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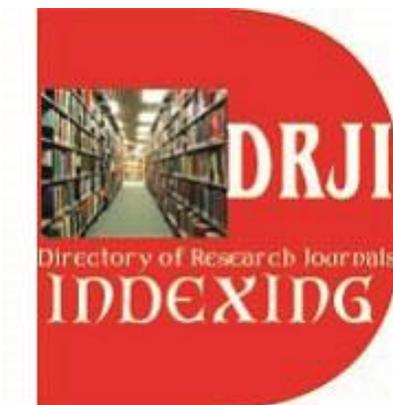
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# THE EFFECTS OF COLLABORATIVE BLOGGING ON COMMUNICATIVE ASPECTS OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' WRITING

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## ABSTRACT

THE PRESENT STUDY WAS AN ATTEMPT TO INVESTIGATE HOW COLLABORATIVE BLOGGING AFFECTED THE COMMUNICATIVE ASPECTS OF IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' WRITING PERFORMANCE. 21 IRANIAN MALE AND FEMALE INTERMEDIATE EFL LEARNERS WERE CHOSEN THROUGH THE OXFORD QUICK PLACEMENT TEST (OQPT). AT FIRST, THE PARTICIPANTS WERE INTRODUCED TO THE BLOGGING PROJECT BY THE COURSE TEACHER AND BLOGGER WAS INTRODUCED TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN CLASS. PARTICIPANTS WERE SHOWN HOW TO SET UP THEIR BLOGS AND HOW TO ADD OTHER BLOGS TO THEIR OWN BLOG. THE PARTICIPANTS WROTE A TOTAL OF EIGHT BLOG ASSIGNMENTS. AFTER 10 WEEKS, THE ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE WAS ADMINISTERED AMONG THE PARTICIPANTS TO SEE IF THEIR ATTITUDE HAD CHANGED. AS PART OF THE BLOG ASSIGNMENTS, THE PARTICIPANTS WROTE ABOUT THEIR IDEAS ON THEIR OWN BLOG AND, ALSO THEY POSTED THE COMMENTS FOR THE OTHER PARTICIPANTS ON THEIR BLOGS. THE RESEARCHER ALSO POSTED COMMENTS ON THE PARTICIPANTS' BLOGS. THE PARTICIPANTS WROTE A TOTAL OF FIVE BLOG ASSIGNMENTS. RESULT SHOWED THAT , A LOW DEGREE OF THE COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS OF WRITING WERE OBSERVED IN THE WRITING ASSIGNMENTS IN BLOGS BY THE PARTICIPANTS. A CHI-SQUARE TEST WAS RUN AMONG THE FOUR SUBCATEGORIES OF COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS, THE RESULTS SHOWED THAT THAT THERE IS NO STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DIFFERENT SUBCATEGORIES OF COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS.

## 1.Introduction

Huffaker (2004) stated that the Internet continues to generate new applications that not only foster individual expression, but also cohesive community development. Current research in computer-mediated communication (CMC) environments such as chat rooms, newsgroups, and multi-user domains (MUDs) have revealed interesting trends in the way individual identity is presented, language is used .and interactions have transpired (Calvert, et al., 2003 ;Crystal, 2001; Greenfield and Subrahmanyam, 2003). One of the latest developments in computer-mediated communication( CMC ) is the weblog, or "blog." Blogs are personal journals made up of chronological entries, not unlike a paper diary. The features of a blog include instant publishing of text or graphics to the Web without

sophisticated technical knowledge, ways for people to provide comments or feedback to each blog post, the opportunity to archive past blog posts by date, and hyperlinks to other bloggers. These features not only distinguish blogs from other forms of CMC, they provide new opportunities for people to present and express themselves online.

According to Huffaker (2004), adolescents make up a large part of the community of bloggers, often referred to as the blogosphere. This article discusses the application of one of the latest Information and Communication Technology( ICT) tools, which is known as weblog. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) in teaching and learning have offered many ways of improving the learner's writing skills such as using online forum, wikis, and weblogs.

The ability to write well can have a profound impact on our lives. In discussing the importance of writing to learning, Suleiman (2000) asserts that "writing is a central element of language, any reading and language arts program must consider the multidimensional nature of writing in instructional practices, assessment procedures, and language development." (p. 155). Writing classes in academic schools have never stopped. Without the stability of written records, a lot of knowledge concerning human civilization becomes impossible. The ability to write well can have a profound impact on our lives. These days many students use social networking sites such as Facebook, my space, Weblogs, Whats app. and hi5. With English being used as a global language for communication in education, business and technology, it is essential that students need to be able to communicate in English. Good writing skills are, therefore, important in today's world of technology where people want to share ideas and communicate over the internet. However, it should be mentioned that even at post-graduate level some Iranian EFL learners have problem with writing properly. Electronic and on-line applications and softwares can enhance the situation to be more rewarding and easier to handle. This is what seems to be ignored in Iranian context, and there is a missing link between writing instruction and the new technologies. Blogging, posting homework assignments using PowerPoint, YouTube and so on can help to provide these links. Previous research on blogging has held similar aspirations, that "...the capabilities of blogging for self-presentation and social interactivity would assist students to forge a stronger sense of personal empowerment and expressive entitlement, on the one hand, and increased connection to a shared learning community, on the other." (Farmer, Yue & Brooks, 2008, p.2). according to the existing literature, a gap is felt within the area of teaching writing.

This study tried to find out whether this electronic media could be an appropriate tool toward mastering communicative aspects writing or not. Therefore, it focused on how collaborative blogging could affect the communicative aspects of Iranian EFL learners' writing .

## 2. Literature Review

Of the four skills in English, writing is considered to be the most complex and difficult skill to master. This difficulty, according to Richards and Renandya (2002, p. 303)," lies not only in generating and organizing of ideas but also in translating these ideas into readable texts."

According to Boyd and Ellison (2007), SNSs are web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view the pages and details provided by other users within the system.

Research on using Facebook and blogs in educational settings, especially in developing writing is a new concept (Wan, 2011). Yet, there are some studies that have investigated their use in the educational field generally and in the writing classroom particularly. Facebook and blogs are only examples of many technology tools (Wikis, Myspace and LinkedIn) to mention a few that are used by educators to empower learners by granting them an opportunity to express their opinions. They help assist students with their reading and writing skills as well as their collaboration in learning (Leight, 2008).

## 2.1 Communicative Skills in Writing through Collaborative Blogging

According to Iyer (2013), "communication skills are skills that enable a person to convey information so it is received and understood" (P 21). Communication skills in writing are shown in the way a person is able to express his/her thoughts clearly. This study focused on four communicative skills in writing, namely, critical thinking, creativity, voice and comments. According to Thompson (2000) any kind of writing brings about communication, and writing on blogs is a powerful tool for communication. Blogs can be viewed as a platform for students to improve fluency by writing new posts and also commenting on their peers' work. The following items are considered as four writing communicative skills.

### 2.2.1 Creativity

As far as creativity is concerned, this form of online collaboration can be used to create powerful connections among students, collaborations and give students opportunities to display their creativity (Johnson, 2010). Creativity in writing is defined as the ability of the writer to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions rather than simply stating facts and information (Hale, 2008). Iyer (2013), claims that "I see collaboration as the natural first step of the creative process (P.21). In addition, Iyer (2013) not all projects can accommodate, a phase of creative exploration and exchange" (P.21). Collaboration is good for creativity, but smart choices about the characteristics of the partners should be made .

### 2.2.2 Critical Thinking

Following creativity, critical thinking is another important communicative skill in writing. "Critical thinking is a form of realistic and perceptive thinking that focuses on deciding what to do and how to do it" (Iyer, 2013, P. 22). According to Pohl (2000), critical thinking has been categorized into creating, evaluating, analyzing, applying, understanding and remembering, where creating, evaluating, and analyzing are the higher order thinking skills. Critical thinking, as such, has been defined as the process of analyzing and evaluating thinking with the goal of trying to improve on it (Paul & Elder, 2008).

Pohl (2000) believes that critical thinking can be seen as having two components: 1) a set of information and belief generating and processing skills, and 2) the habit, based on intellectual commitment, of using those skills to guide behavior

According to Mc Guinness (2013), a lot of clarification in thinking happens as a result of writing blog posts and commenting on feedback received from others. When writing on blogs, students must carefully monitor what they write, as it will be available to the public. This process of writing carefully leads to the development of critical thinking skills. (Iyer, 2013, P 23)

### 2.2.3 Voice

This process involves not only expressing one's own views but also observing feedback from others since blogs involve a two way communication and comments are exchanged back and forth. The different types of blogging voices usually found on the internet are informative, friendly, humorous, inspirational and dreamy (Cutmore, 2012). Freese (2013) believes that finding a writing voice can be a struggle, whether you're writing a novel, short story, flash fiction or a blog post. Some may even wonder, what is voice in writing? A writer's voice is something uniquely their own. It makes their work pop, plus readers recognize the familiarity .

### 2.2.4 Comments

According to Ferdig and Trammell "the comment function allows others to communicate relevant feedback thereby facilitating the scaffolding of new ideas" (2004, P. 1). In addition, Ferdig and Trammell (2004) believe that the blog has a single author, there are some group blogs where contributors post and

debate short essays and opinion pieces. The comments represent the opinions of the author(s) and their interpretations of an event, content or context."

As far as creativity is concerned, this form of online collaboration can be used to create powerful connections among students, collaborations and give students opportunities to display their creativity (Johnson, 2010).

Blogs can be looked upon as a medium to promote critical thinking skills among students. According to Mc Guinness (2013), a lot of clarification in thinking happens as a result of writing blog posts and commenting on feedback received from others. When writing on blogs, students must carefully monitor what they write, as it will be available to the public. This process of writing carefully leads to the development of critical thinking skills. (Iyer, 2013, P 23).

As a result of writing on blogs, students can try and find their blogging voice by communicating with a wider audience. A good and consistent blogging voice leads to effective communication, more appeal and more fans, and also influences the readership on the blog. Freese (2013) believes that finding a writing voice can be a struggle, whether you're writing a novel, short story, flash fiction or a blog post.

Iyer (2013) explored the effects of collaborative blogging on communicative skills in writing of Thai EFL students. The participants were 12 fourth year university students studying English as their major field of study. The participants wrote a total of eight blog assignments, completed two questionnaires, one before the start of the study, and the second after writing all the blog assignments. An interview was also carried out at the end of the study. The results revealed that most participants had not written blogs before, and were relatively new to the concept of blogging. The findings brought to light the fact that the communicative skills in writing, based on the four codes chosen for the study, namely creativity, critical thinking, voice, comments and contributions, Drexler, Dawson and Ferdig (2007) carried out a study between pre-service teachers and third-grade students to help the students complete a five-paragraph essay as part of an assignment. The study used collaborative blogging in which each student posted their assignments on their respective blogs. The assignment involved each student to write a paragraph contributing towards an essay. The students were given instructions on how to use the blogs before starting the study. improved as a result of collaborative blogging. This study was a success in that it not only improved the writing skills of the students but other skills they learned through the collaboration process were transferred to other subjects and other facets of their life.

A study conducted by Kavaliauskiene and Vaiciuniene (2006) indicated that the experience of writing on blogs (for an audience) provides opportunities to help students improve their knowledge of English. Nadzrah (2007) also found that blogs let students compose writing with specific purposes that can encourage them to enhance their writing in the language constructively.

### 3. Methodology

As said in introduction This study tried to find out whether this electronic media could be an appropriate tool toward mastering communicative aspects writing or not. Therefore, it focused on how collaborative blogging could affect the communicative aspects of Iranian EFL learners' writing.

#### 3.1 Research Questions

-Does collaborative blogging contribute to the communicative aspects of Iranian EFL learners' writing ?

#### 3.2 Research Hypothesis

Base on the aforementioned research question the following hypothesis was formulated.

H0: Collaborative blogging does not contribute to the communicative aspects of Iranian EFL learners' writing.

### 3.3 Participants

The sample of the study consisted of 21 EFL learners including six male and fifteen female learners. The participants' age ranged from 15 to 22. The setting of the current study was a language institute in Isfahan. The general proficiency level of the participants was set to be intermediate according to an Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) and the background of the participants. The participants had already taken Basic Writing, Paragraph Writing as necessary credit courses for students of Teaching English as Foreign language (TEFL). The participants created their own blogs on Blogfa and did all the five blog assignments collaborating with the researcher. The sampling method for this research was non-probability sampling (selective methods) and the type of sampling was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is non-probability and hence can be subject to bias and error.

### 3.2 Research Instruments & Materials

The instruments used to collect data were Oxford Quick Placement test (OQPT), blogs, interviews, and multiple instruments were chosen to bring about a triangulation of data.

The Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was used to measure the participants' language proficiency. The test consisted of sixty items with different question formats comprising of two parts. There were multiple choice, item matching, and cloze test type items in the test. In each item, there was a missing word for which there were four options. Students were supposed to find the correct item among these options. All of the chosen participants for the present study were able to pass the test with a score between 30 and 46. Based on the test scoring level chart of OQPT, those whose scores in the test were between 30 and 46 were considered as the intermediate-level and categorized to be at the same level according to the OQPT results. The reason why the researcher of the study decided to utilize OQPT as the students' measure of proficiency was due to the fact that the test is a standard test of proficiency, and its validity and reliability were assumed to be satisfactory.

Blogs were the instrument chosen for the study, in which the participants wrote their assignments. The participants were given explicit instructions on how to set up their blogs on Blogfa and also how to add other blogs to their reading list. Blogfa is a world-class weblog service for Persian language speakers. It is designed to enable Persian people to rapidly configure and deploy weblogs for personal, as well as for marketing purposes.

Blogfa is a wholly-owned product of Ravand Cybertech Inc developed by Alireza Shirazi. Blogfa, being used for blogging and hence it was chosen as the blogging software for this study. The following figures are snapshots that display the steps in creating a blog on Blogfa.

