grading as well as highlighting the weak points of students (through the study of the description of the dimension). As a result, instructors received a feedback regarding their teaching method and its usefulness. This could lead them to think about ways to improve their teaching.

3. A tentative rubric for interpreting assessment in educational setting

The following rubric was suggested for interpreting assessment in educational setting. It was a skill-based rubric, since interpreting included a variety of skills, the thorough and perfect acquisition of which could lead to a perfect performance. All these skills should be taught during the course at universities and then should be examined at the end of the course to evaluate the amount of required skills for each trainee. As, consecutive interpreting (CI) and simultaneous interpreting (SI) differed in some skills, two separate rubrics for each mode of interpreting has been offered.

Table 3: A skill-based rubric for consecutive interpreting based on sentence as the unit of interpreting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demonstrating skill</th>
<th>Skills not refined</th>
<th>Missing skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Note taking</td>
<td>Complete knowledge on what to note, how to note</td>
<td>Failure in one aspect of note taking skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observing TL structure</strong></td>
<td>Appropriate interpreting of SL, based on TL structure</td>
<td>Interpreting with a combination of SL+TL structure (inconsistency in preserving the TL structure)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observing the required strategies for interpreting</strong> (Kalina, 1992)</td>
<td>The ability to apply the demanded strategies</td>
<td>Preserving strategies just in some instances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observing the required coping tactics in interpreting</strong> (Gile, 1995)</td>
<td>The ability to employ coping tactics to solve problems</td>
<td>Preserving tactics just in some instances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turn taking</strong></td>
<td>Reducing the time lag between listening to the oral text and starting to interpreting</td>
<td>Failure in reducing the time lag between listening to the oral text and starting to interpreting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Volume</strong></td>
<td>Interpreting can be heard easily</td>
<td>Interpreting is difficult to hear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pace</strong></td>
<td>Conversational</td>
<td>Speed hurts clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Calmness</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrating calmness in posture, facial expression and voice while interpreting</td>
<td>Posture, facial expression and voice are neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ability to cope with different accents of working language</strong></td>
<td>Interpreting different accents of the text skillfully</td>
<td>Hesitation in interpreting words uttered with different accents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: A skill-based rubric for simultaneous interpreting based on sentence as the unit of interpreting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Demonstrating skill</th>
<th>Skills not refined</th>
<th>Missing skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooperation with passive interpreter</td>
<td>The ability to cooperate with passive interpreter when necessary</td>
<td>Inconsistency in cooperating with passive interpreter</td>
<td>Ignoring passive interpreter completely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance of interferences</td>
<td>Consistency in following the grammatical structure of the SL in interpreting</td>
<td>Trying to shift to the grammatical structure of the TL</td>
<td>Offering meaningless interpreting due to shift from the SL structure to the TL structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observing the required strategies for interpreting (Kalina, 1992)</td>
<td>The ability to apply the demanded strategies</td>
<td>Preserving strategies just in some instances</td>
<td>Producing inappropriate interpreting due to non-observance of interpreting strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observing the required coping tactics in interpreting (Gile, 1995)</td>
<td>The ability to employ coping tactics to solve problems</td>
<td>Preserving tactics just in some instances</td>
<td>Producing inappropriate interpreting due to non-employment of coping tactics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following the speaker (not lagging behind)</td>
<td>The ability to follow the speaker while interpreting</td>
<td>Inability in interpreting due to lagging behind the speaker in some instances</td>
<td>Complete inability in interpreting due to lagging behind the speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volume</td>
<td>Interpreting can be heard easily</td>
<td>Interpreting is difficult to hear</td>
<td>Interpreting cannot be heard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace</td>
<td>Conversational</td>
<td>Speed hurts clarity</td>
<td>Words run together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calmness</td>
<td>Demonstrating calmness in posture, facial expression and voice while interpreting</td>
<td>Posture, facial expression and voice are neutral</td>
<td>Demonstrating nervousness in posture, facial expression and voice while interpreting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to cope with</td>
<td>Interpreting different</td>
<td>Hesitation in</td>
<td>Offering wrong</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Conclusion

Interpreting assessment basically revealed a tendency toward subjective assessment. The fact that the evaluated data was aural and faded away after presentation could also enforce the subjectivity of assessing interpreting. Therefore, interpreter teachers should restore to a device to eliminate the subjectivity of their evaluation as much as possible but augment the objective aspect of their evaluation instead. To reach this aim, they should profit from an integrated evaluation, i.e., a combination of intermediate and final testing. This approach should be norm-referenced. It provided the evaluation of students against a scale of absolute criteria which should be predefined in rubrics. Therefore, creating rubrics was a crucial step toward achieving a more objective evaluation. To sum up, the study declared that interpreting assessment could become more objective, provided that teachers restore to rubrics in their evaluation.

References


Title

Similar Portrayal of Two Invulnerable Heroes in Homer’s *Iliad* and Ferdowsi’s *Shah-nameh*

Author

Mohammad Ghazanfari (Ph.D)
Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran

Biodata

Mohammad Ghazanfari, a member of Asia TEFL, and associate professor of applied linguistics at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran. He has published articles in the field of applied linguistics (TEFL, translation studies, and discourse analysis) in both Persian and English. He has also published a couple of Persian translations from English and has been co-author to an English book on ESP.

Abstract

From the very beginning of life on earth, man has learned that life by itself is valuable. The notion of *invulnerability* is a reflection of human beings' desire to live as longer as possible in this world and to achieve immortality. The idea may as well be approached in terms of man’s desire to achieve supremacy over other human beings. There are a few heroes in world mythology who are famous for their invulnerability, among whom one may mention Achilles—the famous Greek hero in the Trojan War, who, according to myths, was invulnerable except for the heel—and the other, named Esfandiar, the legendary Persian prince and a heroic figure in Ferdowsi's *Shah-nameh*—the national epic of Persia—whose invulnerability owed to Zoroaster, the ancient Iranian prophet. It seems that, from among the invulnerable heroes in world mythology, these two, possessing certain distinguishing characteristics, look more similar than other heroes in many respects. For instance, enjoying a distinguished royal origin; being young, brave, adventurous, arrogant, and unrivalled; enjoying supernatural, divine attributes; being out for fame; being vulnerable in a certain point of the body; and, finally, dying a tragic, premature death. This study compares and contrasts Achilles and Esfandiar on the basis of Greek and Persian mythology.

Keywords: Greek mythology, Persian mythology, Invulnerability in world mythology, Persian heroic epic, Homeric epic poetry
1. Introduction

Myths have been described as clear manifestations of a people’s collective conscience, as reflections of their insights and attitudes towards material, spiritual, and moral aspects of life, of how to run a community, and how to associate with other human beings and other nations. Therefore, the study of world mythology in all its aspects will help us recognize the fountainheads of human civilizations and cultures. Moreover, since a great number of traditions and beliefs tend to stubbornly resist the passage of time and even can be located within some of our own current attitudes and beliefs, it is likely that such a study reveal part of those long-staying customs, traditions, and insights, still, unconsciously, lingering in the minds of people (cf. Bahar, 2007; Haghshenas, 1991).

There are certain themes in world mythology that appear to be common across nations, including those which have to do with mythical heroes. Heroes are ordinarily born in high-ranking classes of societies, or they are usually children of gods, goddesses, powerful rulers, or kings (see, for example, Rosenberg, 1992). They also have an unusual birth. In Persian mythology, for instance, Rostam, the great Iranian hero, is delivered abnormally, in a miraculous way, through a medical method which in later centuries came to be known as the Caesarian section (after Julius Caesar, who was supposedly born this way), by cutting through the wall of his mother’s abdomen by a sharp dagger (See Reza, 2007, pp. 297-305). As Ferdowsi describes the event in his Shah-nameh, when the time came for Rudaba, mother of Rostam, to give birth to her baby, “she could not deliver her enormously large baby in the normal way and in agony lost consciousness” (Shapur Shahbazi, 2002, paragraph 2). On the Simorgh’s advice, she was made intoxicated with wine by a dexterous Zoroastrian clergy, who cut her side open without pain and delivered the child safely:

biamad yeke moubad-ye charbdast/mar an mahrokh ra be mey kard marst
bekafid bi ranj pahlou-ye mah/betabid mar bacheh ra sar ze rah
chonan bi gazandash boroun avarid/ke kars dar jahan in shegethi naddid

(Ferdowsi, 2009, p. 71)

English translation:

There came a skilled (Zoroastrian) priest,
Who made the moon-faced dame intoxicated with wine,
Then cut her side open while she was all unconscious,
And having turned the infant’s head toward the opening,
He brought the baby forth so safely that
No one in the world had ever seen such a wonder.

(Adapted with minor changes from: Davis, 2007, p. 105; Warner & Warner, 1909, p. 322)

Moreover, mythical heroes possessed extraordinary strength, had to engage in combats with monsters, demons, or devils, usually applied special weapons to defeat their enemies, and eventually faced an uncommon tragic death.

Since the very dawn of human life on earth, men have learned that life by itself is precious and should be enjoyed to the fullest. The idea of invulnerability may be an allusion to man’s time-honored wish of not being wounded or hurt, a reflection of his desire to live as longer as possible in this world, and even to defeat death, to achieve immortality. The idea of seeking permanent life on earth has so immensely preoccupied human beings’ minds that, about 1300 years before The Iliad came into being by Homer, it came to be the major theme of the earliest recorded work of literature, that is, the epic of Gilgamesh, where we are told the dramatic story of the first human hero searching for immortality. Heroic myths of the world tell us that many of the world’s greatest heroes could not convince themselves that they finally had to submit to death. As Rosenberg (1992, p. xvii) points out, "Hector and Beowulf are forced to choose heroic deaths because they cannot live with the stain of cowardice." Gilgamesh is so afraid of death that he embarks on a long and perilous journey in search of the secret of immortality. Achilles has to deal with the dilemma of either dying with honor or living a long, undistinguished life.

Viewed from another angle, invulnerability may be considered in terms of supremacy or pre-eminence, a reflection of man’s desire to be more powerful, more dominant, or more important than other human beings. The myth of Esfandiar may be regarded from such a viewpoint. Having relied on his invulnerability, he was driven into a fatal battle with Rostam, the famous legendary Persian hero, in the hope of realizing his ambition of succeeding King Goshtasp, his father, to the throne.

There are a few heroes in the world mythology, as well as in the world literature, who are famous for their invulnerability, among whom one may name:

1. Achilles, the famous Greek hero in the Trojan War, being invulnerable except for the heel, from which the well-known phrase Achilles’ heel has been originated;
2. Siegfried, the legendary German hero, originally based on Scandinavian legends, whose skin, according to the legend, becomes almost entirely invulnerable except for a spot covered by a fallen leaf when he bathed in the blood of a dragon he had slain;
3. Balder, in Norse mythology, the god of light, summer, innocence, and purity, being famous as “the good,” whose mother, according to one version of the legend,
bound all creatures by oath not to harm him, but she accidentally omitted the mistletoe. Loki, one of the gods, having learned this, armed his blind brother, Hoder, with a mistletoe twig, with which Balder was slain;

(4) Esfandiar, the legendary Persian prince and a heroic figure in the Shah-nameh, the national Persian epic, whose invulnerability owed to Zoroaster, the ancient Iranian prophet.

In this article, the mystery of invulnerability has been approached from the viewpoint of the two famous epic poets, Homer and Ferdowsi, each belonging to a certain era and a different nationality, whose epics, nevertheless, appear to have portrayed the two invulnerable heroes as having similar characteristics. The question that may be raised in this regard would be: Is it probable that Ferdowsi was to some extent aware of the myth on Achilles’ invulnerability?

2. Greek and Roman myths on Achilles and his invulnerability

In Greek mythology, Achilles, son of Peleus and the sea goddess Thetis, and king of the Myrmidons, a Thessalian tribe, is the hero of Homer’s Iliad and since remote centuries has been considered as the prototype of Greeks’ conception of manly valor and beauty, "the personification of the heroic ideal" (Sfyroera, 2003, p. 254). Homer tells us that he took part in the Trojan War as the Greeks’ most illustrious warrior and slew the Trojan hero, Hector. The importance of masterpieces like Homer's Iliad or Ferdowsi's Shah-nameh may be better understood in the light of some comments actually made by, or attributed to, historical figures like Alexander the great. Legend has it that on his way to invading Persia, after Alexander occupied the western coasts of Asia Minor, without encountering real resistance by Persian forces (334 BC), having visited Troy, he paid tribute to Achilles by laying a wreath on his tomb, where "he complained that while Achilles had Homer to sing his praises, he Alexander had found no one" (Georgios, 2003, p. 160).

As his father was a mortal, Achilles was doomed to die. But his mother could not accept this fact. When Achilles was an infant, she tried to burn away his mortality by secretly placing him in a fire at night. "The myth relates that Achilles was the seventh child of Peleus and Thetis . . . tried to eliminate all the mortal elements from her children by exposing them to fire, causing their deaths" (Impelluso, 2008, p. 644). According to a slightly different account of the myth, she dipped Achilles in a cauldron of boiling water (see Sfyroera, 2003, p. 254). However, in the case of Achilles, Peleus suddenly awakened in the middle of the
night and commanded her to stop the ritual, leaving the child's immortality incomplete. Thetis was so infuriated, the myth tells us, that she left both her husband and son forever and went to live in the depths of the sea.

Despite the fact that Homer does not allude to Achilles’ invulnerability in *The Iliad*, nor is there any mention of a vulnerable heel in his epic poem, and while Homer explicitly tells us that Achilles is as vulnerable as anyone else, a Roman poet writing more than 1,000 years after the Trojan War has related a myth claiming that Achilles had been dipped in the waters of the Styx, the infernal river that gave invulnerability to all those who bathed in it, by his mother, rendering him invulnerable except in the back of one heel by which she held him (see Rosenberg, 1992; Impelluso, 2008). According to mythology, he was struck at this exact spot of the body by Paris, causing his death. On the basis of that myth, the phrase *Achilles’ heel* has ever been used to describe the vulnerable point in the character of a person, nation, etc.

Anyway, as Homer has related it, during the Trojan War, Achilles was fatally wounded by an arrow shot by Paris—Hector’s younger brother, whose abduction of Helen from Sparta caused the war. Still, another version of the story relates that the arrow was shot by the god Apollo, who had assumed Paris’ shape (see Benét, 1987). Such discrepancies in the stories handed down from remote pasts may be explained by the fact that myths underwent changes throughout the centuries before and after Homer.

3. Persian myths on Esfandiar and his invulnerability

According to Iranian legendary history, Esfandiar, son of Goshtasp, king of Persia, was a prince of Kayanian dynasty, a hero of Zoroastrian holy wars, and is best remembered for his tragic combat with Rostam, the mightiest hero and warrior of the Iranian national epic—namely, Ferdowsi’s *Shah-nameh* [lit., *The Book of Kings*]. Yarshater (1998) maintains that Esfandiar’s name in Avestan (that is, the language of Zoroastrians’ holy book, *Avesta*) is *Spantodata*, literally meaning “created/given by the holy” (see also Yahaghi, 2007; Safa, 2008, p. 596). “He is a man of exceptional qualities: Youth, prowess in fighting, heroism, princeship, and invulnerability are the scarcely-gathered virtues he possesses at the same time, and with such qualities, he is the most perfect and the most befitting man of his age” (Eslami Nodoushan, 1997, p. 354).

According to a Persian Zoroastrian work, the versified *Zaratosht-nama*, as cited by Yarshater (op. cit.) and Eslami Nodoushan (1972, p. 146), after Esfandiar, the young Persian
prince-hero, led the army to defeat the enemies of Persia—namely, invaders coming from Turan (the legendary Turkistan or Transoxiana)—and proved himself as a champion of the Zoroastrian faith, the prophet Zoroaster gave him a pomegranate as a holy reward, which rendered him invulnerable, ruyin-tan (lit., "brazen body"), "so that no sharp knives (kaard) could hurt his body" (Eslami Nodoushan, 1972, pp. 140-159; Yarshater, 1998). Certain oral traditions handed down from ancient Persia relate it differently, claiming that “Zoroaster submerged Esfandiar in a holy water to render him invulnerable, but while being dipped in the water, he instinctively closed his eyes, unknowingly not letting the miraculous water touch his eyes, and, as a consequence, being left with a ‘vulnerable spot’ in his body” (Meskoub, 1977, p. 24). Like the legend related to Achilles’ invincibility, on the basis of the myths concerning Esfandiar’s invulnerability, in the Persian language, the well-known phrase “Esfandiar’s eye” has been used to describe the vulnerable point in the character of a nation, the policy of a government, and so forth.