### 3.3 Procedures

At the onset of the study, the OQPT was run among a group of EFL learners studying at a language institute in Isfahan. Then, based on the results, 21 whose scores fell one standard deviation above or below the mean score of the OQPT were chosen. At first, the participants were introduced to the blogging project by the course teacher and Blogfa was introduced to the participants in class. The email notification feature was also shown to the students and the attitude questionnaire was run among participants. Participants were shown how to set up their blogs and how to add other blogs to their own blog.

The blog assignments were used to investigate how collaborative blogging contributed on students' communicative skills in writing. As part of the blog assignments, the participants wrote about their ideas on their own blog and, also they posted the comments for the other participants on their blogs. The researcher also posted comments on the participants' blogs. The participants wrote a total of five blog assignments. The topic for the first blog assignment was 'behind the beautiful frozen waterfall'. In week two, blog assignment 1 was posted on the researcher blog and participants started writing in their own blogs and posted two comments on two other participants' blogs.

Following this, the topic for the second week was 'a lovely beach with white round table besides two white chairs' which the participants were required to look at Blogfa and then write about what they thought of the picture. After the first two blog assignments, the selection of topics for the remaining three blog assignments was open to the students. This was carried out in order to give them an opportunity to become independent in their learning and take control of decisions they needed to make while they communicated through their blogs. The students could write the blog assignments at their homes if they had internet or write them in the computer lab in the university or wherever they had convenient access to the internet. In week three, the participants as well as the researcher gave feedback on the participant blogs in the comments section on Blogfa. The same process was repeated for blog assignments 2 to 8. Then the course instructor and researcher printed out and collected the blog assignments for analysis. After 10 weeks, the attitude questionnaire was administered among the participants to see if their attitude has changed.

### 3.4 Scoring

The participants' blogs were scored based on the rubric designed for this study. (see Appendix B). The points for each type of communicative skill: creativity, critical thinking, voice and comments ranged from 0 to 3 where 0 = Unsatisfactory, 1 = Partially proficient, 2 = Proficient and 3 = Exemplary.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The rubric coding schemes were three blog rubrics (Franker, 2011; ELT Blog Evaluation, 2009; Blogging Evaluation 2007.) which were retrieved online by the researcher. The codes had been used for evaluating student blogs in other studies, in order to assess the effectiveness of the learners' written work on the blogs. The performance of the participants was scored in terms of creativity, critical thinking, voice and comments based on the rubrics.

## 4. Results

The research question was The effects of collaborative blogging on communicative aspects of writing . in order to measure the effects of blogging collaboratively on communicative aspects of EFL learners' writing, it was needed to code the communicative aspects of writing. According to Saldana, (2009) "a code in qualitative research is a short word or phrase that characteristically assigns a collective, noticeable, essence-capturing, and/or suggestive attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data (P.56). The codes which were used in the present research, were taken directly from blog rubric-coding schemes online that were appropriate for the present research. The rubric coding schemes were three blog rubrics (Franker, 2011; ELT Blog Evaluation, 2009; Blogging Evaluation, 2007) which were retrieved online by the researcher and checked by the supervisor. The blog assignments were classified into the following codes: creativity, critical thinking, voice, and comments. The scores allotted to the participants are show in Table 4.1 below

Table 1

*Communicative Skills in Writing Performance of the Participants*

Participant	creativity	Critical thinking	Voice	comments
1	14	16	12	13
2	15	13	11	12
3	16	10	14	9
4	12	10	7	8

5	14	13	11	8
6	15	10	13	9
7	14	12	10	8
8	14	11	8	12
9	17	12	13	10
10	16	14	15	7
11	18	11	10	10
12	14	12	8	9
13	17	13	11	10
14	18	11	9	12
15	13	10	11	13
16	17	15	12	9
17	17	14	15	8
18	13	11	10	10
19	18	12	10	8
20	15	10	9	10
21	14	9	11	13
Total	321	249	230	208
Mean	15.28	11.85	10.95	9.90
Percentage	31.84%	24.70%	22.81%	20.63%

Table 4.1 shows the frequency and percentage of the scores obtained by the whole participants in the eight blog assignments. In fact, the scores gained by the participants in the four communicative aspects of writing are given. For example participant number one scored 14 in creativity, 16 in critical thinking, 12 in voice and 13 in comments. As shown, creativity with 31.84% was the criteria which scored the first among the four scoring criteria. Differently stated, 31.84% of the blog assignments were scored to be creative. Accordingly, a low degree of creativity was observed among the participants performance in their blog assignment. As the next criterion, critical thinking accounted for 24.70% which still is low in degree. In other words, only 24.70% of the blog assignments were identified to include some critical thinking activities. The third criterion which still scored lower than the two previous criteria was voice with a percentage of 22.81%. Finally, comments with a percentage of 20.63% accounted for the least criterion as applied by the participants in their blog assignments. Therefore, as displayed a low degree of the communicative skills of writing were observed in the writing assignments in blogs by the participants. In fact, less than 50% of the communicative criterion was seen in the blog assignments of the participants.

Thus, the participants showed a low degree of communicative skills in writing, with a higher degree of creativity and critical thinking, compared to voice and comments. Figure 4.1 depicts different criteria of communicative aspects of writing.

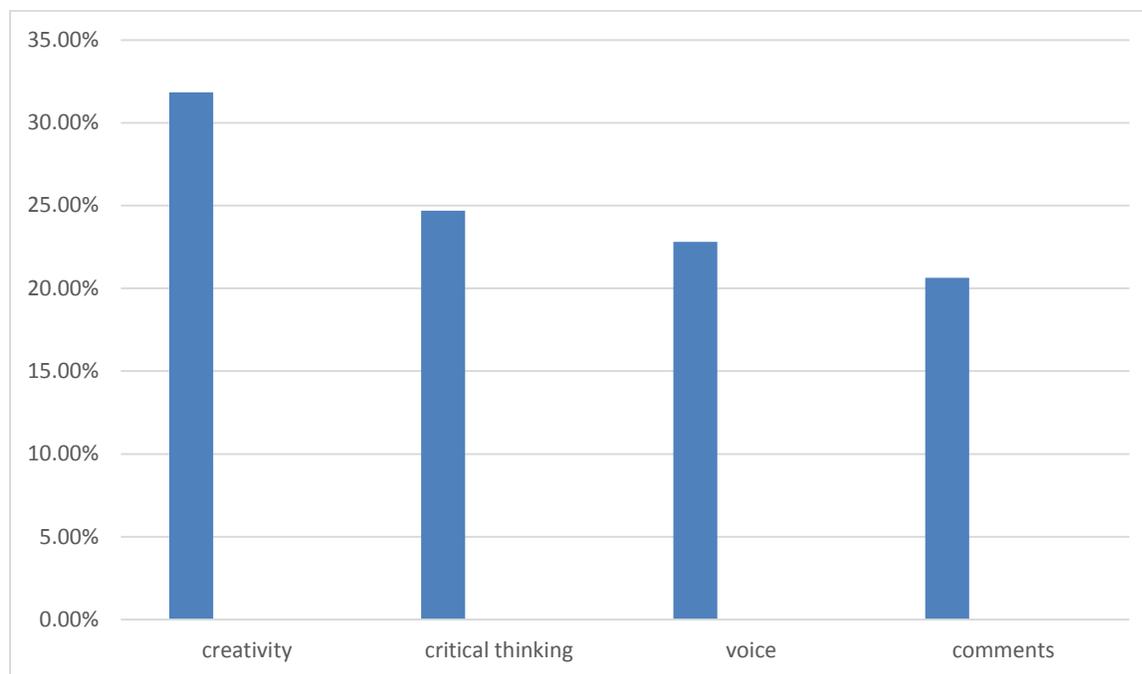


Figure 4.1 Communicative Skills in Writing Performance of Participants

Based on Figure 4.1, all the four criteria of communicative skills in writing were found to be less than 50% showing that the communicative skill of the participants has no improved due to assignments in blogs. However, from among the four criteria of communicative skills, creativity and critical thinking were found to be more than voice and comments among the four criteria.

A Chi-square test was run among the four subcategories of communicative skills, the results are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.2

Results of Chi-square test between subcategories of communicative skills

frequency	Communicative skills	
Chi-Square	000.a	000.a
df	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	1.000	1.000

According to the figures given in Table 4.2 the significance level is 1.000, which is higher than the observed level of significance (.05<.1.000). This tells us that there is no statistically significant difference between different subcategories of communicative skills.

5. Discussions

The current study intended to compare the effects of using collaborative blogging on communicative aspects of Iranian EFL learners' writing. In a quest for finding the answer for this question, after

gathering the required data using writing tasks, and analyzing the gathered data, it was made clear that less than 50% of the communicative criterion was seen in the blog assignments of the participants. Thus, the participants showed a low degree of communicative skills in writing, with a higher degree of creativity and critical thinking, compared to voice and comments.

In justifying the findings it should be noted that even though, the participants displayed low scores, the process of commenting on the blogs made the participants get to know each other and their blog writing styles outside of the classroom. These writing styles gave the participants ideas on what to write and how to write in their own blogs. Using creativity and humor, some participants managed to keep a conversation going on the blogs. The response to this creativity and humor motivated them to continue writing on the blog. The participants did not seem to be shy about voicing their opinion on the blogs. They communicated with others, by putting questions across to them in the form of a blog post or comments. The participants were seen as communicating on Blogger from time to time during the course of the study.

Based on the results in the area of critical thinking, the participants displayed a certain degree of critical thinking, depending upon their topics of their interest and possibly their background knowledge and experiences on that topic. The topics such as money and Valentine's Day seemed to bring about more interest and more discussion was generated from these blog assignments. This showed that if the participants were given topics that related their own lives, they felt motivated to carry on communicating through blogs.

Regarding the display of participants' voice in their blog assignments, there was a varying degree in the participants' contribution, and a reason for this might have been anxiety while writing on the blogs..

Overall, it was found that writing the blog assignments in their own time encouraged the participants to feel less anxious and contribute to the study. The results of this study lend support to the study by Iyer (2013) who revealed that the students displayed a low degree of communicative skills in writing: (26%-32%) for creativity, critical thinking, voice and comments. They showed a positive attitude towards collaborative blogging and found the process of blogging and commenting helped in their writing skills and developing good relationships with each other.

## 6. Conclusion

The study was in fact an attempt to shed more light on the point whether using the ICT tools can enhance writing performance of Iranian EFL learners or not. As it was illuminated in the preceding section of the study, the findings of the study revealed that in spite of the positive contributions of blogging, using collaborative blogging cannot enhance the communicative aspects of writing ability of Iranian EFL students. All in all, more attention should be given to new technology of different types in teaching the complicated task of writing.

The findings may well suggest that the incorporating blogging practices as a type of ICT tool in EFL writing classes in Iran may be fruitful for both the teachers and learners.

The findings of the study can also provide insights for university language professors by demonstrating the role of one of the instruments to be used in writing classes, namely, blogging. This way the Iranian professors may come to know how to teach the instructional materials relating writing, and how to improve writing ability of students.

The findings of the study will, therefore, be helpful for teachers, so as to enable them to decide whether learners should be given some opportunity to use new technology in their writings.

Even though, investigating the role of using new technology in writing performance of EFL learners can be of importance in foreign language writing skill, like any other study, this study also has a number of

limitations, some of which could influence the findings and restrict the generalization of the results. Here are some of the limitations of the research at hand.

Firstly, the study was restricted to pre intermediate EFL students who were Iranian, and the results may be different with students of other levels. Furthermore, in a different environment which may include non-Iranian participants, different results may be obtained.

Secondly, the participants of this study, included 21 EFL students. However, the same study can be conducted with a higher number of students .

finally, in the present study only one of the ICT tools, namely weblog was considered. Other studies can broaden the literature with other ICT tools.

This study focused on the effect of using collaborative blogging on enhancing writing ability of Iranian EFL learners. Other studies can examine the effect of other types of ICT tools like the new applications installed on cellphone on writing performance of the EFL students.

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# AN ANALYSIS OF CLUTIRE SPECIFIC ITEMS IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF PERSIAN TOURIST GUIDE BOARDS OF PERSEPOLIS

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## ABSTRACT

THE PRESENT STUDY AIMED AT INVESTIGATING THE CULTURE SPECIFIC ITEMS OF TOURIST GUIDE BOARDS OF PERSEPOLIS SITE BY STUDYING THE TYPE OF EACH CULTURE SPECIFIC ITEM AND THE STRATEGIES APPLIED BY THE TRANSLATOR IN TRANSLATING THOSE ITEMS BY FOCUSING ON THE PERSIAN BOARDS AND THEIR ENGLISH TRANSLATED BOARDS, BASED ON NEWMARK'S TAXONOMY FOR CULTURE SPECIFIC ITEMS (1988). IN SO DOING THE RESEARCHER EXTRACTED ALL THE CULTURE SPECIFIC ITEMS FROM PERSIAN BOARDS THEN IDENTIFIED THEIR TYPES AND FREQUENCIES. THE TRANSLATED ITEMS FOR EACH CULTURAL ITEM WERE EXTRACTED FROM ENGLISH BOARD AND THE TYPE OF STRATEGIES AND THEIR FREQUENCIES WERE ALSO STUDIED BASED ON NEWMARK 2012. THE RESULTS SHOWED THAT THERE WERE 145 CULTURE SPECIFIC ITEMS IN TOURIST GUIDE BOARDS OF PERSEPOLIS THAT MATERIAL CULTURE WAS THE MOST FREQUENT AND ECOLOGY WAS THE LEAST FREQUENT ONES; THE RESULTS ALSO INDICATED THAT THE TRANSLATOR TRANSLATED 100 ITEMS OF THOSE CULTURAL ITEMS AND FROM AMONG THE TRANSLATION PROCEDURES TRANSONYM WAS THE MOST FREQUENT ONES, OTHER 45 ITEMS THAT WERE REMAINED UNTRANSLATED BY THE TRANSLATOR WERE ALSO TRANSLATED IN THIS STUDY.