While Homer in his Iliad does not allude to Achilles’ invincibility, Ferdowsi (940-1020? A.D.) in his Shah-nameh explicitly mentions Esfandiar’s invulnerability. Bahman, son of Esfandiar, having taken a message from his father to Rostam, introduces himself to Zāl, father of Rostam, as “the son of the invulnerable prince”:

chonin dad pasokh ke mân bâmân ãm/ze posht-e jâhandar ruyeentânm
(Ferdowsi, 2006, p. 389)

English translation:

*He answered, "I am Bahman, son to invincible Esfandiar, lord of the world."*

(Davis, 2007, p. 379; emphasis added)

Elsewhere, in the same episode, namely “The combat of Rostam and Esfandiar”, Ferdowsi tells us that after the two mighty heroes engage in their first single combat and, consequently, Rostam is badly wounded by Esfandiar, the Simorgh, the all-knowing, fabulous bird, appears and admonishes him for “taking the risk of combating the invulnerable Esfandiar”:

chera râzm josti ze esfandiar/ke ou hâst ruyeen tân o namdar
(Yahaghi, 1992, p. 419)

English translation:

*Why did you fight with Esfandiar, as he is invincible and celebrated?*

In the final verses of this tragic episode, when Esfandiar is mortally wounded in his vulnerable eyes and falls to the ground, Rostam, though profoundly grieved, hastens to his side and admonishingly tells him, “Thou art the same who boasted of thy invulnerability”: 
to ani ke gofti ke **ruyeeen tānām**/boland aseman bār zāmeen bār zānām

(Ferdowsi, 2006, p. 402)

English translation:

*You were the man who said, I am invincible, I can bow the heavens down to the earth.*’ (Davis, 2007, p. 414; emphasis added)

4. The tragic death of Esfandiar

According to several Persian sources (e.g., Ferdowsi, in the episode of “The Combat of Rostam and Esfandiar” in *Shah-nameh*, and Saidi Sirjani, 2000), Esfandiar—the eldest son and crown prince of Goshtasp—had repeatedly been promised the throne by his father on condition that he won the war against the enemies who had invaded Persia from *Turan* (that is, Turkistan, the neighboring land in north-eastern Iran), a mission that he accomplished successfully; however, when he returns triumphantly, Goshtasp, instead of fulfilling his solemn promise, “charges him with a last ordeal before he will yield the throne: to go to Seistan and bring in chains the mighty Rostam whom he accuses of arrogance and of not having paid his respects to the court” (Yarshater, 1998, The combat with Rostam, paragraph 1). Esfandiar at first rejects the proposal but finally, driven by pride, ambition, and desire for power, agrees to set out for the mission, ignoring the tearful advice of his mother and the prediction by the King’s vizier that his death would be at the hand of Rostam.

In Seistan, however, Rostam, the old mighty Iranian hero, does not surrender to the humiliation of being chained by a young, ambitious, and arrogant prince, and is finally forced to get engaged in a fatal battle with him. As Esfandiar was invulnerable, none of Rostam's weapons could hurt him; on the contrary, Rostam was badly wounded by the young prince. Rostam, having felt himself on the verge of being defeated, in dire straits, resorted to the mythical sage bird, the Simorgh, prepared a special arrow from a branch of tamarisk (*gaz*) with the aid of the bird, and on the next day of the battle aimed at Esfandiar's eyes, resulting in the tragic death of the young hero (cf. Saidi Sirjani, 2000; Eslami Nodoushan, 1997). In Ferdowsi's words, the catastrophic moment has been portrayed in the following couple of lines:

*tāhāmtān *gaz* āndār kāman rand zood/bedansan ke simorgh fārmudeh bood

bezād teer bār chāshm-e esfandiar/siąh shod jāhan peesh-e an namdar

(Ferdowsi, 2006, p. 402)  English translation:
Rostam notched the tamarisk arrow to his bow quickly,  
As the Simorgh had ordered him.  
Aiming at Esfandiar's eyes, he released the arrow.  
The world turned dark to the celebrated prince's eyes.

5. Resemblances between Achilles and Esfandiar as depicted in the *Iliad* and the *Shah-nameh*

Despite the chronological distance between Homer’s *Iliad* and Ferdowsi’s *Shah-nameh* (the former written down sometime in the 8th century B.C. and the latter in the 11th century C.E.), many scholars have found the two epics similar in certain respects. One of the aspects that make the two works seem similar is the way that the two well-known heroes, Achilles and Esfandiar, have been portrayed by the two poets. Some authors (e.g., to cite just a few, Coyajee, 1939, cited in Yarshater, 1998; Bahar, 1995; Eslami Nodoushan, 1999; Davidson, 1990) have drawn parallels between the two heroes, to a number of which I point here:

1. Both Achilles and Esfandiar came from a distinguished royal family.
2. Both heroes were young, brave, adventurous, arrogant, and unmatched.
3. Both were invulnerable except for a certain spot in the body, Achilles in the back of the heel and Esfandiar in the eyes.
4. Both young heroes were out for fame, seeking excellence or *arête*, in terms of ancient Greek culture.
5. The two heroes look similar in temperament as well—both are easily-offended and moved by anger; and both, as soon as infuriated, are unrivalled so that nobody can prevent their wrath. Homer (1984, p. 1) describes “Achilles’ anger,” in the opening verses of *The Iliad*, as “doomed and ruinous” (Book I). But his wrath is best portrayed when he drags Hector’s dead body behind his chariot round the walls of Troy.
6. Both heroes initially showed reluctance to engage in battle with the enemy.
7. Both of them were warned by their mothers not to enter the mortal battle.
8. Both heroes initially stood away from the battlefield because of a grudge against an unjust king (Agamemnon and Goshtasp).
9. Both were spurred to join the fray by the death of dear ones—Achilles determined to fight after his great friend, Patroclus, was slain by Hector; Esfandiar was eventually moved to lead the Iranian army against Turan when he heard of the mortal wounds received by his brother Farshidvard.
The tragic death of both heroes was already prophesied by foretellers—Thetis, Achilles’ mother, had predicted that if he joined the Trojan War, he would no longer return home alive; in a similar vein, the sage Jamasp, Goshtasp’s vizier and counselor, had predicted that Esfandiar’s death would be at the hand of Rostam.

The fate of both heroes was eventually determined by gods or supernatural beings: Achilles, according to one myth, was shot dead by an arrow aimed at his vulnerable heel by Apollo assuming Paris; Esfandiar was slain by Rostam after the Simorgh’s intervention, who instructed Rostam to cut a special gaz (tamarisk) arrow, temper it in fire, soak it in wine, and aim it at Esfandiar’s vulnerable eyes.

The settings of the two legends also resemble each other, with regard to the fact that the two invading armies, with which the two young heroes are associated, set out from the capital of the country to invade a rather small realm, actually being part of their own mainland—Troy being a Hellenic colony across the Aegean Sea and Seistan a remote state being part of the Iranian territory.

Both heroes are destined to engage in a fatal combat which cannot be judged as a “fair fight”, since gods, goddesses, or other superhuman creatures interfere in the process of fighting.

And, last but not least, the two prince-heroes end up with a tragic, premature death on the battlefield of the small state they invaded.

6. Concluding remarks
Certain themes in world mythology seem to have been repeated in the myths associated with different nationalities, localities, or ethnic groups throughout centuries. Among such themes are included those associated with distinguished mythical heroes: unusual birth, high social rank, spectacular physical strength, beauty, struggle with monsters, applying special weapons to defeat enemies, facing a tragic death, and so on. The notion of 'invulnerability' might be a manifestation of man's time-honored desire to live longer in this world and defeat the inevitable death to which human beings are doomed. Or it might be viewed from the perspective of man's desire to gain superiority over other human beings.

Despite a time interval of over seventeen centuries between Homer and Ferdowsi, and despite some differences between the two epics, one may still find similarities between their works as to the portrayal of the two well-known heroes, Achilles and Esfandiar. The similarities might be interpreted in the light of human beings' common desires, emotions,
insights, and experiences rather than in terms of one poet imitating or duplicating the other’s original ideas. In fact, no hard-and-fast historical evidence can be found as to whether Ferdowsi had access to a translation of Homer’s Iliad, or had ever heard of the existence of such an epic. What we are actually certain about is the fact that the portrayal of the two characters in the two corresponding works resembles strikingly; however, except for the notion of ‘intertextuality’, according to which, in Kristeva’s words (1986, as cited in Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 262), “any text is a link in a chain of texts, reacting to, drawing in, and transforming other texts”, we may not become aware of other probable reasons behind such a resemblance.

References


Title

Image-Making as Exercised by Iranian Literary Translators

Author

Hoda Hadipour (M.A)
Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran

Biodata

Hoda Hadipour, lecturer of Translation Studies at Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran. Her research interests include Sociology of Translation, Translational Act and Linguistics and Translation.

Abstract

“Translation is an art”, this is perhaps the most-heard comment on translation by translators. As a matter of fact, translators, as social agents tend to complain about being ignored, undervalued, and underpaid. This perceived invisibility will make them try to improve their image and make a distinction between themselves and other persons entering the field almost with limited experience or talent. In this research, Iranian Literary Translators were put under investigation to find out if they take any measures or strive to advance their social image and prestige. As proposed by Rakefet Sela-sheffy (2008, Pp. 5-6), translators tend to present three images of them and applying these images to Iranian translation context, it was perceived that Iranian Literary Translators do try to present a sublime image of translation and translator. Introducing translation as an act of art and translator as an artist is the most frequent attempt of Iranian Literary Translators in presenting themselves and their job. Results of this study showed that Iranian literary translators bother themselves to make a distinction, to categorize translation as a profession or art which needs special skills and qualities, in order to claim status and somehow to drive translation toward being an independent profession with established regulations, specific prerequisites, and maybe talents.

Keywords: Literary Translator, Image, Enrichment Agency, Cultural Innovation, Art and Literature
1. Introduction

Improving the status of translation and translators is a matter of importance, which needs more attention in most of countries. Gouadeč (1997, Pp. 245-246) believes that, “in the vast majority of countries, translation is often seen as little more than glorified secretarial work and companies often do not even recognize as ‘translators’ employees who spend most of their working days translating under all kinds of rather unflattering denominations.”

One can find lots of reasons behind this ignorance, including both deeply rooted attitudes toward translation as a simple and second-handed activity in the minds of public and also the lack of status-claiming practices by translators themselves. Iran is one of those countries, in which there is no official body organizing or monitoring the affairs or concerns of translators, especially literary ones. The Ministry of Justice is the only authorized body to issue licenses of certified translators after some examination and selection processes. Apart from certified translations, translators need no license or approval in order to be able to translate and publish their works.

Translation is mostly considered as a cultural practice and there is barely any recognition of the theories behind the process of translation. Rates paid to translators are usually very low and the general assumption among the public is that anyone who is familiar with a foreign language is able to be a translator. This means that in the first place translation is not recognized as a profession entailing the translator to have a degree or even a knowledge base of the science of translation. In short, it can be said that everyone is allowed to translate. Sela-Sheffy(2006, p. 244) believes that:

For all their differences, literary and non-literary translators alike tend to complain about being undervalued, ignored and underpaid, and dependent on unfair market forces. They often talk in interviews about the lack of public awareness and clients’ low appreciation of the peculiar expertise and skills demanded by their profession and the difficulties imposed by it. In short, they resent the fact that their occupation is regarded as semi-professional, with undefined requirements and criteria and unclear boundaries, failing to gain recognition as either a formal ‘profession’ or an individual ‘art’ form.

All these facts would push translators into fights for higher positions both inside and outside of their own field, to distinguish themselves as professionals. According to Sela-Sheffy (2008, p.1), “The way translators perceive their occupation and their role as cultural agents which is determined by their status as a professional group and as individuals is very
So far, Translation Studies has been mostly concerned with the translation performance and too little attention has been paid to the human agents behind the final product of translation. The sociological aspects of translation are introduced into Translation Studies in recent years, and as Merkle (2008, p. 175) states, “following the ‘cultural turn’ in Translation Studies of the 1980s and 1990s, recent years have seen a ‘sociological turn’”. It can be said that the subject of studies has been shifted from translations as texts to the agents involved in their production specifically translators, as members of socio-cultural community and the view translators have about themselves within the field and their struggle for having a better image and position.

This study intended to investigate the ways Iranian literary translators strive to improve their image as a professional group. Therefore, the data for this research were collected from around 500 interviews of literary translators printed in newspapers, magazines and books which were content-analyzed and the three images introduced by Sela-sheffy (2008) i.e. the translator as a man-of-art, the translator as an enrichment agency, and the translator as a guardian of language were searched for.

2. Theoretical Framework
Translators, like many other occupational groups, are very much concerned with their occupational prestige (Treiman 1997, cited in Sela-Sheffy 2006, p. 243). According to Sela-Sheffy (2006, p. 243), “aware of the image of their trade as a second-rate auxiliary occupation with only a secondary function in the production of texts, translators invest considerable efforts in trying to enhance their prestige and improve their starting point as professionals.”

Bourdieu argues that the struggle for social distinction is a fundamental dimension of all social life, “struggles over the appropriation of economic or cultural goods are, simultaneously, symbolic struggles to appropriate distinctive signs in the form of classified, classifying goods or practices, or to conserve or subvert the principles of classification of those distinctive properties” (1984, p. 249).

All human actions take place within social fields, which are arenas for the struggle of the resources. The field is the arena of acquiring status in the hierarchy of powers in it. According to Bourdieu (1986, p. 243), “The field is like a competing market in which all types of capital (economic, cultural, social and symbolic) are utilized.” Individuals, institutions, and other agents try to distinguish themselves from others, and acquire the
capital useful or valuable on the arena. In modern societies, there are two distinct systems of social hierarchization:

The first is economic, in which position and power is determined by money and property, the capital one commands. The second system is cultural or symbolic. In this, one's status is determined by how much cultural or symbolic capital one possesses. Culture is also a source of domination, in which intellectuals are in the key role as specialists of cultural production and creators of symbolic power.

Since the second system of distinction is prominent in the translation profession, it seems that understanding the economic and cultural capital introduced by Bourdieu is essential. Bourdieu (1986, p. 241) defines economic capital simply as what “which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights.” Swartz (1997, p. 75) believes that:

Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital covers a wide variety of resources including such things as verbal facility, general cultural awareness, aesthetic preferences, information about the school systems, and educational credentials. His point is to suggest that culture (in the broadest sense of the term) can become a power source.

Bourdieu (1986) also believes that cultural capital can exist in three different states:

In the embodied state, i.e. in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.), which are the trace or realization of theories or critiques of these theories, problematics, etc.; and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, as will be seen in the case of educational qualifications, it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243).

Bourdieu usually applies his theory of ‘Distinction’ to social classes, but it is possible to apply this theory to occupational groups and fields as well. Using the framework of this theory one can examine the struggles over appropriation of capitals and improvement of status and image by the agents of occupational groups.

People occupying the positions in the field utilize all kinds of strategies (strategy as the active arrangement of deliberately-oriented action lines which are observing the rules and forming consistent and intelligent patterns).
Through these strategies, occupants of positions prompt to keep or improve their status individually or collectively (Ritzer, 1995, p. 724).

Applying this theory of Bourdieu to Translation Studies, Sela-Sheffy proposes that translators adopt two strategies in order to advance their image. According to her, “non-literary translators aspire to sound ‘professionals’, and on the other hand literary translators seek recognition as ‘artists’. These differentiated strategies mark a distinction between literary and ‘commercial’ translators so as to create a structural distance between elite and common translators” (Sela-Sheffy, 2008, p. 4).

*Professionalism* for non-literary translators entails activities like “aspiration at standardization and self-management, rising educational frameworks and diploma programs, or the various conferences and Internet forums.”(Sela-Sheffy, 2008, p. 5). By contrast, for literary translators, the status of profession is improved “through promoting the personal reputation of select individual” (Sela-Sheffy, 2008, p. 5).

Sela-Sheffy (2008, Pp. 5-6) believes that “elite literary translators tend to promote three professional images to build their personal charisma, in terms of their public role as well as personality, as follows:

1. The translator as a guardian of language and culture and as an educator engaged in a national mission. This image implies a profound knowledge of the canonical domestic language and cultural lore, and hence constitutes a safe, albeit scarce, resource.
2. The translator as an “enrichment agency” responsible for cultural innovations and updating. This image implies sophistication and close acquaintance with foreign languages and cultures.
3. The translator as a man-of-art. This image stands out as the major resource evoked by literary translators, which constitutes a highly valued resource for taste-makers.”

3. Methodology
This research is a descriptive-documentary one.

What was studied in this research was views of translators about their profession and images they present when they are talking about translation and translator in their interviews or their personal profiles. One of the best sources of these data is interviews with translators; therefore using interviews leads to documentary method. On the other hand, this research did
not aim to find the reason why they adopt such strategies but it was merely a report of what is the case; therefore it is a descriptive research not an explanatory one.

The data collected for this research were gathered from printed media and they were analyzed with the method of content analysis, which “as a method means recognizing and highlighting the basis or major lines of a text or written text, a series of speeches, a set of pictures, tapes, personal letters, open questions of a questionnaire, etc”(Saroukhani, 2004, p. 281).

4. Translators' Status and Strategies of Status Improvement

The data of this research were collected from around 500 interviews with literary translators, centered on 32 elite translators, printed in magazines, newspapers and books which were studied thoroughly in order to find three images introduced by Sela-Sheffy as represented by Iranian literary translators. Findings are categorized under the main headings introduced by her, based on the emphasis on each one of the images, i.e. language, culture and art.

During the research, another image was also found which seems to be ignored in Sela-Sheffy’s research. And that is showing high proficiency in target language and literature. In what follows, what was found in these interviews is presented in different parts.

1. The Translator as a Guardian of Language and Culture and as an Educator Engaged in a National Mission

Sela-sheffy (2008, Pp. 5-6) believes that:

This image implies a profound knowledge of the canonical domestic language and cultural lore, and hence constitutes a safe, albeit scarce, resource. Exploited primarily by senior venerable translators, it indicates an elitist, orthodox stance of gatekeepers. Those who promote this image often complain about popularizing trends in translation and demonstrate deep concern for the fate of culture. They stress the importance of their job and their ‘sense of duty’.

As stated in different interviews, Iranian literary translators tend to adopt this image. Most of the translators emphasized on the important role translation plays in enriching a language and a culture. Some of them also talked about the inevitable effect languages have on one another and believed that this is the role of translator and translation to take advantage of this effect and help the target language to be developed by introducing new concepts and expressions.
As we can see in the following quotation, (Emami), one of the most famous and creditable Iranian literary translators contends:

How can we prevent languages to affect each other? This is a trend going on for centuries… I can say those new words and expressions suggested by translators have enriched Persian language (Emami, *Translator*, Vol. 2, p. 50).

2. The Translator as an ‘Enrichment Agency’, Responsible for Cultural Innovations and Updating

According to Sela-sheffy (2008, Pp. 5-6):

This image implies sophistication and close acquaintance with foreign languages and cultures, which constitute a highly valued resource for taste-makers. Assuming the position of cultural trend-setters, those who mobilize this image are at pains to demonstrate their cosmopolitan experience, and their desire to rescue the local culture from provincialism. For all the prestige it bestows, however, this stance, if pushed to the extreme, may become risky for translators, who get harshly criticized and called charlatans and ignorant.

Iranian literary translators also emphasized this image. They believed that the translator is ought to deal with culture and language. Translation makes civilization and one cannot ignore translation. Some of these literary translators openly stated that translators in Iran have made culture and difference in a way that they have totally improved Iranian culture and intellectual fields.

Mollanazar states in an interview:

Translator should be aware of the fact that, s/he is importing thought, knowledge and culture to his society by his/her selections in the process of translation. And if the translator knows his/her role in transferring knowledge and understands the importance of his job in constructing culture in society, s/he will definitely do this job more carefully (Iran Newspaper, 03/01/2008, p.18).

3. The Translator as a Man-of-Art

Sela-sheffy(2008, Pp. 5-6)describes claimants of this image as follows:

Those who promote this image like to define their competence as a magic spell a gift bestowed on them from childhood. They deny rational considerations in becoming translators, evoking destiny instead, and expressing scorn for systematic education, including academic training. They like to compare themselves to art performers, notably musicians, and boast of
their individual creativity and artistic license, including disregard of readership constraints.

As it is found by Sela-Sheffy (2008) and also this research, this image is the most common one adopted by literary translators. One major element of this image is emphasis on creation as one of the most important factors that should be considered in a literary translation and most of these translators believe that they are gifted by this ability of creation and any kind of literary translation requires some degrees of creation and recreation.

They compared translation to art and believed that like any other art, translation needs talent, skill, attempt and passion. They contended that although the translator is not the author s/he fails without artistic effort, s/he fails if s/he cannot understand the spirit of the work and keep the style and tone of the author. “Art” or other related concepts were both directly used or implied by translators.

Some of these translators also compared translators with artists, mostly theatre actors and musicians, like the following:

Translator is like a theatre actor. The actor is successful when s/he forgets herself and plays someone else’s role and makes the spectators believe that s/h is somebody else. But, as the translator cannot play any role and is able to play roles which are compatible with his/ her skills so the translator cannot translate any text from a foreign language just because s/he knows that language… (Deihimi, 2005, p. 19)

All three images introduced by Sela-Sheffy were found in this research as adopted by Iranian literary translators; moreover, another image could also be seen frequently. Most of Iranian Literary Translators emphasized on reading and being familiar with the Persian Literature and showing high proficiency in Persian Language and Literature as a prerequisite for becoming a literary translator. Most of them believed in Persian Literature as a very rich one and recommended novice translators to devote some time to reading great works of Persian literature. Iranian literary translators acknowledged that knowing a foreign language is not enough for such a great job as translation and those who are men of literature and have read a lot in Persian, have been started to learn a foreign language and translated great works on the basis of their valuable knowledge of Persian.

As we saw in the previous paragraphs, all the three main images proposed by Sela-Sheffy and also one more images were found by this research. In what follows, two diagrams show the frequency of each image as found in the analyzed material.
One point to be kept in mind is that the translators have not stuck to one image in their interviews, i.e. they may have presented more than one image at the same time and this made the analysis of results somehow complicated, as can be seen in two diagrams presented below, one showing the frequency of each image in general and the second one presenting the frequency of images without considering the overlaps.

**Fig. 1.** Frequency of each image without considering overlaps

In this diagram the frequency of each image as presented by Iranian literary translators is demonstrated. One important note to be kept in mind is that there were overlaps in the data, i.e. some translators had talked about more than one image in an interview. As it is shown, the most frequently used image is that of art, i.e. translators are men of art. After this, most of translators believe in the cultural role they play in society. And finally with a very slight difference they talk about translator as an expert of target literature and guardian of language.

**Fig. 2.** Frequency of each image considering all options

Translators had talked about four main images, which can be summarily called art, culture, language and literature. What is shown in this diagram is the frequency of each image in the total interviews being studied. The image of art is the most mentioned image by Iranian
literary translators. After that, the three other images are mentioned with an almost similar frequency, considering the fact that some translators had talked about more than one image in their interviews, which is also shown in this diagram.

5. Conclusion

Translating is seen in the public view, according to Sela-Sheffy (as cited in Wolf 2006, p. 243) as a “second-hand, auxiliary” occupation. The common assumption is that everybody is able to translate and to translate a book or a literary work does not need any official degrees or formal education, and there is no official institution or organization to support translators. Considering these facts, it seems that one of the most important concerns of translators is to make a distinction between themselves and those who translate non-professionally. According to the theory of Bourdieu and what Sela-sheffy has found in her research on the strategies of image making, this distinction is established in terms of the repertoire of valued properties and images they use to accumulate cultural capital and gain prestige. As stated before, cultural capital in Bourdieu’s theory covers a wide variety of resources including such things as verbal facility, general cultural awareness, aesthetic preferences, information about the school systems, and educational credentials. His point is to suggest that culture (in the broadest sense of the term) can become a power source.

Reviewing the related literature showed that this process of distinction occurs through adopting some strategies of image-making. The presented images were categorized under four main headings, out of which three have been already proposed by Sela-sheffy and one more is found during investigation of the interviews of Iranian literary translators. These images are:

1. The translator as a guardian of language and culture and as an educator engaged in a national mission.
2. The translator as an “enrichment agency” responsible for cultural innovations and updating.
3. The translator as a man-of-art
4. The translator as a literature expert

Based on what is said, this research entered into the realm of sociology of translation and investigates Iranian literary translators in particular. In fact, the researcher aimed to find out what are the strategies of image-making as adopted by Iranian literary translators. To answer this question, interviews done with some elite Iranian literary translators in printed media
were thoroughly read and analyzed in order to extract parts of the texts that mention the foregoing images directly or indirectly.

After categorizing the studied interviews, which in fact are considered as the corpus, the frequency of each image was calculated and the results showed that most of translators emphasized on the image of translators as men of art (44%). After this, the image of translator as importer of culture was the second most frequently mentioned one (19%). The third one in this categorization was the translator as the expert of literature (13%), which is used more than the image of translator as the guardian of language (12%). In what Sela-sheffy has reported, the two images of art and culture are of the same ranking, but what is found in this research shows that the image of translator as an artist is the mostly adopted one by Iranian literary translators.

In presenting the image of translator as an artist, translators have either called translation directly as an art and have emphasized on the creativeness of translation action or have likened it to other arts like painting or acting. Presenting such an image by literary translators makes them guarantee their advantageous status in the professional arena and achieve the position of policy makers in this field. This distinctive position puts them in a better position to bargain on the value of their work.

One should remember that this research was a merely descriptive one and what is achieved by it is not to be generalized to all literary translators, in fact, the researcher does not aim to apply the results to all the community of literary translators of Iran. Certainly, there are translators who look at this profession as a job to earn living so they do not try to show distinction, moreover there are translators who are not being interviewed or their interviews are not included in the corpus of this study. Therefore, what is presented in this paper is only related to the literary translators based on the interviews they had with public newspapers and magazine and its generalization to all community of literary translators needs broader research and studies.

Examining the strategies of image-making which are adopted by Iranian Literary Translators shows us how and how much they try to make a distinction. The process of distinction helps a group to keep their special position in the professional arena, besides it gives them a common identity and makes them identify themselves under one heading, i.e. “we”. This is the most important step in making a group and undoubtedly, if this is achieved in case of our literary translators, their social role becomes more evident or else they become more powerful in the society. Establishing a group, one can more easily ask for his/her
economic, legal and cultural needs, which in turn encourages translators, specifically elite translators who are having a great role in the cultural and social arenas of society.

References


Emami, K. *Translator*, 2, 50.


Title

Improving the Proficiency of Iranian Students in Learning English by Using Games

Authors

Mohammad Reza Pahlavan Nezhad (Ph.D)
Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran

Farzaneh Hassanzadeh Tavakoli (Ph.D Candidate)
International Campus of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Iran

Biodata

Mohammad Reza Pahlavan Nezhad, associate professor of Linguistics at Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran. His research interests include syntax, semantics, applied linguistics, psycholinguistics, morphology, discourse analysis and pragmatics.

Farzaneh Hassanzadeh Tavakoli, ph.D candidate of linguistics at the International Campus of Ferdowsi University of Mashhad, Mashhad, Iran. His research interests include syntax, applied linguistics, semantics and teaching English to EFL learners.

Abstract

One of the major problems of contemporary education is to motivate students, so motivation plays an important role in teaching especially learning English. There are several ways to motivate students. One of them is using games. Games are by definition fun and nearly everyone would agree if learning can be made enjoyable, then students will learn more. Therefore, my work is limited to use games to motivate students. In the first part of my article I will mention different kinds of motivation. I will also have a brief hint to different ways of improving motivation such as using visual aids, songs, games, etc. In the second part, the use of games in different skills and in vocabulary and grammar is briefly mentioned. In recent years teaching speaking skill has received great attention and methodologists suggest many ways to improve it. Also introducing speaking skill at the beginning of the course is a motivating factor. Since speaking and listening skills are interrelated, they are considered together. Therefore in the third part, I will suggest games to improve these two skills. In the last part, the use of games at Iranian schools has been examined. I have prepared some questionnaires and asked the
opinion of some students and teachers about using games. Since Iranian schools are crowded and any game cannot be used there, several usable games are mentioned. There is no work written specially in the use of games to improve these two skills.

Keywords: Proficiency, Iranian students, Learning English, Games

1. Introduction
Motivation plays a dominant role in education. Teachers agree that motivated students are more pleasant to teach and achieve more success than other students. Badri Moghaddam (1363,p.90) points out that "motivation is a very important factor in learning. Most students enjoy normal intelligence, but they fail in their studies for lack of motivation."

Motivation does not imply fun, nor is it synonymous with either noise or silence. Chastain(1976,p.172) indicates "motivation implies some incentive that causes the individual to participate in activity toward a goal and to preserve until the goal is reached.

1.1 Kinds of Motivation
There are two kinds of motivation―integrative‖ and―instrumental‖ motivation. When students study a foreign language if they admire the culture and wish to become familiar with the society in which the language is used, they are most successful. This is called integrative motivation and is distinguished from instrumental motivation in which the purpose of foreign language study is meeting a graduation requirement. Integrative motivation is more commonly found in the foreign language situation, where a person has limited exposure to target language. For example a person studying and using a language in the country where it is spoken, is likely to have integrative motivation. As Julia Falk indicates" students with integrative motivation can achieve success in a foreign language situation, whereas those with instrumental motivation may learn little even on a second language context." McClelland and Watson mention (1973,p.173) these kinds of motivation:

Some students are motivated by a desire to know. For them learning is a goal. Others are motivated as a means of enhancing their self-concept. Some students are motivated by social factors. They are working to attain a certain power status in group.

Consequently motivation is affected by students’ self-concept, values, needs, goals, social environmental of the class, and by teacher’s behavior. Students with different kinds of motivation react in different ways toward classes, so it is teacher’s duty to arrange a syllabus meeting different students’ needs. Shariatmadari (1369,p.360) indicates" if learning materials
are according to student’s need, he will learn and remember them better. If a student is interested in the lessons; the teacher does not make him learn them.

1.2 Improving Motivation

To attain the goal mentioned in the previous section, the teacher should consider different ways of improving motivation. He should recognize that to improve motivation, he will be dealing with cognitive, affective and social variables.

Three factors should be considered in dealing with cognitive variables. Firstly, the teacher should clarify for the students what the goals of the course are and what they should do to achieve these goals. Secondly, learning the new material should begin with what students already know. Lastly, the teacher should enhance the student’s creative learning. Affective variables are one of the other important factors in improving motivation. These variables consist of several components. Firstly, audio-visual aids are one of the important components of affective variables. Rivers(1981,p.207) writes that "student motivation is also considered to be a strong factor in favor of audio-visual approach." Young people today are used to looking and listening for long periods with well constructed pictures or films; they find language classes more interesting. Secondly, the teacher should take use of any opportunity to arouse suspense and curiosity. He can use puzzles in this case. Thirdly, the teacher should use learning games and songs in appropriate situations to improve motivation. Using songs in the classrooms can be both enjoyable and educational. Celece-Murcia points out(1988,p.116) that "songs can be utilized as presentation contexts, as reinforcement materials, as vehicle through which to teach all language skills, and as a medium through which to present some of the most cultural themes". Social variables should also be considered. The use of small groups in classes increases participation.