**KEYWORDS:** TRANSLATION, CULTURE, CULTURE SPECIFIC ITEM, CULTURAL TRANSLATION

## 1. Introduction

Language and culture are means of communication and their relationship with culture is undeniable. Each community often with specific language has its own culture, which refers to the way of life, sets of beliefs, traditions, attitudes, values and behavior of that community. Today translation is regarded as a process and science beyond the linguistic form of a language. "The 1970s and 1980s saw a move away from the statistic linguistic typologies of translation shifts and the emergence and flourishing of a functionalist and communicative approach to the analysis of translation" Munday declared (Munday, 2001, p.73).

Culture is the characteristics of a particular group of people, defined by everything from language, religion, music, arts, etc. Preserving culture helps society members of that culture to remain alive by introducing their culture to others. Studies about cultural and traditional heritages have gained significance especially in recent years. This place gains much attention from different national and international tourists. Administrators of Persepolis put different tourist guide boards in different parts of Persepolis in both Persian and English for both national and international visitors, with the aim of

introducing different parts of the site and giving the visitors necessary information. Texts of these boards are kinds of tourist texts so their function is to give the readers information about culture, custom and history of this site. But, whether these English boards are successful in introducing and transferring cultural issues in the English boards or not is the subject which needs more study.. A good translator should be able to deal with the translation of different CSI and use appropriate and suitable methods for their translation.

World heritage sites must provide a clear translation of these items for international tourists; in spite of this, the fact is that somewhere in English boards of Persepolis these items were omitted and there is not any equivalence for them in its vicinal board. Inadequacy in transferring the message from one language to another language is the source of different problems and misunderstandings. These problems and misunderstandings become more crucial when the focus of the translation is culture and specially culture items. Absence of cultural items of one language in another one is a barrier in introducing and transferring culture of source language and society to the target ones. This is the subject that has gained much attention in translation studies and different scholars and translators have proposed different ways and strategies for dealing with translation of cultural items. For the importance of CSI's translation and their roles in representing each language culture, this research tried to study them and their translation.

In this study the focus was on the culture specific items in Persian and especially English tourist guide boards of Persepolis. The first purpose was to introduce the concept of CSI, its definition and various categories according to Newmark's (1998) model. Then different strategies for translating CSIs were introduced and elaborated. The next step was extracting CSIs from Persian boards and putting them under related categories, after finding equivalences of each Persian CSI in the English boards the main purpose was analyzing translation of each CSI to see what kind of strategy was used by the translator for each item and then the frequency of translation procedures applied by the translator were shown, then where CSIs was omitted the researchers suggested an appropriate equivalence. More specifically, the present research addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the most and the least frequent culture specific items in tourist guide boards of Persepolis?
2. What are the most and the least frequent translation strategies for translating CSIs in tourist guide boards of Persepolis?
3. What is the best equivalence for those CSIs which are omitted in English board in the process of translation CSIs from Persian into English?

## 2. Literature Review

Language and culture are two structures which can be helpful in understanding a country and society. Akbari in a paper 'The role of culture in translation' explained that "language is an expression of culture and individuality of its speakers" (Akbari, 2013, p.13). One might even claim that cultural contact as such presupposes translation and that the exchange of goods of material and spiritual culture is not possible without translation. The concept of translation and culture is a matter of controversy and attracts many enthusiastic researchers to research in this filed.

Larson defined culture as "a complex of beliefs, attitudes, values and rules which a group of people share" (Larson, 1984, p.431). Each individual language can be considered as a means of expression for its own culture. Vermeer (2000) considered language as a part of culture. Each language presents a specific culture and each culture has in itself a specific language. Different cultures influence the way its members view the world. Zare-Behtash and Firoozkoochi (2010) said that the concept of culture is important for understanding the implication of culture specific items, so many translation theorists deal with this issue and provide definitions for this concept.

Newmark as one of them considered culture as “the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression” (Newmark, 1998, p.94). CSIs are those items which can make problems in translation process. CSIs with their cultural roots and meanings which lie behind them and are strongly related to the specific cultural context can provide a clear definition of each culture. Translating CSIs is one of the problematic and challengeable issues in translation studies. In translating CSIs by considering the purpose of the source text, a translator main attempt should be to make the source items clear for target readers by choosing the best and the most appropriate strategy.

According to Nida “differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structures” (Nida, 1964, p.130). This statement emphasizes the importance and significance of the research about translation and culture and CSIs in specific. Preserving culture in world heritage sites like Persepolis, is very important as those places belong to people all around the world with different languages and cultures, and translators have the duty to provide the most understandable, representative and clear texts, and should be aware of this important issue. Representing correct and clear information of each part of this site is the duty of its administrators. While each year about 8000 (non-native) tourists visit this site, those tourist guide boards (in English as an international language) are the most important tools for introducing Persepolis and its ancient culture to its visitors, these boards should be in a way to be able to introduce the nature, culture, history and customs of the site to the visitors through their texts.

Tourist texts have been designed with the purpose of introducing a place or a spot to its viewers by providing related information for them to enjoy their visit. These texts offer expressive, informative and vocative functions. The writer or the originator of a text type produces a text irrespective of any response, so expressive function works as the mind of the originator. The informative function of these texts relates to the information and external aspect of the spot, its vocative function is in a way to appeal and persuade readers to think about the spot and appeal them (Sanning, 2010).

Before visiting a place the visitors may want to gain some information about the history, culture and importance of that place, then a detailed explanation about that place will strengthen their decision for visiting the spot and even make them enthusiastic. So till now the vocative and informative function are crucial. As Newmark (1988) declares the informative and vocative texts belong to communicative translation. This kind of translation tried to render the exact contextual meaning of the original text in such a way that both content and language are acceptable and comprehensible to the readership. But the expressive side has its own importance, as a well translated text and the aesthetic dimensions of language is used by the translator because the visitors “can sense national pride and a warm welcome emanating from the host country” (Sanning, 2010, p.125). An expressive tourist text is often well organized, concise, and short and it concerns the cultural values of the object.

Newmark distinguished six categories for CSIs as follow: ecology, public life, social life, personal life, customs and pursuits, and private passions (Newmark, 2010, p. 173-177).

1. Ecology: encompasses CSIs referring to geological and geographical environment, e.g., Naples, Lyon.
2. Public life: refer to politics, law and government, e.g., the House of Commons, Prime Minister .
3. Social life: includes economy, occupations, social welfare, health and education, e.g., the patients are admitted or discharged from the hospital and not accepted or rejected.
4. Personal life: encompasses food, clothing and housing, e.g., pasta, paella, espresso, mocha.
5. Custom and pursuits: refer to various body language signs that are specific to particular culture, e.g., slow hand clapping means applause, and various means of entertainment, e.g., cricket and football with their national idioms such as sticky wicket.

6. Private passions: include religion, music, poetry and their different social organizations, e.g., Methodism, Shakespeare, the Arts Councils.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. Materials

Text of TGBs of Persepolis was the material for this study. CSIs of these boards were regarded as the content. All the procedures of the study were done according to the CSIs from TGBs, and the results of the research were in the way to prepare appropriate answers to the research questions.

##### 3.1.1. Value of the Materials

Outstanding interaction between people and their environment in a place is the key concept of a world heritage cultural landscape. According to Jukka Johileto who is a UNESCO consultant, in order to understand the values of a place there are some steps as follow:

1. Recognizing the themes characteristics of that place:
2. Chronological-regional context is also important.
3. Type of property
4. World heritage criteria
5. Authenticity and integrity
6. Management, the development of a management system relevant to the defined area.

Value can be understood as the social association of qualities to things. The value of a thing is because of its characteristics. So in the process of defining the value of a thing or a place we should at first define its characteristics, rank and importance, and a point should be considered that value is relative not absolute. The value of a cultural heritage like Persepolis is related to the value discipline of its own culture. Conservation of cultural heritage in all its form is rooted in the values attributed to the heritage. Our ability to understand these values depends on the degree to which information sources about these values may be understood as credible or truthful. Knowledge and understanding of these sources of information in relation to original and subsequent characteristics of cultural heritage and their meaning is a requisite basis for assessing all aspects of authenticity. Providing authentic information about cultural landscape for the visitors of such places is a useful way for transferring and introducing its values to others. The value of Persepolis as a cultural landscape and world heritage site is obvious for everybody.

#### 3.2. Data Collection Procedures

Data for the present study were selected from the boards which are used in the Persepolis site in order to prepare brief information for the national and international visitors. These boards are written documents of a popular culture. They are representative of the ancient culture and era of Persia. The researchers tried to study all these public documents in order to answer the research questions.

#### 3.3. Data Analysis

In order to analyzing the data, all the Persian boards were studied carefully. The unit of analysis was word. The gathered items, those that had the characteristics of a CSI according to Newmark's model, are different kinds of CSIs. Then each word was reviewed and coded into different organized categories. The researchers then counted the frequencies of the items. Each English item's equivalence was founded from each English TGB near its Persia TGB. The types of translation strategies were counted and the quantitative data provided a description for the main research questions.

#### 4. Findings and Results

In the following, one of the Persian TGBs from Persepolis is presented as a sample. All the research procedures were conducted one-by-one and step-by-step for all boards.

##### Board of Terrace Stairway

پلکان ورودی

دو ردیف پلکان قرینه راه اصلی ورود به تخت جمشید را تشکیل می دهند. هر ردیف پلکان مجموعاً دارای ۱۱۱ پله به طول ۶/۹۰ متر عرض ۳۸ سانتی متر و ارتفاع ۱۰ سانتی متر است. پلکان های هر طرف احتمالاً برای عبور گروه های خاصی منظور گردیده است و هر چهار یا پنج یا شش پله از یک تخته سنگ ساخته شده است. ردیف کنگره های جان پناه در جهت آزاد پلکان از سقوط احتمالی میهمانان جلوگیری می کرده است. بزرگان و سران کشور و همچنین مهمانان شرکت کننده در جشن پیاده و به صورت گروهی از پله ها بالا می رفته اند. علت کوتاهی پلکان بر خلاف نظر چه پله های کوتاه اجازه می داده است به عامه رفتن سوار با اسب به داخل کاخ نبوده بلکه پیروی از جنبه تشریفاتی و مهمان نوازی داشته است بزرگان ایرانی به ماموران و نمایندگان ملل تابع دسته دسته و گفتگو کنان همه در لباس های فاخر و بلند و با وقاری در خور بارعام و مهمانی شاهانه آهسته آهسته از پایین به بالای تخت روند.

Table 1. CSI Analysis of Terrace Stairway Board

Col.	CSI type	Extracted CSIs	
1	Ecology		0
2	Material culture	کنگره های جان پناه- تخت(منظور صفه تخت جمشید است)	2
3	Social culture	بارعام	1
4	Organization,...	تخت جمشید- سران کشور-	2
5	Gestures and habits	به صورت گروهی	1
	Total		6

CSI analysis of this board showed that there were 6 CSIs of four kinds: material culture, social culture, organization and gesture. 'تخت'، 'کنگره های جان پناه' are the items related to the ancient buildings and are the items that are culture based. The cultural items which are related to house terms are under the material culture of Newmark's taxonomy. 'بارعام' in Farsi means 'پذیرایی عام یا خاص' therefore it was considered as a social culture term which included work and leisure.

'تخت جمشید' is an international and historical term, 'سران کشوری' in the text is a culture term which, like 'تخت جمشید', is in the organization group.

به صورت' cultural gestures are those gestures that occur in some cultures and are specific for that culture; 'گروهی' is a kind of gesture that shows respect.

Table 2. Strategies Applied in Translation of CSIs in Terrace Stairway Board

Col.	Source Text	Target Text	Translation Strategies
1	تخت جمشید	Platform	Componential A
2	کنگره های جان پناه	Parapets	Marginal T(S)

3	سران کشور	Nobles of the empire	Cultural E
4	به صورت گروهی	..with one another	Marginal T (modulation)
5	بارعام		
6	تخت	platform	Componential A

The translator was successful in translating cultural items presented in this board. He/She had used different strategies in translating these items. The translator had used platform for 'تخت جمشید و تخت' in which he/she had tried to split the term into generic components. Platform is one of the characteristics of this universal place.

'Parapets' which means: a low protective wall along the edge of a roof, bridge, or balcony is a synonym for 'کنگره های جان پناه' and the translation strategy which had been applied here is Marginal translation (synonym).

The following section summarizes the findings of the research in relation to each research question. The research showed that the total number of CSIs in all the available TGBs of Persepolis was 145.

From these CSIs, 'material culture' category had the most frequency with 61 items that allocated 42.06% to itself. Then organization with 58 items had the second rank, social culture with 21 items, gesture and habit with 4 items and finally ecology with just one item occupied other ranks (in decreasing order).

From among these 145 CSIs, the translator translated only 100 items and 45 other CSIs were left without any translation and were absent on the English boards. For translating other 100 items, Transonym with 31 items or 17.6% was the most frequent strategy, and then cultural equivalents, marginal translation strategies, descriptive equivalent, componential analysis and transference were the other strategies that the translator applied in translating CSIs.

'Organization', with 58 items, had the second rank. It means that the frequency of the items related to this part is 40%. 'Social culture', with 21 items, had 14.48% frequency, 'gesture and habit', with 4 items, had the frequency of 2.7%, and finally 'ecology', with just one item, had the frequency of 0.68% and occupied other ranks (in decreasing order).

From among these 145 CSIs, the translator translated only 100 items and 45 other CSIs were left without any translation and were absent on the English boards. For translating other 100 items the translator used all kinds of proposed strategies for translating CSIs by Newmark (2010). Transonym with 31 items or 17.6% was the most frequent strategy which is mostly related to the translation of names of places and proper names. 'cultural equivalent' was the strategy which was used 21 times with the frequency of 11.9%, 'marginal translation' strategies was the third mostly used strategy which itself consists of five subcategories as follow; literal translation, synonymy, modulation, paraphrase and cultural footnotes. Among these subcategories, literal translation allocated 14.2% of the total frequency of the marginal translation. 'Descriptive equivalent' was used 18 times and had the frequency of 10.2%. 'Componential analysis' and 'transference' were other strategies that the translator applied for translating CSIs. The first one was used 17 times and transference was used nine times in the process of translation. All the above mentioned frequencies occurred in a decreasing order. The following tables provide an overview of the research findings. The first table shows the frequency of CSIs and each item's percentage, and the second one shows the frequency and percentage of each translation strategy.

**Table 3. Frequency of CSIs in TGBs of Persepolis**

Col.	CSI type	Frequency	Percentage
1	Ecology(E)	1	0.68%
2	Material culture (MC)	61	42.06%
3	Social culture (SC)	21	14.48%
4	Organization,... (O)	58	40%
5	Gesture and Habits (G)	4	2.7%

**Table 4. Frequency of Applied Strategies for Translating CSIs in all the TGBs of Persepolis**

Col.	Translation Strategy	Frequency	Percentage
1	Componential analysis (CA)	17	9.6%
2	Cultural equivalent (CE)	21	11.9%
3	Descriptive equivalent (DE)	18	10.2%
4	Marginal translation (MT)	35	19.8%
	Literal translation (LT)	25	14.2%
	Synonymy (S)	8	4.5%
	Modulation (MD)	2	1.1%
	Paraphrase (PR)	0	0%
	Cultural footnotes (CF)	0	0%
5	Transference (TF)	9	5.1%
6	Transonym (TM)	31	17.6%
7	No translation (NT)	45	25.5%

### 5. Discussion and Conclusion

As it was mentioned earlier, Newmark's (1988) category of CSIs and his translation strategies (2010) were employed in this study in order to answer the first two research questions with respect to "What are the culture specific items in tourist guide boards of Persepolis?" and "What kind of strategy is used by the translator in the translation of each CSI?". He proposed 5 categories for CSIs and 6 kinds of translation strategies. Some examples for each category are presented here.

Shokri and Ketabi (2015) studied the translation of CSIs of the book 'ShahzadehEhtejab' that is a Persian literary masterpiece. They extracted the CSIs from the text according to Newmark's categorization (1988)

of culture specific items. Then the CSIs were examined according to Aixela's model of translating culture specific items. In their research 'Synonym' with 39percent was the most frequent strategy.

Rezaei and Kuhi (2014) dealt with CSIs and their translation in the article "Strategies Employed in Translation of Tourist Guidebooks Culture-specific Items from Persian into English". They studied the translation of two tourist guidebooks from Persian to English to analyze the kind of strategies used by translators to translate each CSI according to Newmark (1998) and to explore whether most of these CSIs are domesticated or foreignized. In their view, Tourist guidebooks usually include details about a country geographic location and provide some information about its tourist sites, accommodations and sometimes the costumes and culture of its people (p. 750). In translating these kinds of tourist texts, the translator needs to know the source language and the target language well and should also get familiar with both cultures and know a wide range of possible strategies for dealing with the translation of CSIs. This descriptive research studied the rendering choices in translation of CSIs in two tourist guide book 'Travel Guide to Fars' and 'Iran Tourist Guide' translated by Beheshti and Hakimian from Persian into English and did not intend to judge the correctness of translations or appropriateness of the application of translators' ideological presuppositions. At first they explained about the concept of culture and define CSIs according to different viewpoints. Then, the translation strategies for CSIs were explained. And finally the result and findings were reported. CSIs were divided into the following groups in the mentioned corpus: Geographical items, Ethnographic items, Ethic items, and artistic and cultural items. Then for each group, they studied the translation strategies which were used by the translators.

Finally the result revealed that transference with the addition of some notes is the mostly used strategy used by translators and the most common strategy in the translation of these two tourist guidebook is foreignization. It was obvious that the translators tended to foreignize the cultural items and tried to preserve the meaning of the SL cultural norms and their foreignness to the TL text and a number of SL cultural words were borrowed and introduced into the TL culture.

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Appendix

CSI analysis of All the Boards and Their Applied Strategies

Col.	Source Text	CSI type	Target Text	Translation Strategy
1	تالار	MC	hall	NT
2	ایوان	MC	Veranda	NT
3	تخت جمشید	O	Persepolis1 (Takht-e Jamshid)2	1.TM 2.TF
4	فرمانروایی پارس	O	Pars (Persian)reign	NT
5	داریوش اول	O	Darius1 the Great2	1.TM 2.CE
6	صفه (تخت گاه)	MC	Platform1(Takht)2	1.CA 2.TF
7	کوه رحمت (مهر)	E	Mount Mithra1 (Mehr) Koohe Rahmat2 ("Mount Mercy")3	1.MT (S) 2.TF 3.MT (LT)
8	کاخ آپادانا	O	A large audience hall1 (The Apadana)2	1.DE 2.TM
9	پارسه	O	Parsa	TM
10	پرسپولیس (شهر پارسه)	O	The city of Persians	DE
11	حصار	MC	Enclosure, retaining wall	NT
12	شبکه های آبرسانی	MC	Water hammer	NT
13	مقابر	MC	Sepulchers	NT
14	نقش برجسته های سنگی	O	Bas-relief	NT

15	اسکندر مقدونی	O	Alexander III of Macedon	NT
16	آجر های لعاب دار	MC	Coated bricks	NT
17	زبان فارسی	O	Persian language	NT
18	داریوش سوم	O	Darius III	NT
19	تخت جمشید	O	Platform	CA
20	کنگره های جان پناه	MC	Parapets	MT(LT)
21	سران کشور	O	Nobles of the empire	CE
22	به صورت گروهی	G	..with one another	MT (M)
23	بار عام	SC	audience	NT
24	تخت	MC	platform	CA
25	بار عام	SC	Audience	CE
26	خشایارشا	O	The Great King1( Xerxes2)	1.CE 2.TM
27	بر تخت نشسته	MC	Enthroned	CE
28	عصای شاهی	G	A scepter of royalty	CE
29	خواجهگان	SC	A eunuch chamberlain	CE
30	عود سوز	MC	Incense burner	CE
31	شادروان (چادر سلطنتی)	MC	Royal tent	NT
32	نیلوفر آبی (لوتوس)	O	Lotus flower	MT (LT)
33	ولیعهد	O	Crown prince	CE
34	دست راست خود را به نشانه ی احترام بلند کرده است	G	(He) reverentially rises his hand	NT
35	اسلحه دار	SC	Weapon- bearer	MT(LT)
36	رئیس تشریفات	SC	Senior official (the chiliarch)	MT (S)
37	فرش	MC		NT
38	کتیبه	MC	Inscription	NT
39	نیزه داران	SC	Lance-bearers	MT(LT)

40	چهپایه ی سلطنتی	SC	Stool	CA
41	مهتر	SC	Grooms	CE
42	اسبی را که کاملا آراسته شده است	SC	A well-groomed horse	NT
43	گردونه ی سلطنتی	SC	Royal chariot	NT
44	لباس پارسی(کلاه بلند ترک دار و لباس بلند)	MC	(Persian1 attire)2 (consisting of a tall fluted hat3, pleated tunic and skirt4	1.TM 2.MT (LT) 3.CA 4.DE
45	لباس مادی (کلاه نمدی گرد با لباس کوتاه و شلوار)	MC	(Median1 Costumes)2 (consisting of a round flat hat3, tight-fitting jacket and trousers and the candy, a long robe worn on the shoulder but with empty sleeves4	1.TM 2.MT (LT) 3.CA 4.DE
46	دست در دست و یا دست بر شانه ی هم	G	Holding hands	MT(LT)
47	طوق گردن	MC	Torque	MT(ئ)
48	گوشواره	MC	Ear rings	MT(S)
49	دستبند	MC	Armlet	CA
50	ریش بلند	MC	Fairly long beard	DE
51	نوروز	SC	Nowruz (the first day of the new year)	NT
52	میر آخوران	SC	Head of ostlers	NT
53	حرمسرا	MC	Harem1 (seraglio)2	1.MT (LT) 2.MT (S)
54	درگاه	MC	Hall's entrances	MT(LT)
55	نقوش	O	Figures	MT (S)
56	خدمه مخصوص	SC	Attendant	MT (CA)
57	جنگ شاه با شیر و هیولا	SC	A hero1 in Persian dress fighting monstrous animals symbolizing evil powers2	1.CA 2.DE
58	ساروج قرمز	MC	Red plaster coating	CE
59	خشایار شا	O	Xerxes	TM

60	کاخ مشکوی	MC	The Harem of Xerxes	DE
61	کاخ آپادانا	MC	The Apadana	TM
62	داریوش اول	O	(Darius1 the Great)2	1.TM 2.CE
63	بارعام نوروزی	SC	Nawrooz1 festival2 Audience hall3	1.TF 2.DE 3.CE
64	خدمت کاران	SC	servants	NT
65	منقوش	O	Patterned	NT
66	درهای چوبی دو لنگه	MC	Wooden double doors	NT
67	آب روها	MC	Underground canals served as efficient drainage for rain water	DE
68	ناودان	MC	gutter	NT
69	سربازان گارد جاوید	O	Persian immortals	NT
70	کاخ تچر	MC	The Tachara	TM
71	عمارت	MC	Construction	NT
72	اردشیر سوم	O	ArtaxerxesIII	TM
73	نسخ	O	Naskh script (a calligraphic style)	NT
74	تالار آینه	MC	Mirror hall	NT
75	پلکان دو طرفه	MC	Two-facade stairway	NT
76	خط پهلوی ساسانی	O	(Middle Persian texts by Sasanian2 scribes)1	1.CA 2.TM
77	خط کوفی	O	Koofi	TM
78	نستعلیق	O	Nastaleeq (scibe)	NT
79	سکوهای سنگی	MC	A stone bench of black stone	DE
80	مدخل	MC	Doorway	CE
81	جرزهای درگاه غربی	MC	Western doorway pillars	NT
82	خط ایلامی	O	Elamite	TM
83	فارسی باستان (میان)	O	(Neo-Babylonian1	1.TM

	وبابلی)		Old Persian2)3	2.TM 3.MT (LT)
84	اهورامزدا	O	Ahuramazda	TF
85	کاخ دروازه ملت ها	MC	The all land gate	MT (LT)
86	کاخ صد ستون (تالار تخت)	MC	(The hundred column Hall1) 2	1.CA 2.MT (LT)
87	مقامات لشکری	SC	Military officers of the empire	DE
88	بارعام	SC	Audience hall	CE
89	اورنگ بران	SC	Lance bearer	MT(LT)
90	خشت خام	MC	adobe	NT
91	گاو نگهبان	O	(Guardian bull1)2	1.CA 2.MT (LT)
92	اردشیر اول	O	ArtaxerxesI	TM
93	تالار	MC	chamber	CE
94	آپادانا	MC	Apadana	TF
95	جنگ شاه با شیر و یا حیوانات افسانه ای	SC	(A Persian hero1 vanquishing monstrous creatures)2	1.CA 2.MT (LT)
96	آسایشگاه سربازان	MC	The residential area	CA
97	کاخ هدیش	O	The Hadish	TF
98	خشایارشا	O	Xerxes	TM
99	صفه تخت جمشید	MC	The terrace	CA
100	طاقچه	MC	The jamb of window	DE
101	تالار	MC	Main hall	DE
102	ایوان	MC	portico	CE
103	حرمسرا	MC	Harem of Xerxes	MT (TL)
104	ایوان باریک	MC	Long1 corridor2	1.Modulation 2.MT (LT)
105	خدمتکار	SC	servant	CE
106	راه آب	MC	Underground drainage	DE
107	درگاه	MC	Doorway	MT(LT)

108	حوض مانند	MC	Tank-like	MT(LT)
109	سنگاب تطهیر	MC	Water basin for ritual or drinking	DE
110	سر در	MC	architrave	CE
111	هدیه اوران	O	Gift-bearing delegation	MT(TL)
112	امپراطوری هخامنشی	O	Persian Empire	1.MT (S) 2.MT (LT)
113	بزرگان پارسی یا مادی	O	Greats of Medes and Persian	NT
114	استان دار	O	Governor	NT
115	هراتی ها	O	People from Herat	NT
116	مصری ها	O	Egyptians	NT
117	ارمنی ها	O	Armenian	NT
118	آشوری ها	O	Assyrians	NT
119	سکائیان تیزخود	O	Pointed-hat1 Scythians2	1.MT (LT) 2.TM
120	شلوار جوراب دار	MC	Median clothing	CA
121	گنداری ها(قندهاری ها)	O	(Gabdarians1 of the Kabul Valley)2	1.TM 2.DE
122	لودیه ای ها	O	Lydians	TM
123	کاپادوکه ای ها	O	Cappadocians	TM
124	پاسوی ها	O	Parthians	TM
125	هندی ها	O	Indians	TM
126	عبا	MC	Robe with embroidered hem	DE
127	زرنگیان	O	(Zarangians1 of Seistan)2	1.TF 2.DE
128	سکا ها	O	Scythians	NT
129	سبو	MC	crock	NT
130	بازوبند	MC	Armband	NT
131	خوزی ها	O	People from the land of Khuzi	NT
132	رخجی ها	O	Arachosia	NT