2. The Use of Games

Games are one of the best learning activities to improve students’ motivation. Language learning is a hard work. Effort is needed at every moment and must be maintained over a long period. Games help and encourage many learners to keep their interests. Gasser(1979,p.54) argues that games have a goal, are organized according to rules, and are meant to be enjoyable. The use of games depends on the teacher’s purpose, the level of the class and nature of the game itself. Most games contain an element of competition. When individual students are playing, it is better to avoid having winners and losers because the weak students may become discouraged by never winning. Games can teach, and there is no reason why
they can not be included as an integral part of a lesson. Wright(1984,p.1) points out that" games can be found to give practice in all skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking, in all stages of teaching learning sequence and for many types of communication." Many games provide more practice than conventional drill exercises. With a little thought, the teacher will find that many repetition and pattern drills are easily converted into games. Wright names one of the games practicing grammatical structure:

This game called "visual perception of length" uses comparatives and superlatives, possessives and name of colors. It is good for beginning students, and lasts about twenty minutes. In this game four or five learners take it turns to draw a line on the board. Each line should be in different length and color. The teacher asks students to judge which is the longest, and shortest line. The teacher can say: I think the blue line is longer than brown one. What do you think David? David can say: I think it is shorter.

Different versions of a specific game can be derived from. I suggest the variation of game mentioned here. Each learner draws with a ruler a number of colored lines on a piece of paper. Below the lines she writes a number of sentences, some true and some deliberately false sentences concerning the relative length. For example, the red line is longer than the green line. The pieces of papers are then interchanged and receiver must decide which of the sentences are true or false. Students need to learn how to incorporate vocabulary to long-term memory. This does not necessarily mean memorizing. Teacher should arouse a desire to store and remember by providing games through which students can demonstrate what they know and learn from each other. One of the games in Persian about vocabularies can be used in English. I suggest a new game by changing it to some extent. The teacher can think of a five letter word and draw the number of dashes on the board. The learners say words of five letters. If any of these words contain a letter which is the word the teacher is thinking of, and is in the same position, then he should write the letter on the board over the appropriate dash. For example, the teacher is thinking of the word “mouth” and a student says the word “teach”. The letter H is in both words and in the same position, so he writes “_ _ _ _ H”.

It is possible to create games by which either one skill or all skills can be practiced. In the games mentioned here up to now listening and speaking skills were practiced. Games can be specially created to practice writing skill. One of the most famous games in this case is “Treasure hunt”. Groups of students are given an object which they hide somewhere in the class. Then, they write instructions for another group to find the treasure.
3. Improving Speaking and Listening Skills

The early introduction of the speaking is an important motivating factor. Students study another language with the idea that language learning means the ability to speak that language. They are often discouraged when they find that it is just like other subjects. So auditory abilities (speaking and listening) are a good starting point for any language class. Speaking and listening are interrelated and cannot be separated from each other. One of the best ways for improving these two skills is using games. Rivers (1981, p. 228) points out that "in a game the element of a competition and excitement forces out oral expressions so that students forget their inhibitions about making mistakes and being embarrassed in front of their friends."

Listening skill is practiced in games devised for speaking skill, but it is possible to create games in which only listening is emphasized. One of the games involving listening comprehension is called commands. This is the simplest game performed by teachers in classes. In this simple game the teacher gives commands which the students must obey.

There are two kinds of commands which can be used in this game. Those which need physical response; for example, stand up, sit down and those which need students to write or draw something. This game is well suited to practice with prepositions; for example, put your pencil in/on your hand. One of the most popular games used in Persian and any other language is “Twenty questions” game. In this play, a slip of paper with a word on it is given to a student. The student writes down his or her own word. It may be an object in the room or a job or a famous person. The other student must then ask him or her in order to guess the word. Students can ask twenty questions, and that person should answer using Yes or No. Simple present tense can be practiced in this game. For example, one student can ask this question "Do you work in an office?" Listening and speaking skills are practiced in this game.

One of the useful games used for practicing speaking skill is mentioned by Matthews:

In this game different controversial statements are written on pieces of paper and put into a box. For example, on one paper may be written: Brothers are responsible for their sisters. Students are told to pick out a statement and spend a few minutes preparing arguments to defend it. All students then have to present their argument in turn, answer questions and defend themselves from attack. One person can be made chairperson. In the end, there can be a vote to most convincing defense. It is likely that free discussion will quickly begin. This game is more effective than formal topics which can be rather tiresome.
4. The use of Games at Iranian Schools

Are Iranian students interested in games? What is the teachers’ opinion about games? In order to find the answer to these questions I prepared some questionnaires and asked the opinion of 120 students on 3 levels: elementary, junior and high school. About 80% of students said that their teachers have never used games in teaching and about 90% of students showed tendency to use games. Some of them argued that “using games helps us to learn the new material in an interesting way.” I also asked the opinion of 10 teachers in using games. Some of them said that it is not possible to teach through games. Most of them found it a good idea. So, both teachers and students agree with using games. Now the main question is put ward here: Are games really usable in Iranian classes? It is clear that most games are not usable in Iranian classes, especially games in which only several students are involved. In order to find the answer to the above question, I created a game and performed it on third grade students in high schools. I wanted students to practice speaking skill. First, I asked them to talk about the hobbies they have, but only few students participated in discussion. Then, I performed my game. I divided the class to 2 groups. The class had 30 students sitting in 2 rows of benches. I arranged 15 students in each row. They should remain in their seat. I asked each group to choose a hobby among themselves. For example drawing, sewing, etc. In order that each member of the group become aware of each other’s decision, I asked them to choose a head person in middle row among them, then each member of the group should give some characteristic of that hobby and the other group members should guess it. I saw that nearly all the students participated in this game. Then groups changed turns. Later, I asked their opinion about games. Most of them confessed that it was an interesting game, and they enjoyed it very much. One of the said: “I really spoke English in the class and forgot being embarrassed in front of students. I performed another game on other class. I asked them to tell a short memory to class. No one spoke; then, I said I would begin a memory and each of them should add one sentence to it. In this way we built an interesting story altogether. All students participated actively in the class. Therefore, I reached to this idea that games are usable in Iranian schools provided that the teacher creates a game according to the content of the lesson and students’ needs. Some games mentioned before such as twenty questions and vocabulary games are also usable in Iranian schools.

5. Conclusion
I examined during this research that if learning can be made enjoyable, students will learn more. So, games are as a means to achieve this end. Games are not used in classes as a teaching device. The teacher can use them as integral part of the lesson to teach anything especially to improve speaking and listening skills. Finally, I came to this conclusion that motivating students to improve speaking and listening skills can be achieved by using games.

References


The Comparative Effect of Short Stories and Task-Based Reading on Intermediate EFL Learners’ Reading Comprehension

Authors

Mona Khabiri (Ph.D)
Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch, Iran

Tannaz Jalayer (M.A)
Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch, Iran

Biodata

Mona Khabiri, assistant professor of applied linguistics at Islamic Azad University, Central Tehran Branch. Her research interests include peer and dynamic assessment in EFL/ESL context, learner autonomy, social constructivism, language learning and teaching strategies, and collaborative learning.

Tannaz Jalayer, M.A in TELF. Her research interests include second and foreign language acquisition, critical thinking awareness, and reading comprehension.

Abstract

This study was an attempt to investigate the comparative effect of short stories and task-based reading on EFL learners’ reading comprehension. This study was done during two separate terms. To fulfill the purpose of this study, at the beginning of each term 30 male and female intermediate students between 15 and 40 years of age were selected from a total number of 60 students through their performance on a piloted PET. These 30 participants were non-randomly divided into two classes of 15 for task-based group to receive instruction in the first semester and two classes of 15 for short story group to be taught in the second semester. The participants of the task-based group covered 12 passages of the book New Interchange two and its workbook in 16 sessions and did different pre-, while-, and post-reading activities, while the participants of the short story group covered 12 short stories from the book Steps to Understanding in 16 sessions and followed what the teacher suggested them to do. A piloted reading comprehension post-test (derived from another sample of PET) was administered at the end of the treatment to both groups and their mean scores on the test were compared through an independent samples t-test. The result \( t=4.267, \text{ df}=58, p=0.0005<0.05 \), two-
tailed) led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, thereby demonstrating that the learners in the task-based group benefited significantly more than those in the short story group in terms of improving their reading comprehension.

**Keywords:** Task-based reading, Short story reading, Reading comprehension

1. **Introduction**

Reading is one of the necessary skills that every student has to master in learning a language. It is a basic and complementary skill in language learning requiring the reader to focus attention on the reading materials and skills to comprehend what someone else has written. Richards and Renandya (2002) point out the special focus that reading receives in foreign language teaching. To them, there are two important reasons for this. First, many foreign language students often have reading as one of their most important goals. Second, various pedagogical purposes served by written texts cause reading to receive this special focus. Talking about different approaches of this important skill, it can be said that using Literature has proved advantages to ESL/EFL reading experiences and one way of incorporating literature into language classes indefinitely through short story. Erin (2004, p. 43) states that “short story seems to be the most suitable one to use in crowded classes due to its shortness”. According to Gorjian, Moosavinia, and Shahramiri (2011), short story enables learners to practice the four basic language skills in the target language, to experience the culture of other nations, to acquire the target language in funny and enjoyable ways, and to have a chance to express their feelings and opinions. They further maintain that it is a rich resource for language learners who study a foreign language enabling them to imagine themselves living in the world of the story, and thus increasing their motivation.

On the other hand, reading is not limited to short stories. Different models and procedures have been introduced in recent years for teaching reading among which Task-Based Language teaching can be named (Ellis, 2011). Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) requires learners to perform a task according to certain criteria, which show their immediate needs, rather than their ability to successfully complete a test (Ellis, as cited in Hayati&Jalilifar, 2010). In other words, TBLT tries to change the classroom into a real-world situation which needs both authentic materials and communication by using the language (Nunan, 2001; 2004). Therefore, the intent of the present study is to see and investigate effect of these two popular approaches of reading which is the comparative effect of short stories and task-based reading on EFL learners’ reading comprehension.
2. Review of the Related Literature

The traditional view of the four major skills in the field of language teaching and learning used to classify the skills in terms of the degree of the brain involvement, as it was assumed, in the process of performing the skill into two distinct categories: “productive” and “receptive” skills (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Reading was categorized in the latter group, of course. However, thanks to the findings by researchers in the field, today such a distinction is no longer regarded to be valid (Ellis, 2011).

Compared to the traditional view of reading under which a reader simply draws information from the material, the current view describes a reader as an active one who extracts information from more than one text and then synthesizing and making representation out of the text’s message (McKeon, Beck, Sinatra, &Loxterman, as cited in Logan & Johnson, 2009). Now, reading is generally defined as an interactive, cognitive process of decoding the meaning in which the writer encodes his text. In this part this process seems to be easy. In reality, the decoding period is the most complex phase because it should result in comprehension that satisfies the reader (Snow, 2002).

2.1. Reading Comprehension

Nunan (2004) defines comprehension as the process of simultaneously extracting meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. Thus, it appears to be one of the problematic skills for L2 learners (Bensoussan, as cited in Afzali, Tavanger, Amouzadeh, &EslamiRasekh, 2011). Therefore, studies have been conducted to understand what specific problems students encounter during their comprehension (Jong, 2006). In considering the reader, it includes all the capacities, abilities, back ground knowledge, and experiences that a person brings to the act of reading (Farhady, 2005). According to Richards and Schmidt (2002), contemporary theories of comprehension emphasize that it is an active process which is dependent both on information contained in the message (bottom-up processing) as well as background knowledge, information from the content, and from the writer’s intention (top-down processing).

2.2. Task-Based and Short Story Reading

Nunan (1989, p.78) believes that a task-based reading “involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or integrating in the target language while their attention is focused on meaning and the intention which is conveyed”. According to Ellis (2006) the design of a task-based lesson involves consideration of the stages that has a task as its principal component. However, they all have in common three principal phases which are explained as
follows: the first phase is ‘pre-task’ and concerns the various activities that teachers and students can undertake before they start the task. According to Nunan (2004) schema building is usually done in this stage. Pre-reading activities include: discussing author or text type, brainstorming, reviewing familiar stories, considering illustrations and titles, skimming and scanning (for structure main points and future directions). Gibbons (2002) describes the aim of the pre-reading activities as strengthening the total understanding of the passage instead of examining each of the complex details.

The second phase is the ‘during-task or while-task’ phase, which centers around the task itself (Bygate, 2001). After using the pre-reading activities to give the general, and maybe the key knowledge about the text, reading process should be supported by the while-reading activities. While-reading activities regarded as an interactive process aim to improve readers’ capability to strengthen their linguistic and schematic knowledge while they are dealing with the text (Alyousef, 2006). In this interaction period what is expected from the reader is to use their inferring skill. Therefore, they can comprehend the text better (Careless, 2004). According to Razi (2004) there are not so many while-reading activities listed; however, most important ones are: skimming, scanning, clarifying, reciprocal teaching, inferring, rereading for detail, pause and predict.

The final phase is ‘post-task’ and regarding task-based reading, the last application is post-reading activities as well. Post-reading activities are in charge of providing a complete comprehension and develop the existing knowledge. For that matter, after considering the readers’ characteristics, many techniques can be used but summarizing, question and answer, drawing conclusion, discussion, and thinking aloud may be the most effective ones to help readers overcome the difficulties experienced in a text (Huang, 2009). Richards (2001) also proposes activities such as studying on key vocabulary using illustrations, charts, tables, and cloze activities.

Talking about the benefits of using short story, it is believed that Short story like other literary texts can raise cultural awareness, linguistic awareness, motivation, higher order thinking and etc (Khatib & Nasrollahi, 2012). In addition, stories can be used to improve students’ vocabulary and reading. According to Gorjian, Moosavinia, and shahramiri (2011) high intermediate and advanced students also profit from short stories because what they read gives them the opportunity to come up with their own insights, helping them to speak the language in a more imaginative way. This thoughtful process will also lead to critical thinking. By fostering students’ critical thinking, when they read, they interact with the text and by interacting with the text, they interpret what they read (Gorjian,
Moosavinia, & Shahramiri, 2011). Gajdusek (1988) also believes that since short stories usually have a beginning, middle, and an end, they encourage students at all levels of language proficiency to continue reading until the end to find out how the conflict is resolved. As a result, this study focuses on comparing these two popular approaches of reading (task-based and short story) on the intermediate EFL learners’ reading comprehension.

3. Method
3.1. Participants
The present study was conducted during two separate terms each spreading over two months. Each term one experimental group including two classes, each consisting of 15 EFL learners were selected and homogenized. The participants were at intermediate level at Tabaran Language School in Mashhad including male and female between 15 and 40 years old.

3.2. Instrumentation
In order to collect data, the researcher used two tests including Preliminary English Test (PET), Reading comprehension posttest, writing rating scale and course-books.

3.2.1. Preliminary English Test (PET)
The researcher used a sample of PET which covers the four main language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking for homogenizing the participants in terms of their general language proficiency at the beginning of the study. Because the main focus of the study was reading comprehension, the speaking part of PET was not administered in this study.

3.2.2. Reading Comprehension Posttest
Reading comprehension posttest was selected from the reading sections of a sample of PET and was piloted with 30 participants who had the same characteristics of the main participants prior to the main administration and no items were discarded as the result of item analysis. This instrument consisted of three passages followed by five multiple-choice reading comprehension questions for each. The maximum score that could be obtained from the test was 15 points (one point for each correct answer).

3.2.3. Writing Rating Scale
The rating scale used to rate the writing section of PET was the one provided by Cambridge under the name of General Mark Schemes for writing.

3.2.4. Course-Books
Students studied different parts of the New Interchange two by Richards (2005) which integrates all four skills. Moreover, Steps to Understanding by Hill (2005) which involves graded short stories appropriate for different levels was used.
3.3. Procedure
To achieve the purpose of this study, the following steps were taken during the research process: to begin with, the PET (regardless of its speaking part) and the reading comprehension post-test which was derived from the reading sections of a sample of PET were piloted in two separate sessions (one session for the PET and one session for reading comprehension test) with 30 students of other classes at the same characteristics and level of proficiency as the target sample. Then, the item facility and item discrimination of the tests’ items and the inter-rater reliability between the two raters of the PET writing section were computed. Before and after excluding the malfunctioning items, the reliability of the posttest and the reliability of the PET listening and reading sections were estimated.