133	بلخی ها	O	People of Balkh	NT
134	اسه کرتیان	O		NT
135	جبه	MC	Cloak (sleeveless), caftan(with long sleeves)	NT
136	بابلی ها	O	Babylonians	TM
137	پیاله	MC	vessel	CE
138	قبا	MC	clothing	MT(S)
139	سکاهای هوم پرست	O	Amorgian Scythians <sup>1</sup> (the Hauma-venerating Sakas <sup>3</sup> ) <sup>2</sup>	1.TM 2.MT (LT) 3.TF
140	یونیه ای ها	O	Ionians	TM
141	قواره پارچه	MC	Bales of clothes	CE
142	پشم تابیده	MC	(Dyed <sup>1</sup> wool) <sup>2</sup>	1.CA 2.MI(LT)
143	عرب های ناحیه ی اردن و فلسطین	O	Arabs of Jordan and Palestine	TM
144	لیبی ها	O	Lybians	TM
145	حبشی ها	O	Ethiopians	TM

# THE EFFICACY OF ENGLISH DIARY WRITING ON ESP LEARNERS' WRITING FLUENCY AND INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

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## ABSTRACT

THIS STUDY EMBARKS UPON INVESTIGATING THE EFFICACY OF ENGLISH DIARY WRITING ON ESP LEARNERS' WRITING FLUENCY AND INTRINSIC MOTIVATION. FIFTY MALE PARTICIPANTS WERE SELECTED (INTACT SELECTION) FROM ALL THE AVAILABLE CLASSES AMONG THE TOTAL POPULATION OF 82 MASTER OF SCIENCE (M.S.) GRADUATE STUDENTS MAJORING IN MECHANICAL ENGINEERING STUDENTS AT KALEH MEAT PRODUCTION COMPANY. EACH STUDENT WERE REQUIRED TO WRITE 12 JOURNAL ENTRIES AT ONE JOURNAL PER WEEK. STUDENTS WERE DIVIDED IN TWO GROUPS, DIALOGUE JOURNAL WRITING (DJW) GROUP, AND NON-DIALOGUE JOURNAL WRITING (NDJW) GROUP. IN EACH SESSION, STUDENTS, DJW GROUP, WERE ASSIGNED TO WRITE A DIARY AS A HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT. THEY WERE ASKED TO WRITE THEIR FEELINGS ABOUT WHAT WAS DISCUSSED IN CLASS ACTIVITIES OR WHAT THEY WISHED TO WRITE. AFTER COLLECTING THE DATA, THE TEACHER MAKE COMMENTS ON STUDENTS' WRITING BY SHOWING EMPATHY, GIVING SUGGESTING, AND MOTIVATING FOR FURTHER THINKING. THE FINDING REVEALED THAT THE DJW HELPED STUDENTS DEVELOP THEIR WRITING FLUENCY AND INTRINSIC MOTIVATION. THE DJW GROUP REPORTED POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PROJECT AND CONFIRMED THAT IT WAS EFFECTIVE FOR PROMOTING THEIR SELF-GROWTH, SELF-CONFIDENCE.

**KEYWORDS:** DIARY WRITING, ESP LEARNERS, WRITING FLUENCY, INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

## Introduction

From all language skills, teaching writing seems to be different when it was not viewed as language skill to be taught to learners. L2 writing, even as late as 1970s, was not viewed as language skill. Instead, it was used as support skill in language, for example, practice hand writing, write answer to grammar and

reading exercise. As the theory and practice of L2 composition gradually developed, the goals set out by language curriculum indicates a major paradigm shift in teaching writing. More than any other issue in the field of composition studies, the shift from product to process has evoked strong passions. The process movement began more than three decades ago. This idea originated in the L1 classroom, where it was developed in reaction traditional types of writing (ibid). According to the proponents of 'process approach' (Raimes, 1985; Zamel, 1987; Kroll, 1990; Montague, 1995) the previous approaches tended to be model-based and formulaic. Moreover, students were given little indication of how to set about producing texts except to be told to make a plan, and then write an essay based on the plan. Montague (1995) asserts that the focus of the writing, in product approach, was the correct use of grammar form. There was no teaching on how the content of an essay was to be created and developed, that is, the process of writing.

From demerits of the product approach, which was created in students an unproductive and inappropriate orientation toward composition, and based on the views built though research, a process approach to teaching writing gradually emerged. With the advent of the process study, which was built around the idea that teaching should recognize and be based on the complexity of writing process, and the recognition of the need to focus of writing as communicative skill rather than as language skill led teachers to bridge the gap between language based class and writing based class (Marefat, 2001).

Following Ede (cited Barjesteh, Vaseghi, and Gholami, 2011) who makes a plan that teachers should find out what is happening in their classroom, and examine the value that lies their teaching, the present study benefits process oriented writing pedagogy in an ESP writing context. Process-oriented studies focus on the exploration of the way students write, the behaviors and strategies they employ, and the multiplicity of constraints that must observe to construct meaning (Murray, 1978; Zamel, 1982; Raimes, 1985; Kroll, 1990).

Similarly, examination of language classroom processes illuminate the issue of learning by looking at the way in which the learners approach tasks, activities, and the way in which they attempt to solve the problems. (Marefat, 2001). Allwright (1983) points out that one technique for conducting classroom research is introspection. Introspection involves asking people to raise and answer question rather than asking them to allow themselves to be observed in action. As a matter of fact what we may think learners need to learn and what they see as most relevant might be two different things (Numrich, 1996). The researcher guides the learners to examine their own behavior - introspection. One of these research tool, i.e. introspection, is free writing as the easiest way to get words on papers (Elbow, 1981).

Elbow (1981) evokes a responsive chord in most writers when he notes that " much writing time is spent not writing but: wondering, worrying, crossing out, having second thought" (pp.13-14). He suggests free writing as the easiest way to get words on paper. Elbow states that the goal of free writing is to write. The writer's energies are to be concentrated entirely on creative process. He should not consider criticizing what he is saying because criticism hinders the flow of ideas and results in hesitation and blockage of idea. Free writing stimulates a flow of thought and encourages it continue uninterrupted (Chastain, 1988). At this point some practitioners like Bailey (1990) and Porter et al (1990) recommend diary, as a free writing, for initiation into writing and communicating meaning.

A diary (used interchangeably with journals, reflection journals, learning logs, interactive group journal) is not just an account of experience, but it is also a written record (Porter et al, 1990; Bailey, 1990). Interestingly, practitioners (cf. Taylor, 1983; Bailey, 1990; Porter et al, 1990) have emphasized the process of writing and learning are fundamentally linked. There is evidence as Bailey (1983) suggests that "even the act of writing in the diary .... can be therapeutic for the learners" (p. 71). But what all these suggest? Moreover, how students can get help by process- oriented approach to teaching writing. In order to help students write without fear of writing and help them develop writing ability diary writing may emerge as solution at this point. Marefat (2001) argues diaries provide learners with an appropriate and excellent

opportunity for real and natural communication. She asserts, moreover, diary is a safe place to write and help students reflect upon their concerns, failure, and successes. If students are motivated and find writing easy and interesting, they will be more encouraged. Davies (1998) emphasizes that creative writing help learners develop an efficient composing process and give a chance to experiment freely with the language.

Some practitioners (Bailey, 1990; McDonough and McDonough, 1997) stress the same significance of diaries in writing curriculum asserting that in writing a diary the content is under the control of the author, he has little worry about the style or grammar and it is a means for promoting autonomous learning. Therefore, students can experience and communicate their ideas through diary writing without fear of being corrected. They, moreover, emphasized that the main popularity diary has gained among writing teachers is the connection between writing and learning. In this respect McDonough and McDonough (1997) state that writing can be viewed as a discovery process- a way to explore ideas, generate and connect ideas, change preconceived notions and abstract ideas and experience.

To add the value of diaries, Barjesteh et al. (2011) maintains that diary writing can be a very productive and creative pre writing activity for a writing classroom. Accordingly, diary-writing studies constitute a special type of ethnographic study that can be considerable value for the researchers. In characterizing creative effective teaching / learning environment for writing, thus, diaries should not be overlook nor given short shrift (Marefat, 2001)

Although much research in diaries consider diary as a means for real and natural communication, develop creativity, promote autonomous learning, and help learners develop self-confidence in writing while the students should not be worry about being corrected. Little work has actually investigated the effect of diary as a supplementary activity on promoting students' fluency and grammatical accuracy in writing and probe their attitudes toward writing as they write diaries over period of time. Therefore, this study may be considered as the first attempts made to examine whether exposing ESP learners to diary writing will produce any beneficial effect in their writing ability as far as fluency and grammatical accuracy in writing as well as their attitudes toward writing diary concern. In order to comply with the objective of the present study, the following research questions were formulated:

1. *Does diary writing improve ESP Learners' writing fluency?*
2. *What is ESP learners' intrinsic motivation before and after incorporating diary on English writing?*

To approve of the desired results for the study on the aforementioned research questions, the following null hypotheses will be proposed.

H01: *Diary writing does not improve ESP Learners' writing fluency*

## **1. Methodology**

### **2.1 Participants**

In this study, 50 male participants are selected (intact selection) from all the available classes among the total population of 82 Master of Science (M.S.) graduate students majoring in mechanical engineering students at Kaleh meat Production Company. The subjects are native speakers of Persian with the age range of 21-45. They should take all the courses in English in Mahmoodabad. In order to have homogeneous subjects, those students who clustered around the total mean of the students' scores, obtained through a First Certificate English Test (FCE, 1999), are chosen

### **2.2 Instrumentation**

In order to answer the research questions of this study, the instruments employed in this study included: (a) standard FCE test (1999), (b) questionnaire, (c) two expository writing tests (d) Michigan

Examination for the certificate of proficiency in English (MECPE, 1997), and Scoring rubric for writing fluency. It has to be stated that some of the instruments were used to answer the research questions of the study such as questionnaire, scoring rubric, and expository writing tests, and some others to control some variables that might affect the validity of the study and consequently contaminate the results of the study. The detail is presented as what follows

### 2.2.1 *First Certificate English Test (FCE, 1999)*

The first testing instrument was the FCE test. The students were required to answer 100 items in three sections: (a) Reading comprehension, (b) use of English, and (c) writing (See Appendix A). Section one - reading comprehension- included four sub-parts with 35 items. The item had 9 multiple-choice and 26 matching format. Section two -use of grammar- comprised 65 items. It was designed to measure learners' ability in recognizing and writing language that was appropriate for standard writing English. The items had 15 multiple-choice, 15 cloze elide and 35 fill in the blank format. In section three, students were required to write on a particular topic.

The test aimed at selecting 30 subjects in the classes available. The criterion for this selection was the mean scores and the standard deviation of students' score. Thus, those students who scored half a standard deviation above and half a standard deviation below the mean are selected. These tasks aimed at controlling the proficiency level of the subjects and ensuring their homogeneity.

### 2.2.2 *Questionnaire*

The second instrument was a questionnaire. Pre- and post-study questionnaires are administered in the study. The pre-study questionnaire comprised some questions organized in a five point Likert scales ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This section has eight items (1-8), aims to probe the learners' intrinsic motivation in English writing. The post-study questionnaire 11 items (9- 19), explores the students' feelings toward their writing ability organized in a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

### 2.2.3 *Pretest and posttest of writing*

The third instrument was a test of expository writing. The topic titled "Do you agree or disagree with the statement that people should never live at home with their parents after the age of 25", was chosen from the TOEFL test (*Longman Preparation course for the TOEFL test, 1996*). The test was administered as a pretest in the beginning and as the posttest at the end of the term with a different topic. These tests aimed at probing if there was any significant difference between the DJW and NDJW Group in terms of fluency in writing after treatment.

### 2.2.4 *Michigan Examination for the certificate of proficiency in English (MECPE, 1997)*

Finally, the last instrument was MECPE (1997). This proficiency test together with the writing test was administered to the pilot group to probe the validity of the writing test. Before the administration of the instruments to the intended participants, all instruments were piloted in an 'English conversation, class in a private institute to check their validity and reliability.

## 2. Procedures

This study will be conducted for 12 weeks to elicit the required data. All the M.S. graduate students majoring in mechanical engineering at Kaleh meat Production Company were chosen. The criteria for choosing the sample were based on the available sampling. They were asked to take an FCE test. It is administered in the very first session of the semester to test the homogeneity of the students in terms of their language proficiency. Based on their scores, those subjects who obtained scores within the range of half a standard deviation above and half below the mean will participate in this study. Then every other

student will be assigned to the Experimental (dialogue journal writing) group and the Control (non-dialogue journal writing) group. In the beginning of the semester, the students will be asked to take an expository writing test as a pretest in one 30-minute class period before the project. Students' pretest is collected and scored by two raters (i.e. the researcher and his colleague) based on the fluency scoring rubrics in writing. The intervention starts after a short introduction of the course on the main purpose of the study and on the guideline about what needs to be accomplished for the following 10 weeks. Student in both dialogue journal writing (DJW) group and non-dialogue journal writing (NDJW) group participate in the project. More precisely, in each session, students in DJW group are assigned to write a diary as a homework assignment. They were asked to write their feelings about what was discussed in class activities or what they wished to write. The topic was not restricted. They were ensured that their writing would not be corrected and graded for grammar but it was a course requirement. After collecting the data, the teacher makes comments on students' writing by showing empathy, giving suggestions, and motivating for further thinking. In order to achieve as high inter-rater reliability as possible, the researcher, based on the existing literature for evaluating fluency in writing, constructed a rating scale for the students' writing fluency in their assignments.

Students in the NDJW group, however, are only asked to do the exercises in their writing book, paragraph development. They are required to deliver their papers to the teacher book. This is a traditional way of checking students' writing. At the end of the intervention, both groups will be asked to take a posttest on writing for 60 minutes to check students' probable improvement in fluency in writing. Then, the answer sheets will be collected and scored by the same raters in pre-test to screen their improvement in writing fluency. Next, the inter-rater reliability is estimated and the scores are compared with those of pre-test.

In order to probe students' intrinsic motivation before and after the intervention, DJW group will be asked to complete a pre test questionnaire at the onset of the project and a post test questionnaire at the end of intervention. The data are collected and subjected for further analysis. The writing scores of the pre- and posttests are compared using a *t*-test to determine if there was any significant improvement in the students' writing performance after the DJW project. The open-ended questions in both questionnaires are generalized, and some of the students' responses were excerpted to illustrate the results.

### 3. Results

In order to probe the null hypothesis stating *diary writing does not improve ESP Learners' writing fluency*, an independent-sample *t*-test was run on the participants' scores of pre and post-tests in writing to compare the mean scores of both groups. The following table shows the result of Kolmogorov-Smirnov test that indicates the distribution of low level on listening comprehension test with the normal mean. Therefore, the result is significant ( $\text{sig}=.011$ ;  $X=7.38$ ;  $SD= 2.23$ ) which retains the null hypothesis. Table 1 indicates the result.

The following table presents the results of independent-sample *t*-test. As indicated in the table 3 the significant level for Levene's test is .284. This is larger than the cut-off of .05. This means that the assumption of equal variances has not been

**Hypothesis Test Summary**

Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
The distribution of Lowlevel_listening is normal with mean 7.38 and standard deviation 2.23.	One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	.011	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

**Hypothesis Test Summary**

Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
The distribution of Lowlevel_listening is normal with mean 11.18 and standard deviation 3.41.	One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	.317	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .05.

violated.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics in for writing in DJW/NDJW group

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Writing	DJW	25	7.5200	2.51860	.50372
	N	25	7.2400	1.94251	.38850

Table 3

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	M	Std. Er	95% Co. Interval		
										L3	U4
Writing	1	1.17	.28	.4	48	.66	.28	.6361	-.999	1.55	
	2			.4	45.09	.66	.28	.6361	-1.001	1.56	

1. Equal var. assumed 2. Equal var. not assumed 3. Lower 4. Upper

As indicated in table 3, the sig (2-tailed) value is .662. This value is greater than the required cut-off of .05. Therefore, there is not statistically significant difference in the mean of assessment and static group on their pretest. There is not a significant difference in the scores for experimental (DJW group) on pretest listening ( $X=7.5200$ ,  $SD=2.51860$ ) and control (NDJW) group pretest writing ( $X=7.2400$ ,  $SD=1.94251$ ;  $t_{(48)} = -440$ ). This implies that both groups were the same before the intervention.

An independent sample t-test was conducted tap the difference between the mean of the group for the posttest of writing. Before comparing mean if the groups' kolomogrov Simonov test was run to check if the distribution of listening comprehension test at low level in posttest is normal. The following table shows the result of kolomogrov Simonov test that indicates the distribution of low level on listening comprehension test with the normal mean. Therefore, the result is significant (sig=.317;  $X=11.80$ ;  $SD=3.41$ ) which retain the null hypothesis. Table 4 indicates the result.

To check the effect of instruction an independent sample t-test was run. The result is presented in the following tables.

Table 6

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig.	M	Std. Er	95% Con. Interval	

									L3	U4
writing	1	.29	.5	7	48	.00	4.8	.68	3.4	6.2
	2			7	47	.00	4.8	.68	3.4	6.2

2. Assumed 2. Not assumed 3. Lower 4. Upper

As indicated in table 6, the sig (2-tailed) value is .589. This value is greater than the required cut-off of .05. This means that the assumption of equal variances has not been violated. In order to probe the null hypothesis stating dynamic assessment does not affect low-level Iranian ESP learners' listening ability compared with static assessment, an independent-sample t-test was run on the participants' scores of post-tests in writing to compare the mean scores of both groups.

Table 6 indicates the sig (2-tailed) value is .000. This value is below the required cut-off of .05. Therefore, there is a statistically significant difference in the mean of DJW versus NDJW groups. The significant difference in the scores for DJW group ( $X=13.6000$ ,  $SD=.035$ ), and NDJW ( $X=.04$ ,  $SD=2.23607$ ,  $t_{(48)}= 7.103$ ). Table 4 indicates DJW group performed better than NDJW group in writing as far as their fluency is concerned. Therefore the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between the mean of DJW group and NDJW group test will be rejected.

With regard to the second research question, concerning the impact of implementation of diary writing in our ESP writing classroom the students' attitude, a significant relationship was found between the application of diary writing and students' attitudes towards writing. This finding goes in line with the general beliefs drawn for diary studies (cf. Bailey, 1996; Callahan, 1997; Wallace, 1999; McDonough and McDonough, 1997; Porter et al, 1996) in which argue that writing diaries help students gain self-confidence, encourage more writing, and help them find writing interesting. Put specifically many students in the present research found writing fun and interesting because they should not be much care about their grammar. Many students wrote in their reports:

- Diary helped me to read and write more.
- This wary of learning writing, diary, is useful because it really changed my attitude toward writing and helped me find my mistakes in the long run because it is risk-free.
- I like diary because it helped me find writing interesting and motivated me to believe in myself.

In addition, the students realized that writing meant thinking in order to express ideas and convey meaning. The finding in this study supports the view that writing is a problem solving activity (Bailey, 1990; Porter et al 1990). The students plan about the content, and solve their problem at the level of word choice, style grammar and etc.

### 3. Discussion

The present study examined the effect of implementing diary writing on ESP learners' writing ability. As mentioned in the previous parts, ESP students can highly benefit from diary writing as a free writing activity in which they can write, generate ideas and experiences freely without caring much about their grammar. In other words, diary can be safe place for learners to talk about their ideas. So they overcome the barrier of getting started to write, find writing interesting, feel themselves as writer and gain self-confidence in their writing. Researchers show that implementing diary in our EFL writing classroom is one of the best ways for initiation in to writing, and communicating meaning (Bailey, 1996; Porter et al, 1990). As Callahan (1997) suggests diary writing is a way of "changing curriculum to encourage more writing and process guided instruction" (p. 317).

Concerning the first research question stating that “does the effect diary writing in improvement of fluency in writing?” a significant relationship was found between the application of diary writing and the fluency of ESP college students in writing. This finding supports some authorities’ studies (Chastain, 1998; Elbow, 1981; Bailey, 1996, Porter et al, 1996) in which they recommended diary writing as a way for initiation into writing, encouraging students to develop a flow of thought and help them continue uninterrupted. In effect what add the value of diaries is that in writing diaries the content is under the control of the author and he has little worry about the style or grammar (Bailey, 1996; Porter et al, 1996). In highlighting the significance of diaries in a writing curriculum McDonough and McDonough (1997) stress that writing a diary is one way that students can experience and communicate their ideas while their assignment, diary, is by no means a vehicle for error correction. Following this, Porter et al (1996) argue that the connection between writing – learning is the cornerstone of the popularity diary has gained among teachers and writing teachers. They later assert that writing, in this respect, can be viewed as a discovery process – a way to explore ideas, generate and connect ideas, change preconceived notions and connect abstract ideas and experiences. Bailey (1990) reports how many second language learners gave evidence in their journals of being aware of their progress which is a genuine feedback for teachers and learners. Porter et al (1996), moreover, emphasizes “we as teachers and students strongly recommended the addition of a journal to teacher education courses even if these involve eliminating some readings and/or assignment for the syllabus of an already developed course” (p. 239). In what they add the value of diary is that throughout the course diaries allow for a dialogue between teacher and students. Diaries allow students to learn through writing without being evaluated on the writing itself, and they alert teachers to students’ concern and need and allow for this need to be met in the course (Brinton et al, 1993, Bailey, 1990).

#### 4. Conclusion

As illustrated in the findings, students founded diary writing as an enjoyable activity. Many students reported in their diaries that it was a safe place to practice writing because it is a risk-free and they can learn writing though diary without being evaluated on their writing itself. On the other hand, at the beginning of the semester they found diary in their writing difficult because they were afraid of making mistakes. As the study progressed, the students’ attitude changed. They took writing as a non-threatening place to write freely they gained confidence and this made them believe in themselves.

In presenting the findings from the questions, the researcher here highlights the following general conclusion in sum: There is a significant effect of implementing diary writing on EFL learners’ writing ability. Writing is considered as one of the most important skills that university students of English as a foreign language (EFL) need to master. These students need to write for the different purposes. The finding of the present study provides empirical evidence for the effectiveness of implementing diary writing in our EFL writing classroom. In order to overcome the barriers students face while getting started to write, fear of being evaluated in writing, the researcher recommends teachers to apply diaries in their classes because of considerable benefits. In a writing classroom, diary writing can be used as a pre-activity writing. As students in writing diaries generates ideas/topics to be further developed, then, what a teacher need to do is to demonstrate how to develop in to a paragraph/essay. As different topics are assigned, writing a diary may foster reading and encourage students to read different topics/books/articles to gain ideas. Moreover, students are encouraged to use new vocabulary/structure. It may help them develop their vocabulary knowledge. Furthermore, the findings of this study support Bailey (1990) and Porter et als’ (1990) belief that writing is a problem solving activity. In writing diary, students plan about the content, and solve their problems at the level of word choice/grammar etc. So writing teachers can benefit diary to generate students’ grammar/style and fluency in writing.

This study, by emphasizing diary writing, that is a free writing where students can write freely without fear of being evaluated, paved the way for planning a desirable communicative course of writing

and can have a significant impact on EFL learners' writing ability as far as fluency/grammatical accuracy and their attitudes toward writing concern.

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# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRANIAN EFL LEARNERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE, MOTIVATION, AND THEIR LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL

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## ABSTRACT

THIS STUDY AIMED AT INVESTIGATING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IRANIAN STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE, MOTIVATION, AND THEIR LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL. TO THIS END, 137 STUDENTS PARTICIPATED IN THIS STUDY. THE STUDENTS WERE ADMINISTERED A QUESTIONNAIRE CONTAINING TWO SECTIONS ONE OF WHICH WAS ABOUT LEARNING ENGLISH AND ITS CULTURE AND THE OTHER WAS RELATED TO STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE. THE DATA WERE ANALYZED USING STATISTICAL PACKAGE FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES (SPSS) VERSION 22. THE DATA ANALYSIS SHOWED THAT STUDENTS HAD POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE. HOWEVER, LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL DID NOT HAVE ANY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD LEARNING INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE. THE RESULTS ALSO SHOWED THAT STUDENTS' ATTITUDES WERE NEGATIVELY CORRELATED WITH INSTRUMENTAL MOTIVATION. BUT THERE WAS A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTEGRATIVE MOTIVATION AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDES. THE IMPLICATIONS ARE DISCUSSED AT THE END OF THE STUDY.

**KEYWORDS:** INSTRUMENTAL MOTIVATION, INTEGRATIVE MOTIVATION, INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE, LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVEL

## 1. Introduction

The relationship between language and culture in the foreign language classroom has been the focus of much scholarly inquiry (Byram, 1989; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). With increased globalization, migration and immigration there has been a growing realization for the need for an intercultural focus in language education. While language proficiency is at the “heart of language studies” (Standards for Foreign Language Learning, 2006, p. 3), it is no more the only objective of language teaching and learning. The Standards (2006) define language objectives in terms of the 5 C’s (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities) which are designed to help learners become viable contributors and participants in a linguistically and culturally diverse community.

According to the Standards (2006), culturally appropriate interaction occurs when two individuals engage in a bilateral conversation based on mutual understanding and an attitude of openness. When language educators plan a standards-based curriculum, it becomes evident that language and culture are inextricably connected. Moloney and Harbon (2010) maintain that within the context of language classrooms intercultural practice “asks students to think and act appropriately within a growing knowledge of the culture within language (p. 281)”.

Research on intercultural competence focuses on the importance of preparing students to engage and collaborate in a global community by discovering appropriate ways to interact with people from other cultures (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2012). An interculturally competent speaker of a FL possesses both communicative competence in that language as well as specific skills, attitudes, values and knowledge about a culture. An interculturally competent (ICC) speaker turns intercultural encounters into intercultural relationships—someone determined to understand, to gain an inside view of the other person’s culture while also contributing to the other person’s understanding of his/her own culture from an insider’s point of view (Byram, 1997).

When language skills and intercultural competency become connected in a language classroom, students become optimally ready for participation in a global world. This article reviews and summarizes the literature on intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence in order to better understand how these notions can impact the cultural component of a foreign language curriculum. Building on different models of intercultural communicative competence, examples of cultural tasks that enhance intercultural communicative competence and represent best practices in language teaching and learning will be provided and illustrated for classroom integration.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Intercultural Communicative Competence

As language and culture are considered to complement each other, integrating culture into language teaching has been one of the crucial topics that have been studied in ELT (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1998; Tseng, 2002). Attitudes towards teaching or learning target language culture, and target language culture elements in the text-books have been the main focus of the research studying culture (e.g., Alptekin, 1993; Cortazzi & Jin, 1999; Jabeen & Shah, 2011). However, with the change in the role of English as the new *lingua franca*, teaching just the target language culture has been questioned and the idea of teaching world cultures which is necessary for intercultural competence has started to take its place (Alptekin, 2002; Byram, 2008; Ho, 2009). Before implementing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) teaching into ELT, it is essential to learn about both the attitudes of teachers towards teaching ICC and the attitudes of learners towards world cultures. The attitudes of teachers towards teaching intercultural competence has been studied in different countries including Iran (Bayyurt, 2006; Castro, Sercu & Garcia, 2004; Jokikokko, 2005); however, the attitudes of learners towards learning ICC has not been fully studied in Iran. Consequently, this study aims to contribute in filling this gap in the literature by revealing the

attitudes of the university English preparatory class students who learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL) towards learning intercultural communicative competence and world cultures.