It is worth mentioning that before conducting the study, the researcher chose 12 short stories out of 26 to be practiced with the short story group. These short stories were chosen because they were found to have more reading themes in common with the reading sections of the task-based group course book (New Interchange two and its work book). As it was mentioned, this study was conducted in two terms; in the first term, 60 students who comprised all the available intermediate students of the language school took part in the same piloted PET test to be homogenized based on their language proficiency level and 30 students whose obtained scores fell one standard deviation below and above the mean were selected and non-randomly assigned to two classes of 15 participants. These participants went through task-based reading instruction. Since the study was conducted in two terms, the same participant selection procedure was also done at the beginning of the second term. These students went through short story reading instruction. It should be mentioned that all four classes were taught by the same teacher.

In the first term, 30 participants of the task-based reading group were non-randomly assigned to two classes of 15 including both genders between 15-40 years old. They were supposed to cover unit one to five (12 reading passages) of the book New Interchange two and its work book. These students attended an eight-week language course which was held two days a week (16 sessions) with each class lasting 90 minutes. At the beginning of the reading section, the teacher brought some pictures (sometimes, comic pictures) in relation to the topic of the reading to activate students’ schematic knowledge to be engaged in the pre-reading activities. Students were supposed to talk about the title of the reading as they saw the presented pictures and expressed their ideas regarding those pictures. By their teacher’s guide and encouragement, they had to talk about their presuppositions, their likes and
dislikes, their real life experiences regarding the reading title, and went through agreement and disagreement with one another.

During the pre-reading discussion, the teacher started the gradual pre-teaching of the unfamiliar words which appeared in the text and encouraged her students to use these new words in their discussion. At this stage, the teacher wrote each new word, accompanying its’ Persian and English equivalence, on the white board and gradually made a list of the new words visible to students and thus better remembered and used more easily later. She also wanted her students to jot down their newly emerged ideas which aroused as the result of the class discussion. Later, they could use those ideas in a paragraph writing that the teacher would assign them to do for the next session.

When the intended reading is task-based reading, it should not come up merely with receptive reading (Hedge, 2008). To meet this purpose, the researcher considered incorporating reflective reading and scanning skill in the reading course. As a result, before reading the main text, students were allowed to take a five minute cursory glance at true/false statements, comprehension questions, or charts and tables which were presented as post-reading activities to get a general idea of the important points which enabled them to practice scanning skill. The next step was silent reading of the students which allowed the teacher and students to go through while-reading activities. In this step, the teacher allocated a pause of three minutes after each paragraph during which students had to highlight the important sentences according to what they remembered from the questions, true/false statements, or charts and tables (the act of scanning skill). They also had to reflect upon what they were reading (reflective reading), wrote their questions from the related paragraph in the margins of their book to be discussed later. They could also ask questions about the vague points if they did not understand them (it could be everything from grammar, to vocabulary, to simple misunderstanding of a related paragraph), and the teacher would also encourage them to give their opinions.

The next step was post-reading activities. At this stage, the students were supposed to extract the main ideas of the text based on those important sentences that they had highlighted during their silent reading and negotiated the main ideas and the main intentions of the writer in the class. Then, they proposed those questions that they had written in the margins of their books. At this stage, the teacher would come at play and find volunteers by giving extra bonus such as extra mark or even chocolate, to respond to their classmates’ questions. Continuing, they put the information in the charts or tables which were presented after the text, or answered True/False statements or reading comprehension questions and
when it came to their turn, each of them was required to read his/her answer for the rest of the class. As the last activity, the teacher asked them to write three or four paragraphs about the related text by using the newly learned vocabularies and their newly emerged ideas which they had jotted down in the pre-reading stage, and to hand it to the teacher the following session.

In the second term, 30 participants of the short story reading group were non-randomly assigned to two classes of 15 including both genders between 15-40 years old. They were supposed to work on 12 short stories of the book “Steps to Understanding”. These students also attended an eight-week language course which was held two days a week (16 sessions) with each class lasting for 90 minutes. In addition to their main book which was New Interchange two, at the last 20 minutes of each session, they had to read one short story. In contrast to the first group, in which all activities happened in a sequence based on task-based logics (pre, while, and post activities); in this group, teaching procedure did not happen based on a sequence of fixed steps. Different reading approaches were introduced and it was the students who had to choose the best one which suited their preferences. To start reading, students should take a look at the reading title, give their opinion and express their feelings towards the title; this part was considered to be some sorts of warm-up activity for the short story group.

In some sessions, the teacher talked about the theme of the text before engaging in reading and familiarized the students with them; then, she read each paragraph aloud for the rest of the class to follow her; she paused after each paragraph to make sure that students could understand the meaning of the related paragraph or propose their questions if they had any. In these sessions, the primary focus was on understanding the general meaning of the text rather than analyzing each sentence one by one or finding the meaning of each unknown vocabulary to come up with a general understanding.

On the other hand, in some sessions, the focus was drawn to the vocabulary of the text and the vocabulary introduction happened before the reading. At this stage, the teacher did not talk about the theme of the text; instead, she introduced new vocabularies orally and then read the text aloud. Sometimes, after introducing the new vocabularies, she asked the students to do silent reading by themselves. The teacher would not cover all the new vocabularies so that while reading the passage, the students would be responsible of finding the remaining new vocabularies by looking at their dictionaries and as the result coming up with a general understanding of the short story by the help of those vocabularies that they found.
Short story group was not limited only to the above mentioned approaches. Sometimes, the students were divided to six or seven groups and were supposed to read the short story with their peer and were asked to guess the meaning of the difficult paragraphs or the total intention of the story by the help of their peers. There were no post-reading activities of paragraph writing, comprehension questions, True/False statements, or table and charts to be answered at the end of the reading. Students were supposed to enjoy the short story, sometimes visualized the whole story in their minds, and made a conclusion of the hidden messages behind each story, and sometimes played the role of the main characters of the story by the help of their peers. Immediately after the two above mentioned treatments, the researcher administered piloted reading comprehension post-test. The data which was obtained from the post-test administrations was analyzed to compare the reading comprehension of the two groups.

4. Results and Discussion

In order to find out the purpose of this study, the researcher conducted a series of descriptive and inferential statistical routines to come up with certain results which are elaborated in this section.

4.1. PET Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a descriptive statistics of PET pilot study. The mean and standard deviation were found to be 39.5 and 5.37, respectively. Then, item facility (IF) and item discrimination (ID) of all 65 items were calculated and the reliability of the test was calculated through Cronbach Alpha. The analysis indicated that there were three malfunctioning items (two items in the reading section and one item in the listening section); therefore these items were removed from the listening and the reading sections. The reliability of the test was 0.66 which turned out to be 0.69 after eliminating malfunctioning items.

4.1.1. PET Administration for Homogenizing the Participants

In order to homogenize the participants, the piloted PET was administered to the 60 available intermediate EFL learners in the first term. The reliability of the closed-ended item was computed through Cronbach Alpha which turned out to be 0.72. on the other hand, Two raters rated the two tasks of the PET writing section and thus, inter-rater consistency was computed between the two sets of ratings through Pearson Correlation due to the fact that the skewness
ratios of all the two ratings for the two tasks turned out to be within the acceptable range, this correlation also turned out to be significant ($r = .778$, df $= 60$, $p = .0005 < .05$).

Since the correlation between the two ratings turned out to be significant, the average rating was considered as the final score for the writing tasks for the participants and added to the score of the other sections of PET. In the next step, the total score on PET was calculated for the 60 participants and the descriptive statistics were computed. The mean of the sample turned out to be 36.95 and the standard deviation came out to be 5.7. Therefore, the researcher chose all the students who scored one standard deviation above and below the mean, which comprised 30 students, and considered them as one of the experimental groups.

The following term, exactly the same procedure was followed with another 60 intermediate student who comprised the entire available intermediate students. The reliability of the closed-ended item was computed through Cronbach Alpha which came out to be 0.783. Exactly like the first homogenization, two raters rated the two tasks of the writing section which demonstrated normal distributions. Therefore, Pearson Correlation was used to check the inter-rater consistency between the two raters. The results of the correlation between the two raters showed that the correlation turned out to be significant ($r = .863$, df $= 60$, $p = .0005 < .05$). This result legitimized averaging the two ratings as the final score for the two tasks of the writing section.

In the next step (exactly like the first term) the total score on PET was calculated for the 60 participants and the descriptive statistics were computed. The mean of the sample turned out to be 44.13 and the standard deviation came out to be 7.46. Therefore, the researcher chose all the students who scored one standard deviation above and below the mean, which comprised 30 students, and considered them as the second experimental group. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the total PET score of the two groups.

**Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of the Total PET Scores of the Two Experimental Groups**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXG1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>41.116</td>
<td>.4476</td>
<td>2.452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXG2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>.5742</td>
<td>3.145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>.5742</td>
<td>3.145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As demonstrated in Table 1, the mean of the two groups turned out to be 41.1 and 42.2 and both distributions turned out to observe the criteria of normality. Therefore, running an independent-samples t-test was legitimized. The results are demonstrated in Table 2.

**Table 2 Independent Samples Test on the Total PET at the Onset**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TotalPET Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>3.757</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>-1.488</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in Table 2, the homogeneity of variances was assumed as the result of the Levene’s test (F= 3.76, p= .057>.05), as the result the outcome of t-test with equal variances assumed was taken into account (t= -1.488, df= 58, p= .142>.05, two-tailed), which demonstrated no significant difference between the PET mean score of the two experimental group at the onset of the study. Therefore, homogeneity was assumed between the members of the two experimental groups.

**4.2. Post-Test Results**

The researcher administered the reading post-test to both experimental groups once the treatment period was over for each of them. The purpose was to check the reading comprehension ability of the participants at the end of the study to test the null hypothesis of the study. The reading post-test was selected from the reading section of another PET and consisted of three reading passages followed by five questions each adding up to 15 comprehension items. The reliability of the reading post-test as computed by Cronbach Alpha turned out to be 0.71. To test the null hypothesis which stated there is no significant difference between the effect of short-story reading and task-based reading instruction on EFL learners’ reading comprehension, an independent samples t-test had to be run to compare the mean scores of both experimental groups. The descriptive statistics of the reading post-test of both groups are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3 Descriptive Statistics of the Reading Post-test**
As Table 3 demonstrates, the task-based reading group turned out to obtain a higher mean, namely 10.93, than the short-story group who obtained a mean of 9.10. Moreover, the skewness ratio obtained by both experimental groups fell within the acceptable range of ±1.96, which revealed normality for both distributions. Therefore, the first assumption for running an independent-samples t-test in order to compare the mean scores of the two experimental groups was observed and as a result, running as independent-samples t-test was legitimate.

4.2.1. Testing the Null Hypothesis

To verify the null hypothesis of the study that stated ‘There is no significant difference between the effect of short-story reading and task-based reading instruction on EFL learners’ reading comprehension’, the researcher conducted an independent sample t-test. Prior to this, the normality of the distribution of these scores within each group was checked. Table 4 displays the independent samples t-test results on the reading mean score of the two groups on the reading post-test.

Table 4  t-test Results for Comparing the Reading Post-test Scores of both Experimental Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Statistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task-Based Reading Group</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10.93</td>
<td>.279</td>
<td>1.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-Story Reading Group</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>.326</td>
<td>1.788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 4 illustrates, with the Levene’s results ($F=.974$, $p=.328>0.05$), the variances of the two experimental groups did not show any significant difference. Therefore, the results of the t-test with equal variances assumed are reported here. The results ($t=4.267$, $df=58$, $p=0.000$)
\( p=0.0005<0.05, \) two-tailed) indicated that there was a significant difference between the mean scores of the two experimental groups on the reading post-test. Consequently, the researcher was able to reject at 0.05 level of significance the null hypothesis that stated: “There is no significant difference between the effect of short-story reading and task-based reading instructions on EFL learners’ reading comprehension’. Based on Table 3, since the mean score of the task-based reading group (10.93) was higher than the mean score of the short-story reading group (9.10), it was concluded that task-based reading instruction had significantly more positive impact on the reading ability of EFL learners compared to short-story reading instruction.

In order to determine the stability of the research findings across samples, the effect size was computed. The effect size as computed by Cohen’s \( d \) and \( r \) using \( t \)-value and \( df \) came out to be 1.121 and .49, respectively. According to Cohen’s standard, values more than 0.8 are considered to be large effect size. Cohen’s \( df \) of 1.121 and \( r \) value of .49 indicate that with strong effect the experimental group which practiced task-based reading obtained higher degree of achievement in terms of reading comprehension compared to the one which practiced short-story reading and that the differential treatment effect accounted for 49% of the variation in the post-test scores. Therefore, it can be safely concluded that there is a significant difference between teaching reading through task-based approach compared with teaching it through short stories with a high degree of generalizability.

4.3. Discussion

The findings of this study offered to the literature the evidence for superiority of task-based reading on short-story reading. The findings of this research is in contrast with studies like the ones by Erin (2004) and Haji Maibodi (2008) who concluded that short-story reading group can outperform the group which did not have short story as their reading materials. On the other hand, the findings of this research is in line with Malmir, NajafiSarem, and Ghasemi’s (2011) findings, who compared the effect of TBLT with CBLT on Iranian intermediate learners’ reading comprehension and concluded that task-based reading group significantly outperformed the other group.

The researchers consider several possible justifications for the findings of this study. The better performance of the task-based group may be attributable to the interaction that students had while performing different tasks because according to Freeman (2003), in task-based reading, students have the opportunity to interact and such interaction facilitates language acquisition and specially comprehension because finally learners have to check to see if they have comprehended correctly or not. In addition, task-based approach helps students to make
a connection between pieces of information and make a better conclusion which is an important factor for a better comprehension (Prabhu, as cited in Ellis, 2004).

The findings of this study might have also been due to the fact that in the task-based instruction, the learning, the interaction, and the use of the language were taken into consideration and that when students understood how to use task-based stages properly through practice, they could enhance their comprehension. In addition, the pre-reading activities might have been effective in activating their background knowledge (Hayati&Jalilifar, 2010); the while-reading activities might have facilitated their focus on important points and boosted reflection; and post-reading activities might have provided more practice and feedback to enhance comprehension.

Moreover, it can be argued that the better performance of the task-based reading group might have been due to the fact that literary texts, as Sell (2005) mentions, usually require a greater amount of inferencing than other texts. For comprehending these texts, learners should be able to understand the meaning of sentence both at the surface and discourse level (Khatib&Nasrollahi, 2012), thus requiring a special strategy instruction. Moreover, according to Hismanoglu (2005), there is a lack of preparation in the area of literature teaching in TESL/TEFL programs for students which may result in their confusion regarding which strategies they need to implement. Therefore, in contexts where practicing short stories is more coherently planned into a language program, different results may be obtained. However, in lack of such preparation and pedagogical planning, task-based reading seems to be more functional and fruitful based on the findings of the current research.

5. Conclusion

This study presented evidence for the effectiveness of task-based as a reading activity in the context of teaching reading comprehension to intermediate EFL learners. The findings of this study have various pedagogical implications in TEFL/TESL. In addition, these various implications can be used in different domains of TEFL like language teaching methodology, syllabus design, and materials development. Finally, the subsequent suggestions interconnected to this study are presented for further research on this topic.

1. Other researches can be conducted to find the comparative effect of short story and task-based instruction on EFL learners’ other language skills; listening, speaking, and writing.
2. Other researches can be conducted to find the comparative effect of short story and task-based instruction on EFL learners’ other language sub-skills like vocabulary and grammar or other personality factors such as motivation and autonomy.
3. In this study age and gender were not considered (the age range was between 15 to 40 and gender included both male and female), therefore, further studies can be carried out considering age and gender of the participants.

4. The same study can be conducted for students at advanced level of language proficiency.

5. In another study, personality factors such as extrovert and introvert, multiple intelligences, or learning styles can be considered as moderator variables in comparing short-story and task-based reading instruction.

References


Critical Evaluation of Teaching ESP for Tertiary Level Iranian EFL Learners

Authors

Farah Shooraki (Ph.D Candidate)
Isfahan University, Isfahan, Iran

Azizollah Dabbaghi (Ph.D)
Isfahan University, Isfahan, Iran

Saeed Ketabi (Ph.D)
Isfahan University, Isfahan, Iran

Biodata

Farah Shooraki, Ph.D. Candidate of TEFL at Isfahan University, Isfahan, Iran. Her research interests include second language teaching, Teaching Methodology and ESP.