Even though the term intercultural communicative competence, “intercultural competence, or ICC, for short,” (p. 26) is widely used today, researchers have different opinions on what it means (Fantini, 2000). According to Fantini and Tirmizi (2006), everyone develops a kind of communicative competence (CC) in their native language which enables them to communicate with the people sharing the same culture without having significant misunderstandings. When someone learns another language and needs to communicate with the people speaking that language and having different cultural values, this person needs to develop another communicative competence for this new situation, which researchers name as “intercultural” communicative competence (Fantini & Tirmizi, 2006). Intercultural competence together with learners’ linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence form intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997). Learners with an ICC can link the knowledge of the other culture to their language competence through their ability to use language appropriately.

Fantini (2003) gives one definition of ICC as “the complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself” (p. 1). In Deardoff’s (2006) research, whose data were collected from intercultural scholars through the Delphi study, the top-rated definition from among nine definitions of intercultural competence was “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (pp. 247-248).

Intercultural communicative competence expects people to be able to communicate with others from different cultural backgrounds and this requires them both to keep their individual self and have multiple identities at the same time (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002). This competency is all about the ability to communicate effectively with the people of other cultures and accomplish tasks in those cultures or with the people of those cultures (Moran, 2001). Therefore, it requires people to be able to look at themselves from a different perspective, and assess their own behavior, value and beliefs like an outsider (Byram & Zarate, 1997). According to Wiseman (2002), ICC is not innate; there are some pre-conditions such as knowledge, skills and motivation, or attitudes as called by Byram, Gribkova, and Starkey (2002), needed to develop intercultural competency.

Knowledge refers to the necessary information about other cultures. To be able to have good relations with the members of other cultures, one needs to be aware of the differences that exist in his/her own and the other cultures, and should know about the rules governing those people’s behaviors. Skills are about the performance of the behaviors. People having the necessary knowledge are expected to behave appropriately in different cultures. However, having the necessary knowledge and skills is not enough to be interculturally competent. Motivation, or attitudes, which includes feelings and perceptions, affects one’s openness to engage in intercultural communication. Dislikes or prejudice also affect people’s decisions and behaviors. Therefore, all three of these components are necessary to be competent at intercultural communications and it is possible to learn or improve them through education, experience and practice.

## 2.2 Integrative and Instrumental Motivation

The most influential theory in the field of language learning motivation is the socio- educational model proposed by Gardner (1985). This model highlights the impact of attitudes towards second language (L2) communities on motivation and student achievement. According to this model, motivation includes three components: effort, want, and affect. This model also identifies two types of motivational orientation: integrative and instrumental. Integrative orientation is defined as “a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other language group” (Lambert, 1974, p. 98), while instrumental orientation pertains to the potential pragmatic gains of L2 proficiency, such as to get a better job or to pass a required examination. According to a meta-analysis that examined 75 independent studies

involving 10,489 individuals, Masgoret and Gardner (2003) found that there was a positive correlation between both types of orientation and achievement. Both integrative and instrumental orientation had an indirect effect on achievement through motivation. As there are different opinions on the distinction between motivation types in the literature, defining motivation and studying its relationship with attitude is one of the problems existing in the ELT world (Uzum, 2007). Instrumental motivation is defined as the “desire to learn a language in order to attain certain career, educational, or financial goals” whereas integrative motivation is explained as the “desire to learn a language stemming from a positive affect toward a community of its speakers” (Brown, 2000, p.75). In other words, instrumentally motivated learners are considered more concerned with the practical gains while integratively motivated learners are more interested in interacting with other people who speak that language. However, there is also another type of motivation which is referred to as personal motivation, which is about personal development or satisfaction (Cooper & Fishman, 1977). The personal reasons for learning English are related to “Pleasure at being able to read English and enjoyment of entertainment in English” (Benson, 1991, p.36).

In his study, Devrim (2006) investigated students’ goals for learning English and his findings revealed that learning English for instrumental purposes was the most important reason for the participants of his research. Uzum’s (2007) study showed that his participants were “instrumentally oriented towards learning English” (p.74), hence, Uzum (2007) mentioned that this orientation might facilitate students’ learning process. Brown (2000) states that if a language learner has the appropriate motivation, it is possible to say that he/she will succeed. Considering the importance of students’ motivation types that is mentioned in the relevant literature, the relationship between students’ motivation types, reasons for learning English, and their attitudes towards learning ICC is investigated in the current study.

### *2.3 Language Proficiency Level*

English proficiency levels is another factor whose effect on student attitudes has been studied and proven to be significant in previous research. Prodromou (1992) is one of the researchers who studied the effect of language proficiency levels on student attitudes and he concluded that students’ desire to get to know the target language culture increases in line with the proficiency levels. In order to reveal the effect of English language proficiency levels on Iranian EFL learners’ attitudes towards learning ICC, proficiency levels are included as a factor in the current study. This study attempts to answer the following question:

Is there any relationship between Iranian students’ attitudes toward learning intercultural communicative competence, motivation, and their language proficiency level?

## **3. Method**

### *3.1 Participants*

The participants in this study were 137 university students in Salman Farsi University of Kazerun ranging from 18 to 25 years of age. The students were divided into three groups regarding their proficiency levels namely pre-intermediate, intermediate, and advanced.

### *3.2 Instruments*

A localized version of the questionnaire of students’ attitudes toward learning English culture was devised for Iranian students based upon Devrim (2006) and Çalışkan’s (2009) master’s theses that examined Turkish students’ attitudes toward learning English culture. The questionnaire was administered to students with explanation in order to avoid possible misunderstanding. It was comprised of three sections. The first and second sections included items regarding learning English. The second section included items concerning students’ attitudes toward learning English and its culture. The items were about status of English language, students’ opinions about communicative competence (CC), and student attitudes towards learning intercultural communicative competence (ICC).

3.2 Procedure

The students were required to take Oxford Placement Test so that the researchers could determine their proficiency level. They were then explained about the aims of the study. They were also ensured regarding the confidentiality of the information they provided. After the administration of the questionnaire the items were analyzed to check the reliability which was calculated as .741 which was acceptable according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2003).

3.3 Data Analysis

The items of the questionnaire which were on a five-point Likert scale were analyzed using SPSS 22. In order to explore the effect of students' proficiency level on their attitudes, one-way between subjects ANOVA was run. To find out the relationship between motivational orientations and students' attitudes toward learning ICC, the researchers conducted standard multiple regression. The results of the data analyses will be provided and discussed in detail later.

4. Results

In the first section of the questionnaire, participants were provided with 11 reasons for learning English and were asked to respond to them by choosing the appropriate option on the Likert scale (5=Definitely Yes, 4=Yes, 3=Undecided, 2=No, 1=Definitely No).

When the data were analyzed, it showed that the Cronbach's Alpha value of the Reasons for Learning English section was .784 which suggested the consistency of results across items.

For the analysis purposes, these 11 reasons for learning English were categorized under three motivation types: instrumental, integrative and personal. The Cronbach's Alpha values for those scales were .669, .647, and .718, respectively.

The descriptive statistics of the reasons for learning English show that instrumental type reasons for learning English has the highest mean ( = 4.30) and it is followed by integrative reasons with a mean of 4.23. Personal reasons which is about "Pleasure at being able to read English and enjoyment of entertainment in English" (Benson, 1991, p.36), on the other hand, has the lowest mean ( = 3.81). While instrumental reasons come first in motivating students for learning English, the students are not that motivated about learning English by personal reasons which would expected to give them pleasure.

Table 1 Participant Responses to Reasons for Learning English Questions by Scales

Items		SD
<b>Instrumental:</b>		
1.4 To find work after graduation	4.61	.79
1.1 To study in other countries	4.19	.95
1.2 To pass my classes in my department	4.10	1.09
<b>Integrative:</b>		
1.3 To communicate with people from other countries	4.54	.68
1.10 To visit other countries	4.42	.78
1.8 To take part in the cultural activities arranged by the	4.27	.97

European Union such as Erasmus and European Voluntary Service

**Personal:**

1.7 To watch movies or TV programs in English	4.22	.90
1.11 To follow published materials (books, journals and magazines) in English	4.00	1.01
1.6 To use the Internet	3.39	1.25

It is important to note that item 1.4 “to find work after graduation” has the highest mean ( = 4.61). Therefore, it is possible to state that “to find work after graduation” is the most important motivation factor for the learners to learn English language. It is also interesting that item 1.6 “To use the Internet” has the lowest mean ( = 3.39). It can be interpreted as students do not think it is necessary to have English knowledge to be able to use the Internet. With a mean of 3.62, item 1.9 “To listen to music in English” also is not a strong source of motivation for the learners. Students are also mostly undecided for item 1.5 “to get informed about the culture of other countries;” thus, it has a mean which is under four ( = 3.68).

It can be said that the motivational orientation of Iranian EFL learners in this study is mainly instrumental which is explained by Gardner and Lambert (1972) as being related to pragmatic gains of L2 learning, such as getting a better job or a higher salary. However, Brown (2000) mentions that instead of selecting one form of motivation, learners usually have a combination of motivation types. Supporting Brown (2000)’s argument, the participants of this study are also motivated to communicate with people from other countries, and to watch movies or TV programs in English, which are categorized under integrative and personal motivation, respectively.

In the second section of the questionnaire, participants were asked to rank the cultures which come to their minds when they think of the culture of English language. They were provided with five different culture options- British culture, American culture, culture of other countries where English is the native language (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc.), culture of countries where English is the official language (India, Nigeria, Malaysia, Hong Kong, etc.), and culture of countries where English is spoken as a foreign language (Japan, Spain, the Netherlands, etc.) - and one option which indicates no particular country’s culture. Participants were asked to order these options starting from 1 for their first choice.

For calculation purposes, if participants indicated 1 for an option, it received 6 points and if participants indicated one option as the 6th in the order, this option received 1 point while calculating the means. Table 2 shows the descriptive analysis of the second section of the questionnaire questioning the culture of English Language.

**Table 2. Participant Responses to Culture of English Language Questions**

Items	Mean	SD
<b>2.1 British culture</b>	5.24	1.37

2.2 American culture	4.81	1.45
2.3 Culture of other countries where English is the native language (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc.)	3.62	1.31
2.4 Culture of countries where English is the official language (India, Nigeria, Malaysia, Hong Kong, etc.)	2.57	1.18
2.5 Culture of countries where English is spoken as a foreign language (Japan, Spain, the Netherlands, etc.)	2.35	1.16
2.6 No particular country's culture	1.36	1.17

As shown in Table 2, British culture received the highest mean which indicates that it was mostly ranked as the 1st option in the rankings. This suggests that when students think of the culture of English language, it is British culture what comes to their minds first. American culture took the second place in this ranking and the order of the rest, predictably, reflects the positions of Kachru's (1985) circles by moving outwards from the culture of other countries where English is the native language (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc.) towards the culture of countries where English is the official language (India, Nigeria, Malaysia, Hong Kong, etc.) and culture of countries where English is spoken as a foreign language (Japan, Spain, the Netherlands, etc.), respectively.

The statements in the third section of the questionnaire are listed under three categories: The Status of English Language (Items 3.1, 3.3, 3.4), Student Attitudes towards CC (Items 3.2, 3.6) and Student Attitudes towards Learning Intercultural Communicative Competence (Items 3.5, 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12, 3.13, 3.14, 3.15, 3.16, 3.17, and 3.18).

As participants' responses to the Status of English Language scale questions in Table 7, below, indicates, the students strongly agree with the idea that English is an important international language, and that it is not just the language of a particular nation – reflected in the high means for items 3.1 and 3.3 ( = 4.50 and = 4.65), and the low mean for item 3.4 ( = 2.10).

Participant responses to Student Attitudes towards Communicative Competence Scale Questions in Table 7 reveal that Communicative Competence (CC) is highly valued by students as both of the items have high means ( = 3.2 and = 3.6). That shows that students have positive opinions about CC with an overall mean of 4.53.

**Table 3. Participant Responses to Learning about the Culture of English Language Questions by Scales**

Items		SD
The Status of English Language Scale Questions		
3.3 English is the most widely used language in international communication.	4.65	.59
3.1 English language has become a world language rather than that of a particular nation.	4.50	.77
3.4 English language reflects one country's cultural values.	2.10	.95

Communicative Competence Scale Questions		
3.6 To have verbal and written communication skills in English has gained importance in each business sector.	4.55	.62
3.2 It is necessary to have a good command of English because it enables us to communicate with foreigners.	4.51	.71

### Learning Intercultural Communicative Competence

3.11 In intercultural communication, it is important to know what not to say to whom in different cultures.	4.18	.74
3.16 Gaining awareness about cultural differences can minimize misunderstandings among people from different cultures.	4.17	.74
3.14 It's necessary to learn about how people from different countries behave in various circumstances to have better communication with them.	4.16	.75
3.8 Learning about the standards of judgment of other cultures improves our communication skills with people from these cultures.	4.12	.83
3.9 I would like to learn about the similarities and differences between the cultures of other countries and Iranian culture.	4.02	.86
3.12 Learning about different cultural elements in English language classes makes language learning more interesting.	3.93	.97
3.15 Introducing culture in English language classes teaches to be respectful of other cultures.	3.78	.93
3.7 Cultural elements of different world countries should be introduced in English language classes.	3.63	1.07
3.18 Cultural content should be included in English language teaching curriculum.	3.63	.96
3.5 To be able to speak good English, it is necessary to know about the culture of countries where English is the native language (America, England, etc.).	2.97	1.20
3.13 I do not think it is necessary to learn about the cultures of other countries	2.03	1.02
3.10 Learning about other cultures is harmful to my own culture.	1.76	.87
3.17 During the introduction of different cultural elements in English language classes, I develop a negative reaction.	1.60	.85

The Cronbach's Alpha values of the Status of English Language and Student Attitudes towards Communicative Competence scales were below .60, which indicated that they had low validity. As a result, these two scales were not included in any of the analyses looking at the relationships among different groups. The items of Learning Intercultural Communicative Competence scale, on the other hand, showed relatively high reliability with the Alpha coefficient of .842.