Azizollah Dabbaghi, assistant professor of TEFL at the University of Isfahan, Iran. His research interests include second language teaching and sociolinguistics.

Saeed Ketabi, associate professor of applied linguistics at the University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran. His main areas of interest are English Teaching Methodology and Materials development.

Abstract

Teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) for all students except students of English is widespread in many countries of the world, also in Iran, however, with teachers facing many obstacles and trying to come up with creative solutions to the problems of teachers and students. The proficiency in different language skills is of utmost importance to these students at tertiary levels. In order to succeed, students need to develop proficiency in reading, writing, vocabulary, and translating from English into their mother tongue and vice versa. Therefore, the most important skills suitable for ESP objectives were studied and a short overview of some beneficial techniques for teaching reading, writing, translation, and vocabulary skills are presented. This study indicates that EFL teachers have to concentrate on the learner’s interaction (student-centered), be aware of different learning styles and employ a variety of assessment techniques, and make use of...
modern technologies and the worldwide web in their classes for different activities.

**Keywords:** Transfer, Interference, ESP, Tertiary level, Learning styles, Strategies

1. **Introduction**

English for Specific Purposes, so far, is probing its way in the Iranian universities. It is taught as a university requirement. The current situation of learning this foreign language is the continuation of language instruction from the high school. Learners, as a rule, prefer being passive, avoid taking responsibility for their own learning and depend upon teachers too much. Such approach is inefficient basically because learners are not involved in perceiving and correcting their errors. In other words, fear of making mistakes prevents learners from being receptive and responsive. Afterwards, the students’ obsession is how to pass the examination rather than to achieve any development in the language field. Therefore, they feel disappointed when they graduate confronting the real situation to use their ESP background. Furthermore, the EFL teachers concentrate on teaching general English rather than ESP. Accordingly, we should investigate the topic to characterize the term first, and then discuss the relevant issues. We have to find out what kind of language acquisition is actually required by the learner. It is believed that the ESP teachers follow a traditional approach of teaching and examination. Optimistically, we hope that this situation gradually changes and the teachers get aware of need analysis in designing their material to meet the goals of learners.

Overcoming learners’ fear is also an essential element of successful learning. It necessitates creating a friendly and supportive atmosphere in language classrooms, encouraging cooperation between learners through peer or small group work and employing various language learning techniques. The learner-friendly ways of rectifying mistakes are fateful for overcoming learners’ intimidation as well. The issue of learning how to read efficiently is also of paramount importance in the second language basically because many learners usually prefer translating word for word. This paper addresses the issue of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). It will endeavor the objectives of the core course of ESP at the tertiary level in Iran. Furthermore, how we should mobilize all the efforts to overcome the difficulties to promote the students communicative competency in English language in their very field of their specialization.
2. Purpose & Significance of the Study

Teaching English for Specific Purposes for all students except students of English is widespread in many countries of the world, also in Iran, however, with teachers facing many obstacles and trying to come up with creative solutions to the problems of teachers and students. In the educational system in Iran, the teaching of English as a foreign language starts in the guidance school and continues through the high school before being accepted into the university. Although the materials selected for the recommended texts aim at the communicative approach, the usual teaching methodology in schools tends more towards grammar translation and audio lingual method. More or less the same trend continues at the tertiary level in the universities, even for ESP courses. Then learning ESP has almost always remained virtually unachievable to most students in the tertiary level in Iranian universities.

In the majority of universities in Iran, the compulsory General English courses for the non-majors are conducted with especial focus on grammar and vocabulary, and the teachers (who may have the required proficiency) adhere mainly to the grammar translation method. The students go through the English courses (three to six credit hours) with the sole objective of passing the credits that are pre-requisites to the other major credit hours. In other words, three credit hours of General English and three to six credit hours of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) are mandatory in obtaining the undergraduate degree. Moreover, students’ proficiency level in English is mostly graded on a multiple choice examination and translation. What is important here is why the knowledge and usage of English that the university leavers possess give rise to concern. Therefore, the purpose of the paper is to illuminate and articulate a new perspective in teaching ESP, in Iran and explore the ways of improving the quality of learning for ESP courses.

3. Background Literature

There seems to be no extensive research into efficiency of teaching ESP skills in the tertiary levels. The common sense suggests that this issue in the second language must be understood through the acquisition of literacy in the first language. In other words, it involves the fundamental psycholinguistic issue of transfer of the abilities that enable L2 learners to utilize knowledge from one language in acquiring literacy in another (Carson, 1994).

English for Specific Purposes is an obligatory subject for the Iranian university students at the tertiary level as well. So it is taught as a university requirement. It is common knowledge that although Iranian students go through the English courses such as three credit hours of
General English and three to six credit hours of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which are mandatory in obtaining the undergraduate degree, they are disappointed when they graduate confronting the real situation in the workplace to use their ESP background. The natural question that occurs is why school and university leavers do not possess adequate language skills, so attempts should be made to tackle this question.

3.1. What is ESP?

Most of the students feel they discontent with the syllabus which had been taught, because it doesn’t meet their needs. Furthermore, the EFL teachers concentrate on teaching general English rather than ESP. This situation evokes the question whether we teach English for Academic purposes or English for Specific Purposes at the tertiary level. Accordingly, we should investigate the topic to characterize the term first, and then discuss the relevant issues. We have to find out what kind of language acquisition is actually required by the learner. There is an obvious confusion between English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes. For this reason we should attempt to distinguish the line of demarcation between the terms.

English for Specific Purposes or English for Special Purposes (ESP) has developed gradually to be an important area of interest for all who are concerned with the activities of the discipline it serves. There are many fields of interest with various activities which require special linguistic competency such as technical English, scientific English, medical English, English for business, English for political affairs, and English for tourism. Wright (1992) defines the concept of English for Specific Purposes, “ESP is, basically, language learning which has its focus on all aspects of language pertaining to a particular field of human activity, while taking into account the time constraints imposed by learners”.

Although ESP is a controversial issue, consequently, there is much misinterpretation concerning the exact definition of ESP. Moreover there is a hot debate whether or not English for Academic Purposes could be considered part of ESP in general. Some scholars described ESP as simply being the teaching of English for any purpose that could be specified. Dudley – Evans, Coeditor of the ESP Journal defines ESP in terms of ‘absolute’ and ‘variable’ characteristics.

Definition of ESP (Dudley-Evans, 1998):

2.3.1. Absolute Characteristics

1. ESP is defined to meet specific needs of the learners
2. ESP makes use of underlying methodology and activities of the discipline it serves
3. ESP is centered on the language appropriate to these activities in terms of grammar, lexis, register, study skills, discourse and genre.

2.3. Variable Characteristics
1. ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines
2. ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of General English
3. ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could, however, be for learners at secondary school level
4. ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students
5. Most ESP courses assume some basic knowledge of the language systems

Most of ESP definitions distinguish three themes: the nature of language to be taught and used, the learners, and the settings in which the other two would occur. These three aspects of ESP are very much connected together. ESP is the teaching of specific English (specialized discourse) to learners (adults), who will use it, in a particular setting (business, engineering, medical field, science, etc.) in order to realize a practical purpose.

Bearing in mind all the definitions mentioned, we admit that ESP is broader than what we apparently bounded to, in our universities. Hence, ESP may be considered as an 'approach' to teaching, or what Dudley-Evans describes as an 'attitude of mind'. The likewise (Hutchinson et al. 1987:19) state that, "ESP is an approach to language teaching in which all decisions as to content and method are based on the learner's reason for learning".

Accordingly, ESP teachers should be aware for the matter and should not concentrate on teaching general English, but they have to satisfy their students’ needs for the language in the different fields of specialization in order to use the language linguistically correct verbally or on paper.

3.2. Application of ESP
ESP is considered as a goal directed kind of language; therefore, the students are not learning the English language for its own sake, but because there is a need for its exploitation in the workplace and they are enforced by a certain motivation. ESP is considered as a major field of EFL teaching at present. It begins to emerge from the EFL field since the 1960s. EFL teachers nowadays are more aware of the role of ESP in the different modern fields of specialization.

That indicates ESP is determined by specific learning needs of the language learner. Therefore the teacher’s role should not be restricted to mere teaching, but should extend to be
a course designer, researcher, evaluators, and an active participator in all of aspects of the teaching/learning process.

3.3. Needs analysis

EFL teachers have to be aware of the need analyses importance in the field of ESP. Needs analysis helps us to collect information about our students' learning needs and wants to help us draw the objectives of the targeted core courses and determined the appropriate content. It is very important to start needs analysis for the targeted group of students before a teacher determines the exact content, which he is going to subscribe them. Consequently, needs analysis has been given a significant consideration in making a particular course serve a particular group's interests (Vorobieva N., 1996).

4. Course Design

Teachers have to ask whether their students will use English to pass the exam as a university requirement or in workforce after graduation. Absolutely, in this case our intention is to prepare learners for the future not for passing exams, because we rely on the results of the need analysis, which we have to execute before designing the ESP course. ESP needs analysis positions a solid foundation for a stable ESP syllabus. Since needs analysis have been run for the targeted group to collect data about their learning needs then the process of core courses designation will take place.

Designing a course for any ESP system need a considerable amount of general English along with an integrated functional terminological language matted in the targeted ESP course which is based on the needs analysis. Moreover, the objective of the course must be authentic to meet the needs of students to grantee motivation and better achievement. On the area under discussion of an ESP course for Greek student, Xenodohidis, (2002) confirms that: "the goals should be realistic; otherwise the students would be de-motivated." Concerning, another ESP course for employees at the American University of Beirut, Shaaban (2005) explains that the core course development and its content focus on a common core for the learners from various workplaces. This content contains basic social English communication, following directions, giving instructions, along with specialized terminologies and expressions. Developing a course for

Health science, Gatehouse (2001) also integrates General English language content and acquisition skills for language. Referring to the mentioned cases of ESP, it can be concluded that General English language content, grammar, functions and skills acquisition are the
dominant aspects in any core course plan, while terminologies and specific functions of a particular content are integrated in the course to meet the learners’ specific needs.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) compare ESP to the leaves and branches of a tree to a language tree. Without any roots to absorb water, leaves or branches would not grow up; so do the leaves and branches ESP language will not flourish, if they lack the essential language support such as general English grammar, lexis and functions. Gilmour and Marshal (1993) argue that the ESP learners’ difficulties are not attributed to the lack of technical terminology but mostly due to the shortage of general English vocabulary. These essential items must be matted in the prescribed course for the ESP learners with relevancy to the field of specialization. Moreover, in designing any ESP course, attention should be paid to the four learning styles, using a range of combinations of knowledge, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation. Different experiential elements should be used in the classroom, such as sound, music, visuals, movement, experience, and even talking.

Therefore, EFL teachers who teach ESP courses have to know the goals of ESP well in order to guarantee its steady progress of areas of concern. There should be much more researches in this vital field to explore the needs and draw clear objectives of each discipline. ESP teachers have to shoulder the responsibility of assessing the needs of their students, setting the learning objectives, organizing the courses, creating a vivid learning environment in the classroom, evaluating his students’ development and assuring the quality continuously. Nowadays, there is an immense breakthrough of the modern information and communication technologies (ICT). Computer is the cornerstone of these technologies; via this smart machine we listen, speak, read, write and even communicate at distance. Therefore, it is applicable to invest these facilities in the teaching and learning process. Now, we can change our traditional classes to more modern styles of instructing either utilizing the multimedia or even online learning via the web. ESP materials or classes can be approachable in a very apt techniques to meet the different needs and the advance method of instructional designing does let the learner feels the loneliness or remoteness. Open and distance learning would be a very suitable mode instruction for ESP adult learners in the future.

When devising any language learning course, it is absolutely essential to start with creating a learner profile and investigating the target learner’s expectations about the different aspects of the course (Nunan, 1995; Harmer, 1991). Learner needs, apart from logistical considerations, administrative considerations, psychosocial considerations, are what a course designer has to take into account. As Nunan (1987) suggests, the modern classrooms should experience a shift from a teacher-centered curriculum, decided upon in advance by the
teacher, to a learner-centered one, where the purpose for learning, individual differences, learning styles preferences, interests determine to a large extent the content and methodology of the course.

4.1. Reading, Writing and Vocabulary Skills
The issue of learning how to efficiently deal with the most important skills suitable for ESP objectives is of paramount importance in the second language basically because many learners usually prefer translating word for word. There are various ways of addressing the problem of language difficulty for ESP learners in Iran. The most common are pre-teaching difficult or unfamiliar vocabulary, encouraging learners to read extensively, to train learners in intensive reading, and to teach reading and writing strategies.

Reading is a complex cognitive activity, and its development can be promoted by two approaches – extensive and intensive reading practice. Extensive reading is known to develop word recognition and general language proficiency, while intensive reading deals with detailed comprehension and teaching reading strategies.

Authenticity of reading materials presents difficulty to ESP learners because no concessions are made to foreign learners who encounter non-simplified content (Harmer, 2001:205). Authentic materials can be extremely demotivating for students. Negative expectations of reading are often due to previous unsuccessful experiences (Harmer, 2001:208).

For some inexplicable reasons, learners are basically taught (and tested) skimming and scanning strategies. Skimming and scanning are useful first stages, when a reader decides whether to read a text at all or which parts to read carefully. To develop an independent reader, a number of other strategies are paramount, e.g. inferring, summarizing, checking & monitoring one’s comprehension, connecting information from different parts of the text, evaluating and fault-finding. All these strategies involve ability to deduce the meaning of unfamiliar words and word groups, relations within the sentence, implications – not explicitly stated information, conceptual meaning, understanding relationship in the text structure and parts of a text through lexical-grammatical cohesion devices and indicators in discourse, distinguishing facts from opinions (http://www.fas.harvard.edu/reading).

Weak students often adopt mistaken strategies that cause reading difficulties. The set of so called SQ3R study skills - the abbreviation stands for the following steps: survey (using a previewing skimming technique), question (formulating questions that will be answered in a text), read, recite (rephrasing the ideas in one’s mind), review (going over the text as a whole) – might be beneficial (Kopeika, 2000:28).
In the teaching of ESP reading and writing, grammar is often ignored because of many misconceptions about the role of grammar. According to Dudley Evans & et. al. (1998:80), ‘for reading, where the learners’ grammatical weaknesses interfere with comprehension of meaning and form, it can be taught in context through analysis and explanation. This often includes the verbform, notably tense and voice, modals, particularly in relation to the expression of certainty and uncertainty, connectors, noun compounds and various expressions. If students are expected to present written work, serious weaknesses in grammar require more specific help’.

Another aspect of learning reading & writing includes vocabulary that is needed for comprehension and for production. ‘In comprehension, deducing the meaning of vocabulary from the context and from the structure of the actual word is the most important method of learning new vocabulary.

Alderson (1984, cited by Dudley Evans & Jo St. John, 1998:74) showed that ‘poor reading in a foreign language is due in part to poor reading in the L1, together with an inadequate knowledge of the foreign language. Learners need to reach a threshold level of language knowledge before they are able to transfer any L1 skills to their L2 reading tasks’. The cognitive processes involved in processing a text cannot be ignored. However, learners must be aware of two simultaneous ways of processing a text (Lingzhu, 2003): ‘In top-down processing, learners use the prior knowledge to make predictions about the text. In bottom-up processing, learners rely on their linguistic knowledge to recognize linguistic elements – vowels, consonants, words, sentences to do with the construction of meaning’.

Linguists’ research findings on writing shows the following: a lack of competence in writing in English results more from the lack of composing competence than from the lack of linguistic competence, differences between L1 and L2 writers relate to composing proficiency rather than to L1, and using L1 when writing in L2 frequently concerns vocabulary and enables the L2 writer to sustain the composing process (Krapels, 1994:49).

There are six aspects of written work that learners must pay attention to: textual organization, structure of sentences / clauses, different word networks, paragraphing, spelling, punctuation and non-standard English (http://english.unitecnology.ac.nz/links/resourcequery.html).

The surveys of different literatures allow us to conclude that reading-writing relationship in the ESP has not received proper attention. Researchers display a distinct tendency to investigate the development of either receptive (reading) or productive (writing) skills. The adopted attitude prevails due to complexity of untangling intertwined components of both skills. Theoretically, ‘the fundamental process involved in the second language reading-
writing relationship and the relationship between L1 and L2 literacy skills is transfer. Transfer of skills is not automatic, either across languages or across modalities. What this means for the L2 reading-writing relationship is that teaching is important to facilitate transfer’ (Carson, 1994:99).

4.2. Translation Skill

New ways of treating a need for translation in language teaching are advocated by Guy Cook (2001:3): ‘Communicative language teaching has prevailed for 30 years and outlawed the translation and explanation in the students’ first language, which was declared illegal’.

According to G. Cook, ‘bilingualism and translation in the classroom are really quite authentic, together with the conscious focus on differences between languages... The notion that a bilingual environment with a lot of translation and a lot of code-switching and focus on form is something alien to what people are learning a language for is really quite peculiar’. G. Cook concludes that learners need ‘a bilingual environment with a lot of translation and a lot of code-switching and focus on form and a bit of focus on meaning and use’.

Nigel J. Ross (2000:61) argues for translation as a useful language learning tool in the ordinary classroom: ‘The real usefulness of translation in the EFL classroom lies in exploiting it in order to compare grammar, vocabulary, word order and other language points in English and the students’ mother tongue, Persian. The areas where differences occur range from relatively small points, through sizeable areas such as tense systems, to more complex fields such as contrastive rhetoric. If students are aware of the differences, interference is likely to be reduced’. The use of translation as a discredited tool for language learning has been re-examined lately by Daniel Linder (2002:39), who claims that EL teachers often reject translation in classroom because they associate translation with the use of grammar-translation as a non-communicative method. Another aspect of translation is its being a professional activity which requires special training. Thus, ‘for students, translation into English as well as literal translation into students’ native tongue is professionally unrealistic task, and it should not be the focus of an English class’. D. Linder advocates translation activities on a regular basis as natural language learning methods ‘for promoting contextualised language use, discourse and textual-level language competence, and cultural transfers skills’. According to D. Linder, ‘translation activities should be used, and they should be supported by communicative, natural language learning methods’.

‘Real-world’ foreign language use is full of translation... and for the majority of the world’s population, switching and negotiating between languages is part and parcel of everyday use’.
However, ‘the usual objections to translation as a pedagogic tool are twofold: that it encourages a sense of false equivalence between two languages, and that it impedes automatic and fluent language use. Both views are silly’. G. Cook believes: ‘the outlawing of translation not only reflects the monolingual mind-set of the English-speaking world, it has also been to its political and commercial advantage. Monolingual native-speaker teachers have been privileged, and the status of ‘local’ experts undermined’.

Nobody would argue that human way of thinking is shaped by a mother tongue, which always interferes with a foreign language. The interference may be positive or negative, and the latter causes errors in a foreign language. There appears to be a widespread assumption that language interference or transfer is an important characteristic of second language acquisition. Majority of linguists agree that the relation between transfer and other processes in second language acquisition remains only partly understood, and the role of language transfer has long been a very controversial topic. The term transfer is widely used to describe the issue of cross-linguistic influence. Cross-linguistic similarities and differences can produce varied effects (Odlin, 1996:36):

I. Positive transfer
II. Negative transfer
   A. Underproduction
   B. Overproduction
   C. Production Errors
   D. Misinterpretation

III. Differing lengths of acquisition

The linguistic awareness of the L1 transfer to L2 helps learners to deal with the hazards of using two languages alternately. The new findings show that the ability to switch to a native language even for a short time allows learners to preserve face, get rid of anxiety, build confidence and feel independent in their choice of expression.

5. Discussion & Conclusion

Based on studying different articles and observations, these important facts emerged:

- learners’ reading rates are low,
- Learners’ difficulties in reading, translation and writing are caused by either limited vocabulary or its inappropriate usage. This point is emphasized by R. Buckmaster (2003) who argues that ‘the most important ‘skill’ is a very large vocabulary’.
Learners’ difficulties in reading and writing are triggered by insufficient vocabulary and inadequate knowledge of sentence structure, tenses and textual organization. Learners seem to be unaware of their lacks in good practice strategies in reading and writing. For transfer of language skills to occur learners need to reach a threshold level of language knowledge. Teachers’ objectives are to help learners in the acquisition of language knowledge and train students in developing their reading and writing skills efficiently.

Examining each learner’s attitudes, difficulties and production in different language areas allows catering for their needs and fostering proficiency in the ESP.

Consciousness-raising in students to ways of mastering language skills is a valid part of pedagogic strategy. It implies encouraging learners’ initiative and taking over responsibility for their own learning. Given space, time and clear directions learners are bound to succeed. It is tempting to use specific concrete results for decision-making – to make recommendations for changes in how teaching and learning should be carried out.

teachers’ attitudes to the use of learners’ native language in the classroom have undergone significant changes from a complete denial to a reluctant acceptance. The majority of teachers should support the limited use of translation in the ESP classroom and agree that L1 assists students in learning a foreign language. The prohibition or avoidance of the mother tongue minimizes the effectiveness of its learning.

5.1. Recommendations and Suggestions

Teachers should concentrate on the learner’s interaction (student-centered) rather than lecturing and overwhelming the course with exhaustive list of words and boring grammar exercises. Meaningful interaction with others speakers in the target language enhances the opportunity for competency. Therefore, we have to create opportunities for the learners to create effective communication skills in the classroom.

EFL teachers should be aware of different learning styles of their students. Moreover, teachers should employ a variety of assessment techniques, focusing on each of the different learning styles.

Teachers have to make use of modern technologies in their classes or otherwise the traditional audio visual aids to meet their learners’ needs and to motivate them. In addition, there should be a variety of activities such as presentation, problem
solving, role-play; practical hand-on activities, field visits and interviews with experts using the target language exclusively.

- Teachers should make use of the worldwide web for different activities to expose ESP learners to different experiences and different activities with various techniques.

References


Shaaban, K. (2005). An ESP Course for Employees at the American University of Beirut, ESP.


Title
Generic Differences between Iranian Students’ Essays and a Standard Model Essay

Author
Parisa Javani (M.A)
Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran

Biodata
Parisa Javani is a graduate in Teaching English Language from Kharazmi University of Tehran, Iran. Her research interests include IELTS studies, psychology of language learning, writing, sign language, and education management.

Abstract
This paper attempts to recognize the moves that are ignored by Iranian students in IELTS essay writing, which make their essay unconvincing and below standard. In order to address this issue, a study was conducted on the essays of forty students, who were not instructed about the structure of an IELTS essay but could write comprehensible English sentences. After the moves of each essay were established, they were compared with Higgins’s (2010) model for IELTS essay writing. According to Higgins’s (2010) model each essay should contain four paragraphs, the first three of which ought to have four moves and the fourth paragraph three moves. Since the purpose of the study was just to investigate about the correct use of moves, the students were asked to write in four paragraphs in order to facilitate the comparison of the paragraphs of the sample essays with those of the model essay. The essays were written by intermediate students during their placement test before taking IELTS course. Since the study was not aimed at identifying students’ grammatical and vocabulary mistakes, these were corrected before the essays being analyzed. However, the order and structure of the essays remained intact. The study revealed that first, out of the eleven moves introduced in Higgins’s (2010) model, the majority of the students used four of them without difficulty. These included thesis in the first paragraph, topic sentence and example in the third and fourth paragraph, and prediction move in the last paragraph; second, the most problematic moves were outline move in
the first paragraph and conclusion in the second and third paragraphs, which were ignored by about eighty-five percent of the students; third, the five remaining moves, namely background statement, detailed background statement, discussion, summary, and restatement of the thesis, were ignored by about more than two third of the students; fourth, the majority of the students were only familiar with about half of the moves outlined by Higgins (2010).

**Keywords:** IELTS writing structure, Iranian students' writings, essay moves, Higgins model

1. **Introduction**

IELTS was designed to evaluate the English ability of people who wanted to study or work in English-speaking countries (IELTS, 2001). The first test was made by the British Council and the University of Cambridge in 1980, but now this test is taken in more than 150 centers around the world (IELTS, 2001).

A research conducted by Feast (2002) showed that there was a significant and positive relationship between English proficiency, which is usually assessed by IELTS, and university performance, but he adds that despite this positive relationship, there is a great dissatisfaction among university professors with non-native students because these students' level of English is not advanced enough to meet the requirements of university especially in the field of writing.

Additionally, research carried out by Bellingham (1993) revealed that whereas 50 percent of students who had an IELTS score of above 6 passed their university entrance exam, only 20 per cent of students who had an IELTS score of less than 6 managed to pass the exam. He added that there is a moral and financial need to ensure that students who pay large amounts of money to study overseas will succeed. That is why the score required for IELTS is rising with time.

According to Blundell (2007), foreign students who study in Australia have serious difficulty with essay writing, and this is mostly because of lack of knowledge about genre. Dickinson (2008) also states that test results show that the most problematic part of IELTS is writing. He believes that genre-based teaching of writing is necessary so that not only students receive high marks, but they also become prepared for their future tasks to some extent.

Most of the genre-based teaching and education, however, has been on research articles (Peacock, 2002; Swales, 1981, 1990) and dissertations (Dudley-Evans, 1986, 1994). While
this has assisted graduate and post-graduated students significantly, it has not been helpful for novices who start studying in English-language universities (Johns, 2008; Samraj, 2004).

Lin (2006) also notes that students, coming from Korea and Japan have major problem with essay writing, and this is because genre-based teaching of writing is limited in Asia.

Statistics have shown that Iran was one of the top 25 countries where IELTS test was taken (IELTS, 2003). Iran is also among the countries where genre-based writing seems to have been neglected. Therefore, the researcher was motivated to analyze Iranian students’ writing to find out whether the moves in their essays were observed, and if so which moves were more problematic and which less. One of the implications of this paper would be to possibly raise students’ and teachers’ awareness. The result of this research may help teachers draw students’ attention to the moves they usually ignore.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

There are a large number of students who wish to study in English speaking countries. According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2011), approximately 3.7 million tertiary students registered outside their country of citizenship in 2009, and Australia, the US, the UK, Ireland and Canada were among the top ten countries which students travel to study abroad. The dominance of English-speaking countries shows the acceptance of English as a global language (OECD, 2011). As a result in 2009, 30 non-English-speaking countries around the world offered most or part of their courses in English (OECD, 2009). Obviously, apart from academic skills, knowledge of English is one of the main prerequisites to enter a foreign country. Nowadays an IELTS certificate is a requirement to join universities in Australia, New Zealand and UK. In fact, IELTS test ‘is generally trusted as an accurate measurement tool for academic English proficiency, and it is a ‘the major gatekeeping mechanism’ to receive many of the scholarships available in foreign universities (Moore, Stroupe, Mohony, 2009, p. 1). Many scholars agree that those who meet band score requirement will be able to deal with tasks they will be given in English-mediated universities (Bayliss & Ingram, 2006; Coffine, 2004; Feast, 2002).

Essay-writing is the mainstay of IELTS exam, because it both enables students to receive the required score in the writing section of IELTS and sometimes helps them become prepared to write their term papers in their future universities in English-speaking countries. In fact, many studies show that there is a positive relationship between IELTS writing score and performance in English-language universities (Abe, 2008).

Numerous researchers have worked on the role of feedback on students writing (e.g. Ferris, 1995; Ferris & Hedgcock, 1998; Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1994; Hyland, 2003; Tickoo,
2001). There are different kinds of feedback such as correction, reformulation and peer correction. Abe (2008) worked on exposing students to model essays written by native-speakers as a kind of feedback. Her research revealed that exposing students to model essays improved their writing to a large extent. However, this was true only for advanced students. Many of the students who were questioned claimed that they could not benefit from the model essay because they were not able to fully understand the differences between the format and language of the model essay and theirs. Therefore, while it is beneficial to provide the students with model essays, it is more important to know how students’ essays are different from native-written essays to increase students’ awareness of the differences.

Generally, a great many papers have been written about the language and moves constituting academic articles. Salager-Meyer (1990) analyzed moves of an abstract. Wood (1992) analyzed moves of method section. Brett (1994) and William (1999) and Giannoni (2002) worked on the result, discussion and acknowledgement sections respectively. However, very little has been written about the moves of everyday life writings such as one-page essays which are written by university students for school masters or principals or by ordinary people to newspaper editors and so on. Examples of this kind of essays can be found in IELTS course books, and students taking these exams are required to write essays. Many of the Iranian students who take these exams without instruction tend to get low marks in their exams. In fact, essays written by Iranian students and those appearing in textbooks are significantly different. This may be because students do not know the right format of an essay. Based on Abe’s (2008) findings just providing students with sample essays will not benefit them. Having this in mind, the researcher analyzed the moves of Higgins’s model (2010) in ‘How to write at a 9 Level’ and compared Higgins’s sample IELTS essay with IELTS essays written by Iranian students who have not received complete instruction on the moves existing in IELTS writings.

1. 2. Research Questions

1. What are the moves of essays written by Iranian students?

2. What are the differences between the moves of Higgins’s model and the moves of the essays written by Iranian students?

1. 3. Significance of study

Anyone who wants to study in English-speaking countries should have an IELTS Certificate (Rasti, 2009). Since 2000, the number of foreign students who registered in overseas universities worldwide has increased by 77% (OECD, 2011). Iran is among the top 25 counties with people taking this test (Heidari, Simin, Minasian & Ezati, 2012).
The writing skill is usually considered the most difficult language skill since it requires a higher level of productive language control than other skills (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). According to Assadi (2012) writing in ESL and EFL contexts, in particular, has been a challenge for teachers and students at different levels of English acquisition. He adds that it was concluded that the discourse-based teaching had a great effect on the writing of the Iranian TEFL majors. It is always very difficult for foreign students to write a successful piece of writing in English because they do not know the moves and the correct language used in English essays. Most of the language instructors who have teaching experience are aware of the fact that when Iranian students want to start writing any kind of text without complete instruction on the structure of that genre, they tend to make many mistakes with the moves specific to that genre because they just follow the flow of ideas that come into their minds. Their writings fail to meet the purpose of a specific writing like an essay. Of course, studies show that ESL and EFL students follow similar patterns in the writing process but do everything less than native English speakers (Reid, 2001).

It is believed that students, especially advanced ones, need to have knowledge of discourse and structure to understand the meaning of texts (Lotfipour-Saedi, 2006). Students have to see numerous essays to understand what the structure and moves of an essay is. The results of this research are expected to assist students to get a good grasp of how a standard essay is written and what their mistakes are. Therefore, they will be able to eliminate the differences, to make their writing as similar to the native-speakers’ writing as possible. Additionally, it might potentially help teachers know what some of the weak points of the Iranian students are, and what materials might be better to be taken to writing classes for the students’ writings to improve, provided that follow-up studies are conducted.

2. Literature review

One idea in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is that the language used in different situations has particular characteristics. The same applies to written language. The language that is used in each kind of text has specific linguistic features which distinguish it from other types of texts. Therefore, if the language that is used in each text has particular characteristics, those characteristics can be identified and used firstly to distinguish one kind of text from another and secondly to produce the kind of text we wish, using the appropriate features (Dudley-Evans, 1998). Dudley- Evans adds that even grammatical features used in a specific text like an academic one differs from the general grammar that is found in grammar books.
The study of ‘the regularities of structure that distinguish one type of text from another’ is called genre analysis (Dudley-Evans, 1998, p.87). Genre analysis in ESP began by the work of Swales. Swales stated that each kind of text consists of specific moves and steps. A move is the purpose a writer wants to communicate and a step is the choices a writer has when he wants to write each move.


Some of the researchers who analyzed texts noticed that a wide variety of steps can be used, and also it is possible to omit some of the moves. However, detailed analysis of a large number of texts showed that there are particular regularities which are repeated in all texts (Dudley-Evans, 1998).