As shown in Table 4, below, the overall mean for students' attitudes towards learning ICC is 3.94. The participants agree with the items which emphasize that they would like to learn about the similarities and differences between the cultures of other countries and Iranian culture, and cultural elements of different world countries should be introduced in English language classes. The range of the means of each item regarding culture learning reveals that students have favourable attitudes towards learning ICC.

Items 3.13, 3.10 and 3.17 have low means. Because of the wording of these items, a “strongly disagree” on items 3.13, 3.10 and 3.17 expresses a positive attitude towards ICC. Therefore, the scores of these items have been reversed while looking at the effects of some other factors on attitudes.

Table 4 below shows the descriptive analysis of the items in the third section of the questionnaire questioning the participants’ attitudes towards learning ICC.

**The effect of motivational orientations on students’ attitudes toward learning ICC**

Regression was conducted in order to explore any possible relation between the motivation types of students in learning English and their attitudes towards learning ICC. Below, Table 12 gives the analysis of the effects of reasons for learning English on student attitudes towards learning ICC.

**Table 4. The Regression Results for the Relation between Students’ Motivational Orientations and Students’ Attitudes toward Learning the ICC**

Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Unstandardized      Standardized  
Coefficients          Coefficients

Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.611	.185		14.146	.000
	Instrumental	-.079	.039	-.091	-2.042	.042
	Integrative	.279	.047	.306	5.906	.000
	Personal	.129	.034	.188	3.792	.000

a. Dependent Variable: ICC Means

As it is shown in Table 4, the relation between students’ motivation types and attitudes towards learning ICC is statistically significant at the  $p < .01$  level. According to the analysis, Integrative Motivation has the biggest effect on students’ attitudes and it is followed by Personal Motivation. Instrumental Motivation also makes a statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) contribution to students’ attitudes towards ICC; however, this contribution is in a different direction.

The positive values in the table show that any two variables change in the same direction. That is, while one value increases, the other one increases, too. If students’ Integrative and Personal Motivation is high, their attitudes towards learning ICC tend to be positive. However, the negative values indicate that while one variable is going up, the other one is going down. Therefore, the values of Instrumental Motivation in Table 12 can be interpreted as having a reverse effect on students’ attitudes. That is, if students’ Instrumental Motivation is high, their attitudes towards learning ICC tend to be negative and if their Instrumental Motivation is low, their attitudes towards learning ICC tend to be more positive.

To sum up, students’ reasons for learning English is strongly related to their attitudes towards learning ICC and students’ attitudes tend to change according to their motivation types in learning English.

**The Effect of English Proficiency Levels on Students’ Attitudes toward Learning ICC**

It was the initial aim of the study to look at the effect of five different proficiency levels on students’ attitudes towards learning ICC; however, none of the participating students’ English proficiency level

was elementary or advanced. Therefore, in this study, the possible effects of pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper-intermediate levels on student attitudes were analyzed.

The analysis which was carried out to reveal the effects of different proficiency levels on students' attitudes towards learning ICC is reported in Table 5 below.

**Table 5. ANOVA Results for the Effects of Proficiency Levels on Student Attitudes**

	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	df	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.273	.091	3	.288	.834
Within Groups	159.384	.316	504		
Total	159.658		507		

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to identify whether there was a statistically significant difference among students' attitudes towards learning ICC according to proficiency levels. As shown in Table 5, there is not a statistically significant difference between different proficiency levels in terms of students' attitudes ( $p > .05$ ). This result suggests that learners' language level does not seem to affect their attitudes towards learning ICC.

## 5. Discussion

This study aimed at investigating the relationship between Iranian students' attitudes toward learning intercultural communicative competence, motivation, and their language proficiency level. In doing so, a questionnaire was developed and administered to 137 university students in Salman Farsi University of Kazerun, Iran. The responses to the questionnaire were clustered into several categories for analysis. They included: reasons for learning English, the culture of English language, learning about the culture of English language, the effect of motivational orientations on students' attitudes, and the effect of English proficiency levels on students' attitudes.

### 5.1 Students' Motivational Orientations

Students were provided with 11 reasons for learning English which were categorized into instrumental, integrative and personal reasons and were asked to respond to them by choosing the appropriate option on the Likert scale. When the data were analyzed, the descriptive statistics of the reasons for learning English revealed that while instrumental type reasons for learning English had the highest mean ( $M = 4.30$ ) and it was followed by integrative type reasons with a mean of 4.23, personal type reasons had the lowest mean ( $M = 3.81$ ). Instrumental motivation type reasons came first for their English learning; however, the participants' answers showed that they were not highly motivated to learn English for personal type reasons which would have been expected to give them pleasure. Item 1.4 "to find work after graduation" had the highest mean ( $M = 4.61$ ); therefore, it was the most important motivation factor for the learners to learn English language. On the other hand, item 1.6 "To use the Internet" was the only item that fell into the "undecided" range with a mean of 3.39. As the participants of the study were raised with computers and other technology, it is possible to speculate that this response might suggest that students do not think it is necessary to have knowledge of English to be able to use the Internet. Students were also mostly undecided for item 1.5 "To get informed about the culture of other countries." It suggests that students do not primarily aim to learn the language in order to receive information about other countries' cultures. This is something anticipated because people generally learn about the culture

of the language in order to be able to understand the underlying reasons of some uses in the language, not as their primary goal.

The data analyses have revealed that students learn English mostly because of instrumental motivation and the most important reason for learning English is “to find work after graduation.” “To communicate with people from other countries” and “to visit other countries” are the second and third most important reasons for learning English and they highlight the place of integrative motivation for students in learning English. The findings of the current study are consistent with the results of Uzum’s (2007) research. According to Uzum (2007), the most popular reason for Iranian EFL learners to learn English is “to have a good job, and to communicate with a wider community” (p.120). His results also show that learners have positive attitudes towards the English speaking countries. They would like to visit these countries, and meet and have conversations with the people from these societies.

In terms of the instrumental reasons’ being one of the most important incentives for students, the findings of the present study are in parallel with the research of Devrim (2006), which studied high school students’ opinions. However, the results concerning personal reasons for studying English differ between the two studies. Devrim’s (2006) study revealed that the most important reasons for the participants of his study were “using the Internet as well as communicating with native speakers of English” (p.44). The current study, on the other hand, revealed that this item had the lowest mean suggesting that “to use the Internet” is not a strong motivation factor for today’s students for learning English. The personal reasons for learning the language have been shown, in the current study, to be the least important factors affecting students’ motivation in learning English.

To sum up, the findings of this study revealed that instrumental reasons are still the most important motives of students for language learning. On the other hand, the results suggest that personal reasons are less motivating for students to learn English, which differ from the findings of Devrim (2006). McKay (2003) mentioned that “Many individuals learn English not because English is promoted by English-speaking countries, but rather because these individuals want access to scientific and technological information, international organizations, global economic trade, and higher education. Knowing English makes such access possible” (p. 4) and the findings of the current study about students’ reasons for learning English confirm that statement.

### 5.2 *The Culture of English Language*

The participants were provided with five different culture options- British culture, American culture, culture of other countries where English is the native language (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, etc.), culture of countries where English is the official language (India, Nigeria, Malaysia, Hong Kong, etc.), culture of countries where English is spoken as a foreign language (Japan, Spain, the Netherlands, etc.) - and one option which indicated no particular country’s culture. They were then asked to rank the cultures which came to their minds when they thought of the culture of the English language.

The findings seem to be entirely predictable as the order of the ranking reflected the positions of Kachru’s (1985) circles. The only interesting ranking was the first two. “British culture” was frequently ranked as the first option and it received the highest mean. It revealed that when students thought of the culture of the English language, it was “British culture” that came to their minds first and “American culture” took the second place in this ranking. The learners of English are exposed to the knowledge about the UK, as well as the accent of British English much more than the USA and the American accent. As a result, when the students are asked about the culture of English language, their response might automatically refer to British culture, and it is possible to speculate that the content of English teaching materials plays a big role in their thoughts about the culture of English language.

To conclude, the present study confirmed that it was British culture that Iranian EFL learners associate English with. British culture was followed by American culture and the rest of the ranking predictably

reflected the positions of Kachru's circles by moving outwards from the culture of other countries where English is the native language. The findings of the present study, in terms of the associated culture of English language, are totally in line with the findings of Devrim's (2006) study.

### 5.3 *Learning about English Language Culture*

The statements given in this section focused on three different aspects related to the culture of English: The Status of English Language, Students' opinions about Communicative Competence (CC), and Student Attitudes towards Learning Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC).

The findings related to the Status of English Language revealed that students strongly agreed with the idea that English is the most widely used language in international communication and it has become a world language rather than that of a particular nation. Despite ranking the British culture as the first one that they associated English language with, the participating students did not agree with the item suggesting "English language reflects one country's cultural values." Students' opinions about CC were also positive and the high means of this part show that CC was highly valued by the participating students. Students strongly agreed that having verbal and written communication skills in English has gained importance in each business sector and it is necessary to have a good command of English because it enables them to communicate with foreigners.

As for the EFL learners' attitudes towards learning ICC, the overall mean for students' attitudes was 3.94 which showed that students had positive attitudes towards culture learning. They agreed with the items which emphasized that they would like to learn about the similarities and differences between the cultures of other countries and Iranian culture, cultural elements of different world countries should be introduced in English language classes and cultural content should be included in English language teaching curriculum. Hence, the findings of this study coincide with the research conducted by Devrim (2006).

Contrary to the findings of Jabeen and Shah's (2011) study, which revealed that Pakistani students had negative attitudes towards learning the culture of the target language, the finding of the current study showed that Iranian EFL learners agreed that learning about different cultural elements in English language classes makes language learning more interesting. The participants of the current study strongly disagreed with the item which suggests "during the introduction of different cultural elements in English language classes, I develop a negative reaction" ( $r = -1.60$ ); they have positive attitudes towards learning ICC. The participants of Jabeen and Shah's (2011) study stated that they wanted to learn the target language in local culture contexts. After finding out that the participants of his study, in general, viewed culture learning as an indivisible part of language learning and they were interested in learning more about the target language culture, Kahraman (2008) concluded that the learners that we teach are completely aware of the importance of cultural knowledge, hence they do not resist, but, instead, are ready for culture learning. The findings of the current study support his conclusion on the readiness of Iranian EFL learners to be involved in culture learning in English language classes. This result suggests that adding cultural content into language classes and letting students reflect upon their own culture can be fun for learners. Thus, it can increase their motivation and help students be more active learners.

### 5.4 *The Impact of Motivational Orientations on Students' Attitudes*

The data analyses revealed that the relation between students' motivation types and attitudes towards learning ICC is statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ). There is a direct relationship between the values of Integrative, or Personal Motivation and student attitudes towards learning ICC. The higher Integrative or Personal Motivation students have, the more positive attitudes towards learning ICC they tend to develop. On the other hand, there is a negative correlation between Instrumental Motivation and students' attitudes towards ICC. That is, if students' Instrumental Motivation increases, their attitudes towards learning ICC tend to decrease.

Instrumental motivation is identified as the goal of acquiring language in order to use it for a specific purpose, such as meeting the requirements for university graduation and applying for a job, and it is explained as being related to pragmatic gains of L2 learning, such as getting a better job or a higher salary (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). As this explanation suggests, higher values of instrumental motivation shows more utilitarian approaches. Therefore, it is possible to speculate that the students with high instrumental motivation for language learning are more interested in fulfilling the language requirement of their university rather than being interested in knowing about the people who speak that language and their culture more. However, the learners who are more integratively motivated want to learn the language so that they can get to know the culture of other societies and understand the people who speak that language better. Gardner and Lambert (1972) associated integrative motivation with positive attitude toward the foreign culture and a desire to interact with the members of that group. As a result, the findings of this study coincide with the theoretical underpinnings of related literature.

To sum up, students' reasons for learning English are closely related to their attitudes towards learning ICC and students' attitudes tend to change according to their motivation types in learning English. The results support Wiseman's (2002) statement suggesting that motivation which includes our feelings and perceptions, affects students' openness to engage in intercultural communication.

#### *5.5 The Impact of English Proficiency Level on Students' Attitudes*

In order to identify whether there was a statistically significant difference among students' attitudes towards learning ICC according to proficiency levels, a one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted and the results showed that there was not a statistically significant difference between different proficiency levels in terms of students' attitudes ( $p > .05$ ).

In Prodromou's (1992) study conducted in Greece, the results of data analysis showed that there was a relation between English proficiency levels and student attitudes. The attitudes tended to be more positive towards learning target language culture as the proficiency levels become higher. Therefore, Prodromou (1992) concluded that while making decisions about the inclusion of cultural content into the language teaching, the proficiency levels of the students should be taken into consideration. However, the findings of the current study are not in line with Prodromou's (1992) results in terms of the effect of English proficiency levels on students' attitudes. Proficiency levels do not make any difference on the attitudes of Iranians EFL learners towards learning ICC.

To sum up, the findings of this study do not support the previous research in terms of the effect of English proficiency levels on student attitudes. The results of the current study suggest that it does not make a difference what language level you teach in terms of learners' attitudes towards learning ICC. However, there were three proficiency levels included in the study which were pre-intermediate, intermediate and upper-intermediate. Therefore, it is important to note that the findings of the current study do not cover beginner, elementary or advanced level students.

### **6. Implications of the Study**

The results revealed that students have positive attitudes towards learning ICC. They are mostly of the opinion that adding cultural content into language classes and letting learners reflect upon their own culture can add fun to language classes. Students' motivation types or reasons for learning English also have an effect on their attitudes. The results revealed that the higher integrative and personal motivation the students have, the more positive their attitudes towards learning ICC are. However, instrumental motivation has the reverse effect on student attitudes. This finding suggests that institutions or instructors should help students see English language learning as something for pleasure and develop interest in people and other cultures, which would help to increase their personal and integrative motivation in language learning, and consequently, serve in the development of positive attitudes of students towards learning ICC.

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