Therefore, it is necessary to learn about moves and structure of writings, and many of the researchers agree with this idea. For instance, Assadi (2011) stated that discourse-based teaching of writing has a great effect on students' performance. Therefore, it is necessary to acquaint the EFL students with an approach to writing that engages the students in a process whereby the creation of a text as a whole, not as a scratch of sentences, is considered.

Also Silva and Matsuda (2002) believe although morphological, syntactic, lexical and idiomatic knowledge is necessary to be able to write, such knowledge does not guarantee writing well. In order to write successfully, students should also know how various parts have to work together to produce a good writing.

According to Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000), knowing about the format of each genre of writing is necessary. The discourse should suit writers' goal. For example, specific expressions and structures should be used to make a text persuasive.

Soles (2005) also stated that one kind of essay is persuasive essay, and adds the purpose of a persuasive essay is to convince your reader that your views on a particular controversial topic are valid. Chris and Schwegler (2000) mentioned that academic argument follows a predictable pattern in writing. After a brief introduction of your topic, you state your point of view on the topic directly and often in one sentence. This sentence is the thesis statement, and it serves as a summary of the argument you will make in the rest of your paper. Therefore, it is crucial to know about this pattern to write properly.

Silva’s (1993) research demonstrated that second or foreign language writers have more difficulty setting up goals and organizing the written materials. Consequently, it is important
to provide students with an effective instruction of writing as discourse constantly changes to suit the writer's purpose.

Some contrastive studies have specifically been done on IELTS writing, but they have not focused on the differences between students' writings and standard writings. One of the examples of these studies is Moore and Morton’s (2005). Intending to prepare a group of university students for IELTS writing, they decided to compare standard IELTS essays with university essays and find out whether their language and structure are different from each other. The study showed that although the two kinds of essay bear some resemblance with each other, there are some important differences that can not be neglected in order to write a successful IELTS essay.

Many scholars have compared written texts across languages (Taylor and Chen, 1991; Ahmad, 1997; Duszak, 1994; Martin, 2003; Fakhri, 2004; Yakhontava, 2006; Ansarin and Rashidi, 2009; Hirano, 2009; Loi and Sweetnam Evans, 2010; Soler-Monreal, Carbonell-Olivares and Gil-Salom, 2011). According to Flowerdew (2002), contrastive rhetorical analysis of academics discourse shows that there are differences in the way information is organized in varied languages and cultures.

Yaghoubi-Notash and Tarlani-Aliabadi (2012) focused on the distinctions between 40 articles written in English by native English vs. the same number of articles written in English by native Persians regarding the move employment. They found that despite the many similarities in moves, there was one big difference: Iranian students’ essays did not have the persuasion move.

Most of the studies done on one-page essays are about feedback. For example, Jalali and Abderli (2011) focused on students' and teachers' preference for different types of feedback, coming to the conclusion that students prefer direct clear feedback.

A lot of studies have been conducted on Iranian students’ writing in general, but they are not related to essays. For example, Shokrpour and Fallahzadeh (2007) analyzed students’ reports to see whether their weakness is due to their language skills or writing skills like organization. The research results indicated that although they had problems with language skills, their major problem resulted from poor writing skills. As a result, if students learn what the organization of a good essay is like, their main problem will be solved.

Some contrastive generic studies have also been conducted. For example, Lasaky (2011) observed the differences in generic structure of doctoral dissertations written by Iranian and native students. A new step called thanks-giving step was in the writings of Iranian students,
which made Iranians' writing different from those of native students. Of course, before Lasaky, Hyland had discovered this step when he had analyzed writings of Muslims.

Shokouhi (2010) also analyzed the generic differences between English and Persian editorials. His research showed that both sets of editorials had the same six moves.

Many of the researchers have emphasized the importance of teaching students the structure of writing. For example, Zamal (1983) analyzed the writing process of a group of students who wrote well and noticed that they showed a sophisticated understanding of mechanics and process of writing. Therefore, students should learn every genre and the appropriate language before they are expected to produce good writings.

Grabe and Stoller (2002) believe that second and foreign language learners, especially at intermediate and high intermediate levels, need explicit instruction of structural knowledge and discoursal knowledge.

Alifatemi (2008) also mentioned that it is necessary for instructors of writing in different educational environments to exploit the many different approaches and techniques that can serve to produce better writings. Therefore, the teaching of writing structure is highly important.

Rahimi (2010), in a similar vein, stated that students value their teachers' feedback on errors which their teacher had previously emphasized. Therefore, if we teach students about what makes their writing different from native writers, they will value those points and make sure to learn them.

The ability to write effectively is becoming increasingly important in our global community. Consequently, writing instruction plays a crucial role in both second and foreign language education (Weigle, 2002). It is, thus, important to teach learners writing to enable them to attain their goal (Hyland, 2009).

Finally, Mirahayuni (2002), who had carried out research on Indonesian students’ structure of English writing, emphasized foreign students should definitely learn about structure of native writings. Considering the importance of learning the correct format of essay writing, the researcher made an attempt to find the differences between Iranians essay structure with that of a native speaker.

3. Methodology
   3. 1. Instruments
Two sets of instruments were used during this study: First, Higgins’s model for writing IELTS essay and second, forty IELTS essays which were written by Iranian students during their placement test prior to IELTS course.

3.1.1. Higgins’s Book

The first instrument is Higgins’s (2010) book, How to Write at a 9 Level, where Higgins (2010) has introduced a model, which is explained below. Additionally, in this section, Higgins’s (2010) sample essay can be found along with his analysis of moves on the essay.


According to Higgins’s model, a standard essay has four sections, each of which is a separate paragraph, and involves fifteen moves altogether. Paragraph one consists of four moves: background sentence, detailed background sentence, thesis, and outline. Paragraph two and three have the same four moves: topic sentence, example, discussion, and conclusion. Finally, the last paragraph is composed of summary, restatement of thesis, and prediction or recommendation. Of course a move is usually more than one sentence, but in his book, Higgins has written only one sentence for each move to provide the learners with an easy sample to understand the purpose of each move. The moves are outlined and explained below.

Paragraph 1 – Introduction
- Sentence 1 - Background statement
- Sentence 2 - Detailed background statement
- Sentence 3 - Thesis
- Sentence 4 - Outline sentence

Paragraph 2 - First supporting paragraph
- Sentence 1 - Topic sentence
- Sentence 2 - Example
- Sentence 3 - Discussion
- Sentence 4 – Conclusion

Paragraph 3 - Second supporting paragraph
- Sentence 1 - Topic sentence
- Sentence 2 - Example
- Sentence 3 - Discussion
- Sentence 4 - Conclusion

Paragraph 4 - Conclusion
- Sentence 1 - Summary
Sentence 2 - Restatement of thesis
Sentence 3 - Prediction or recommendation

The introduction provides a general overview of the rest of the essay so that after reading the introduction, the reader should have a clear idea about what the essay will be like.

The background statement says something general about the topic of the essay. For instance, it explains the current situation regarding the issue being discussed.

The detailed background statement is the paraphrased version of the question. In fact, the issue under discussion needs to be introduced here.

Thesis is the main move of the essay where the essay question is directly answered, and the writer gives his opinion directly.

Finally, the last move of the introduction paragraph is outline, where the writer mentions the points he is going to use to support his opinion. In fact, a summary of the second and third paragraph is given.

As for the second and third sections, they start with the topic sentence. The topic sentence expresses the main idea of the paragraph. The topic sentence is elaborated by an example, which is the next move. Then, the discussion move links the example to the essay question and explains why the example supports the idea about the topic. At last, the conclusion move links the supporting paragraph to the thesis of paragraph one.

The last section is the conclusion section, which includes three moves. First, the summary move restates the topic sentences in the supporting paragraphs. Then the thesis is repeated in other words. This move is called restatement of thesis. Ultimately, either a logical guess is made about the possible events which will happen regarding the issue under discussion or the writer simply expresses his hope about what will happen concerning the essay subject.

3. 1. 1. 2. Higgins’s Sample Essay

In today’s world, the use of technology is ever-increasing. Even in classrooms technology can be commonly seen. It is disagreed that technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Analyzing both the inability of a technology-driven teacher to discipline students in a classroom as well as this robotic teacher’s hindrance to a student’s learning process will show this.

Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have little to no control over its students. For example, it is commonly understood that children require the watchful eye of a teacher to ensure that they are indeed completing their class work and not fooling around during class time. Unfortunately this is something that a robotic teacher simply cannot provide. Thus this makes it clear why technology will never completely replace the teacher in the classroom.
Secondly, a robotic teacher would disrupt a student’s learning process and in effect slow a student’s ability to absorb information from lessons. For instance, kids require motivation to be taught effectively. Such is a quality human teachers possess but technologically driven instructor do not. From this it becomes quite evident that robotic instructors will never take the place of real teachers in a classroom.

In summary, a robotic teacher lacks the discipline needed to instruct students properly and actually operates to retard a student’s ability to learn new information. Thus it is clear why the idea of having a class run entirely by a machine cannot be supported. After analyzing this subject, it is predicted that the negative aspects of the debate over computerized teaching will forever be stronger than the positive ones and because of this computers will never replace teachers.

Moves of Higgins’s Sample Essay

Paragraph 1 – Introduction
- Background statement
Analyzing both the inability of a technology-driven teacher to discipline students in a classroom as well as this robotic teacher’s hindrance to a student’s learning process will show this.
- Detailed background statement
Even in classrooms technology can be commonly seen.
- Thesis
In today’s world, the use of technology is ever-increasing.
- Outline sentence
It is disagreed that technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom.

Paragraph 2 - First supporting paragraph
- Topic sentence
Firstly, a teacher powered by artificial intelligence would have little to no control over its students.
- Example
For example, it is commonly understood that children require the watchful eye of a teacher to ensure that they are indeed completing their class work and not fooling around during class time.
- Discussion
Unfortunately this is something that a robotic teacher simply cannot provide.
- Conclusion
Thus this makes it clear why technology will never completely replace the teacher in the classroom.

Paragraph 3 - Second supporting paragraph
- Topic sentence
Secondly, a robotic teacher would disrupt a student’s learning process and in effect slow a student’s ability to absorb information from lessons.
- Example
For instance, kids require motivation to be taught effectively.

- Discussion
Such is a quality human teachers possess but technologically driven instructor do not.

- Conclusion
From this it becomes quite evident that robotic instructors will never take the place of real teachers in a classroom.

Paragraph 4 – Conclusion

- Summary
In summary, a robotic teacher lacks the discipline needed to instruct students properly and actually operates to retard a student’s ability to learn new information.

- Restatement of thesis
Thus it is clear why the idea of having a class run entirely by a machine cannot be supported.

- Prediction or recommendation
After analyzing this subject, it is predicted that the negative aspects of the debate over computerized teaching will forever be stronger than the positive ones and because of this computers will never replace teachers.

3.1.2. Iranian Students’ Essays
Forty essays written by Iranian students who had not received any instruction on the moves and structure of IELTS essays were used. The essays were written by intermediate students during their placement test before taking IELTS course. Since the study was not aimed at identifying students’ grammatical and vocabulary mistakes, these were corrected before the essays being analyzed. However, the order and structure of the essays remained intact.

The essays were written in reply to the following question:
Technology is becoming increasingly prevalent in the world today. Given time, technology will completely replace the teacher in the classroom. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?

This question is the same question about which Higgins (2010) has written an essay in his book, analyzed it, and with which he has introduced his model. Additionally, just like Higgins’s sample essay, students’ essays were written in four paragraphs at the request of the researcher.

3.2. Procedures
The researcher analyzed the sample essay written in ‘How to Write at a 9 Level’ and the moves outlined by Higgins. The sample essay in Higgins’s book was only one, and through it the model was introduced.
Next, 40 IELTS essays written by Iranian students, in reply to the same essay question as Higgins had written his sample essay on, were collected. The essays were written during a placement test prior to students’ entry to the researcher’s IELTS classes.

The IELTS classes are private sessions with one student and the tutor (researcher) which last for six months. The students who want to join these classes have to take a full IELTS mock test as a placement test. Part of this test is essay writing. The essays were written by 40 individuals in different times during a year and were kept by the researcher prior to the study.

During the study, each essay was examined in detail, and the moves of each paragraph of all the essays were extracted separately. Second, all the moves outlined by Higgins (2010) in his model were listed in another table, and the frequency and percentage of each move which was used by students were calculated and demonstrated in the table 1.

Finally, a bar graph was drawn which showed the percentage of the use of each move. Then the researcher concluded which moves students used correctly and which was the most problematic move (Figure 1).

### 4. Findings

The table below summarizes the frequencies and percentages of the moves which were included in all the forty writings in each paragraph.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paragraph</th>
<th>Moves</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 1 – Introduction</td>
<td>Background statement</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Detailed background statement</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thesis</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>72.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outline sentence</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 2 – First supporting paragraph</td>
<td>Topic sentence</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 3 – Second supporting paragraph</td>
<td>Topic sentence</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Example</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paragraph 4 – Conclusion</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restatement of thesis</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prediction or recommendation</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The graph above provides information about the percentage of the moves used in all the essays written by students. Overall, it seems that among the eleven moves which constitute a standard IELTS essay, four of them were easily used by majority of the students. However, the rest of the moves were ignored by more than half of the students.

First, it seems that example move was the least problematic move, because almost eighty percent of the essays had examples. The same applied to the thesis move and prediction/recommendation move, which were observed by over seventy percent of the students. Closely after came the topic sentence. More than half of the essays had this move. Looking at the moves with which students were less familiar, the researcher realized that background statement, detailed background statement, summary, and restatement of the thesis were ignored by thirty percent of the writers.

Finally, only about two-tenth and one-tenth of the students had included outline and conclusion moves, respectively.

5. Conclusion
The study showed that most of the students just included one move in each of their paragraph. Although the essays were usually of standard size, many of the moves were missing. Therefore, the purpose of the writer is not fulfilled.
In the first paragraph, most of the students only restricted themselves to the thesis. In other words, they just answered the essay question without introducing the topic and elaborating on it. As a result, one of the implications of this study was to increase awareness of teachers about this problem so that teachers draw students’ attention to this point. Students especially need to learn about including an outline sentence in order to provide a roadmap for the rest of the essay.

In the second paragraph, whereas topic sentences and examples were used in most of the essays, the discussion and conclusion moves were mostly neglected, making the example sound irrelevant to the topic sentence and decreasing the overall coherence of the essays. Consequently, it is of paramount importance for the teachers to lead students to consider the discussion and conclusion moves.

Finally, although a great number of students made some kind of prediction, they had not summarized and stated the thesis again. According to Higgins (2010), this is one of the major problems in essay writing. Majority of the students feel uncomfortable with these two moves even though they are told these moves should be included. He adds that the reason is that students believe they are repeating themselves. However, it is suggested that teachers remind students to use these moves because this is the way native speakers write in order to support themselves more strongly by repeating their opinion.

5.1. Limitations

Although this research was carefully prepared, it is not immune to limitations and shortcomings.

First of all, the research was conducted only on forty essays. Forty pieces of students’ writing is not enough for the researcher to observe all of the students’ performance. It would be better if it was done with a bigger sample.

Second, the sample was selected with convenient sampling because the researcher did not have access to a large number of students who were at an intermediate level of English to be able to write an understandable text and also be prepared to devote their time to write a full-length essay. Therefore, if this study is done by a researcher who works for example in an IELTS mock test center and has access to essays which are written with full attention, the chances of getting a more accurate result is higher.

Finally, since the sample was small, no advanced statistical procedures were used. However, with larger samples, there will be need for some statistical calculations.

5.2. Suggestions for further research
In order to complement the findings of the present study, some further research areas can be suggested:

1. Similar studies are critically needed to be conducted on larger samples in order to see whether the results will be the same as or different from the results of the present study.
2. Further investigation is needed to find ways to facilitate the understanding adaptation of the moves by students.
3. Much empirical research is suggested to be carried out on students who have been instructed the moves to find out whether their IELTS marks increase significantly, and even further, to investigate whether the generic teaching of writing has any effect on their future success at the university.

References


Iranian EFL Journal


Yaghchi, M. A. (2000). The Impact of Formal Instruction of References and Conjunctions on Reading Comprehension of Iranian EST students. Iran University of Science and Technology, Iran.
